



Border, Midland & Western
Regional Assembly
Investing in Your Future

BMW REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

PROGRAMME OF WORK

2009



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



**EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND**

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Article 14 (3) of the Establishment Order, the Regional Assembly shall, as early as possible in each year, adopt a programme of work for that year. This programme of work sets out the key areas of work for the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly and its sub-committees for 2009. The programme of work builds on and extends the activities that were carried out in 2008.

The activities are set out in accordance with the principal responsibilities of the Regional Assembly, i.e.

- Managing the Regional Operational Programmes 2000-2006 and 2007 – 2013;
- Monitoring the impact of EU expenditure and the National Development Plan in the BMW region;
- Co-ordinating the delivery of Public Services in the BMW region; and
- Ensuring that national policies take the regional dimension into account.

In addition, a number of activities in relation to operational issues, policy and research and the implementation of the Innovative Actions and INTERREG Programmes are included. This document also includes a schedule of meetings, which may be subject to change.

During 2009 the closure process for the Regional Operational Programme (2000 – 2006) will progress and will entail significant financial management work, i.e., final spot-checks on operations, facilitation of audits and inspections and preparation of a final implementation report.

The NDP 2007 – 2013, provides a role for the Regional Assemblies on the Monitoring Committee for the NDP. The Regional Assembly will participate fully in these new arrangements, while continuing its monitoring role in relation to the Rural Development Programme 2007-13 and the ESF Human Capital Investment Programme 2007-13.

The two sub-committees which were established following a review in 2006 in the light of the structure of the NDP 2007 – 2013 and the new Regional Operational Programme 2007 – 2013 have provided a forum for discussion on policy issues as well as a mechanism for reviewing the implementation of the BMW Regional Operational Programme, the Rural Development Programme and the NDP.

PART TWO

DETAILS OF ACTIVITIES

1. Managing the Regional Operational Programme 2000 – 2006

1.1 Financial Management and Control

- Participate on the Department of Finance Closure Monitoring Committee and compile regular updates on certified claims, verifications, irregularity reports and follow-ups on audit findings;
- Co-ordinate the preparation and submission of all closure documentation at Fund and Programme level and complete a final implementation report in line with Department of Finance guidelines and timetables;
- Complete Article 4 spot checks and “look back reviews” on expenditure under the 2000-2006 Regional OP;
- Submit certified payment claims to the Paying Authorities in respect of final co-financed ERDF and ESF expenditure in respect of the 2000-2006 OP;
- Liaise with ERDF FCU and ESF FCU in respect of the closure audits of the 2000-2006 OP and collate responses to audit queries/reports;
- Finalise the submission of all remaining irregularity reports;
- Provide guidance to Implementing Departments and Agencies and Final Beneficiary Bodies in relation to the closure arrangements for the Regional OP and the correct application of EU regulations generally; and

1.2 Other Managing Authority Functions

- Manage outstanding FIGG expenditure arising from six month extension request;
- Preparation of the Final Implementation Report for approval by the Operational Programme Monitoring Committee and for submission to the EU Commission and the Department of Finance by the end of 2009;
- Prepare and publish a report on the achievements of the BMW Regional OP 2000-06;
- Keep the web-site of the BMW Assembly, BMW region, and Operational Programmes updated in relation to the activities of the Assembly and as a vehicle

to promote the Assembly and the implementation of the Regional Operational Programme;

- Liaise with all implementing bodies in relation to the completion of expenditure on all co-financed-measures under the BMW Regional Operational Programme;
- Prepare an annual implementation report for 2008, for adoption by the OP Monitoring Committee and submit to the European Commission by the end of June 2009;
- Provide the Secretariat to the BMW Regional Operational Programme Monitoring Committee;
- Continue to ensure the correct implementation of the publicity and information requirements of the EU; and
- Facilitate the ex-post evaluation of the BMW Regional OP 2000-06 by the EU Commission.

2. Regional Operational Programme 2007 – 2013

2.1 Financial Management and Control

- Review the financial plan for the 2007-13 Regional OP in the light of the current economic situation and prepare a proposal for consideration by the OP Monitoring Committee;
- Provide training and guidance seminars for all Intermediary Bodies and Public Beneficiary Bodies on the Structural Funds IT System and on all financial management and control regulations including publicity requirements;
- Provide forecasts of ERDF drawdown in 2009 and 2010 to the relevant Certifying Authority;
- Carry out verification spot-checks and submit certified payment claims to the Certifying Authority in respect of co-financed ERDF expenditure in respect of the 2007-2013 OP;
- Facilitate the 5% financial audits of the 2007-2013 OP being carried out by the Audit Authority and collate management responses to audit queries/ reports;
- Liaise with the ERDF FCU (Audit Authority) in relation to the conduct of systems audits on co-financed Intermediary Bodies; and
- Update the systems description for the BMW Regional OP, following any programme revisions.

