

Minutes of the 187th Meeting of the Board of InterTradeIreland, the Trade and Business Development Body.

Tuesday 25th September 2018 – InterTradeIreland (8.30 am – 10.00 am)

Present:

Board Members:

Mr Ken Nelson	Chairman
Mr Paul O’Sullivan	Vice Chair
Mr Micheál Briody	
Mr Timothy Cairns	
Ms Ann Rudden	
Mr James Spratt	

In Attendance:

Observer:

Ms Florence Bayliss	Nominated Board member
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Executive:

Mr Aidan Gough	Designated Officer
Ms Margaret Hearty	Assistant Designated Officer
Mr Martin Agnew	Corporate Services Director
Ms Alayne Kinver	Assistant Director of Strategy and Policy
Mr Alan Morrow	Assistant Director of Programmes and Business Services
Ms Orla McGlennon	Board Secretary

187.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Terry Crossan, Mr Paul Greenfield, Mr Patrick Joy and Ms Adrienne McGuinness.

187.2 Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting. He thanked Ms Rudden for agreeing to Chair the Trade Sub Committee meeting to be held after the Board meeting.

187.3 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. Ms Ann Rudden declared a potential conflict of interest arising from her position as founder and MD of Áine Hand Made Chocolates who are participants on the Co-Innovate programme. Mr Briody also declared a potential conflict of interest arising from his position as CEO of Silver Hill Foods who are participants on the Co-Innovate programme.

No other conflicts were declared.

187.4 Approval and Authorisation of the 28th August 2018 Board Minutes

The minutes of the 28th August 2018 Board meeting were agreed as a true record of the meeting and were approved by the Board and authorised by the Chairman.

187.5 Matters Arising

Mr Gough reported that all matters arising from the last Board meeting had been addressed. He advised that an invitation had been sent to the DfE Permanent Secretary and the DBEI Secretary General to attend a future Board meeting. The Board's congratulations had been passed onto all staff on the recent accreditation against the Investors in People Standard. Board members had been sent a list of the key considerations of the potential impact of Brexit on the Body in the event of a hard border.

187.6 Chairman's Business

The Chairman advised that he and the Senior Leadership team met recently with Mr Noel Lavery, DfE Permanent Secretary and his officials. There was good engagement and discussion. The Chairman advised that the matter of outstanding Board appointments had been discussed but any new appointments must be ratified by the NSMC.

It was agreed that it would be advantageous if the DfE Permanent Secretary and the DBEI Secretary General could jointly meet with the Board if possible. The Chairman advised that DfE is hosting the next Inter Agency meeting with representatives of the two sponsor Departments and Chairs and CEOs of Invest N.I and Enterprise Ireland.

187.7 Designated Officer Report

Mr Gough reported on our achieving the Investors in People (IIP) standard. He informed the Board that the Senior Leadership Team has agreed an action plan based on the Investors in

People assessment report that will focus on leadership, performance appraisals, staff development, recognition and reward, internal communications and health and wellbeing.

The Senior Leadership team hosted a visit from Mr Pat Breen, Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection. The Minister launched the Export Participation report and met some local SMEs. Mr Gough informed the Board that he had met Mr Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England who was well briefed on the work of InterTradeIreland.

Mr Gough advised that we would be hosting a meeting later this week with the members from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The Board noted the Designated Officer's report and the Chair thanked Mr Gough for his update.

187.8 Board Sub Committee Reports

Innovation Sub Committee Report

Mr O'Sullivan reported back from the Innovation Sub Committee meeting held on 28th August 2018. Nine new Fusion applications were considered and all were approved (which included five 12-month projects and four 18-month projects). Mr O'Sullivan commended the quality of the applications submitted.

The Board noted the Innovation Sub-Committee report and the Chair thanked Mr O'Sullivan for his update.

Trade Sub-Committee Report

Ms Hearty reported back from the Trade Sub-Committee meeting held on 28th August 2018. She advised that the Committee considered fourteen new Acumen applications. Thirteen applications were approved and one application was deferred for further information. She noted the quality of the applications received by the new Acumen Delivery Agents. Despite the uncertainty around Brexit, the pipeline of Acumen projects remains strong.

The Board noted the Trade Sub-Committee report and the Chair thanked Ms Hearty for her update.

187.9 For Consideration, Discussion, Decision &/or Approval

Draft 2019 Business Plan and Budget

Ms Kinver presented the Draft 2019 Business Plan and Budget. She highlighted the key points in relation to the Plan.

Ms Kinver gave the Board an overview of achievements in 2017 and in 2018 up to the end of June as detailed in the Board paper. She updated the Board on recent monitoring activity and reported that we have now exceeded our target for first time exporters and total jobs impact. The Board noted that there had been a significant increase in Business Development Value.

Ms Kinver informed the Board of the key targets, activities and budgets for the 2019 Plan.

All of the activities in the 2019 Business plan are to help meet the current and future demand and will assist SMEs with the impact of Brexit.

Ms Kinver outlined the levels of funding received from the Departments in 2017, 2018 and the proposed funding required for the 2019 Business Plan.

The Board discussed the proposed 2019 Business Plan and Budget including the potential of flexibility around budgets in programme areas, the robust monitoring information, pension costs, communications activity and corporate advertising.

The Board approved the 2019 Business Plan and associated budget.

The Chairman thanked Ms Kinver for her presentation.

Operations Directorate Progress and Activity Report

Mr Morrow presented the Operations Directorate Progress and Activity report. He advised that to date, programme budgets and targets are largely on track to be achieved. There continues to be a significant demand for Brexit Start to Plan Vouchers. Mr Morrow reported that Mr Mark Sterritt will be leaving the Body to take up a position in the British Business Bank. He will be replaced in the short to medium term by Mr Grant Gilmore. Ms Hearty advised that Mr Gilmore will move to the Brexit Advisory Service immediately to shadow Mr Sterritt. The Brexit Manager role will be advertised immediately. The Board asked that Ms Hearty pass on their best wishes to Mr Sterritt in his new post.

Mr Morrow updated the Board on activities in the Operations Directorate as detailed in the Board papers.

The Board noted the Operations Directorate Progress and Activity reports and the Chair thanked Mr Morrow for his report.

Governance and Financial Matters

Mr Agnew presented the Governance and Financial Matters report. He advised that the 2017 Accounts and Annual Report will be presented to both governments at the end of the month.

The Board was informed that an internal cross directorate GDPR working group continues to meet regularly to discuss issues arising from the implementation of the new regulations. A

GDPR e-learning module will be issued to all staff and Board members in October 2018 to provide further training on the regulations.

Mr Agnew advised that expenditure to date is largely on track.

The Board noted the Governance and Financial Matters report and the Chair thanked Mr Agnew for his report.

Tenders and Variations to Letters of Offer/Appointment

Mr Agnew sought Board approval to go to competitive tender for the service to continue to produce the InterTradeIreland All Island Business Monitor for a further three years. The Board discussed and agreed on the importance of this credible survey and approved Mr Agnew's request.

Communications Update

Mr Agnew presented the Communications update. He advised that as mentioned earlier in the meeting, Minister Breen had launched the Export Participation report. The Minister had a round table informal meeting with six local companies who advised him of how InterTradeIreland had supported their businesses.

Mr Agnew reported that the September ezine had generated a very satisfactory open rate. He advised that the corporate digital campaign continues and this month promotes the Acumen trade supports.

The Board noted the Communications update and the Chair thanked Mr Agnew for his report.

Brexit Update

Mr Gough advised that after last meeting, Ms Kinver had provided Board members with key considerations for InterTradeIreland in the event of a hard Brexit. An internal taskforce has been set up including staff from Communications, Research, Brexit and the Senior Leadership team to consider the changing environment.

Ms Hearty reported that the Brexit team are working to streamline their processes to help prepare for the likely increase in volume of companies requiring assistance. She advised that the Brexit Start to Plan Voucher Scheme economic appraisal is currently with the DfE economist for review.

Co-Innovate Programme Update

Mr Neil Ryan, Co-Innovate Director joined the Board meeting for this agenda item. He gave an update on each strand of the Co-Innovate programme.

The Chairman advised that the next Interreg Va Monitoring Committee meeting would be held in Dundalk on 27th November 2018. The Board discussed the Co-Innovate Programme and agreed it would be useful for Mr Ryan to give a presentation to the Board outlining how the programme assists companies in the various strands. The Board suggested some Co-Innovate case studies that highlight the different benefits of each strand would be valuable. The Board also recommended some PR/media opportunities should be scoped out going forward. It was agreed that as the Co-Innovate Programme progresses, particularly in Strands 4 and 5, the Board would be provided with a greater level of project detail in Board reports.

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

Business Plan Budget Variance and Milestone Exception Report

Ms Kinver presented the Business Plan Commentary Report. She advised that minor issues relate to timing issues and will be addressed in the coming months.

The Chairman thanked Ms Kinver for her report and the Board noted the Business Plan Budget Variance and Milestone Exception Report.

187.10 AOB

The Board discussed dates of Board meetings for 2019. It was agreed that Board meetings in 2019 would continue to be held on the last Tuesday of the month.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their input to the meeting.

.....Authorised by:

Mr Ken Nelson
Chairman, InterTradeIreland
30th October 2018