2.2 Other Managing Authority Functions

- Ensure the full compliance with the Information and Publicity requirements in line with the OP-level Communications Action Plan;
- Prepare an annual implementation report for 2008, for adoption by the OP Monitoring Committee and submit to the European Commission by the end of June 2009;
- Manage the Technical Assistance priority which relates to expenditure incurred in the appraisal and monitoring of operations, OP, publicity, evaluation and audits and certain eligible costs of the Regional Authorities; and
- Prepare an evaluation framework for the new Regional OP by the end of 2009.

3. Monitoring the Impact of the NDP and EU Programmes in the BMW Region

- Prepare comprehensive reports and documentation for the meeting of the BMW Regional Operational Programme Monitoring Committee in April 2009;
- Prepare Summary Reports for the meeting of the NSRF Monitoring Committee;
- Provide an input into the Monitoring Committees on which the BMW Assembly is represented:
 - National Development Plan Monitoring Committee
 - PEACE III
 - Interreg IVA
 - Rural Development Programme
 - Human Capital Investment Programme (ESF)

4. Co-ordination of the Delivery of Public Services in the BMW Region

- Continue to support Lónra, the Regional Higher Education network in implementing their strategic plans;
- Promote investment in infrastructure, productive enterprise, services and innovation in the BMW region;
- Organise a high profile conference in the BMW Region in April 2009 on the following theme: “The National Spatial Strategy – Is it Delivering Balanced Regional Development?”. This will also ensure compliance with the EU

requirement of a major information activity highlighting the EU contribution to the Regional Operational Programme;

- Communicate the role of the BMW Regional Assembly and the needs of the BMW Region to Government Departments, Regional Bodies, Local Authorities and State Agencies. Where possible, address relevant conferences and workshops on the role and work of the Assembly;
- Examine, in consultation with the Western Development Commission, the scope for continued co-operation and co-ordination of activities;
- Continue formal links with the Association of Irish Regions, the Committee of the Regions and develop links with other EU regional networks; and
- Liaise with the region's representative in the Irish Regions Office (IRO) Brussels in co-operation with the Association of Irish Regions.

5. Policy and Research

- Facilitate the publication of the Gateway Development Index in early 2009;
- Prepare submission to the EU Commission in response to the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion;
- Prepare policy papers on significant regional issues. These papers will be considered by the relevant sub-committee and put before the Regional Assembly for adoption;
- Actively encourage the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines adopted by the Regional Authorities;
- Prepare submissions on behalf of the Assembly in response to public consultations by Government Departments and Agencies;
- Update the socio-economic profile of the BMW Region;
- Prepare submissions in advance of meetings with the Taoiseach, Ministers and senior Government officials; and
- Compose a BMW Region statistical bulletin to monitor emerging trends and the development of the region.

6. INTERREG Project Activities

6.1 INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area Programme

For the 2007 – 2013 programming period, the BMW Regional Assembly is the National Contact point and first level control authority (responsible for expenditure verification) for the Interreg IVB Atlantic Area Programme.

The BMW Regional Assembly will, during 2009:

- Participate in meetings of the Atlantic Area Steering Committee and Monitoring Committee;
- Promote the new Interreg IV programme and provide support to Irish project partners in developing trans-national projects;
- Undertake the first level control function by carrying out desk-based and on-site verification checks on expenditure declared by Irish programme participants;
- Liaise with the Programme Managing Authority based in Oporto, Portugal; and
- Consider invitations to participate as a partner in the Atlantic Area Programme.

6.2 INTERREG IVB Northern Periphery Programme

The Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013 will promote trans-national co-operation with Scottish, Nordic and Scandinavian countries. For the 2007 – 2013 programming period, the BMW Regional Assembly is the Regional Contact point and first level control authority (responsible for expenditure verification) on the Programme.

The BMW Regional Assembly will, during 2009:

- Host the Regional Advisory Group (RAG) for Ireland to consider proposals presented to the programme;
- Participate in Programme meetings including Monitoring and other programming committee meetings;
- Act as Regional Contact Point for the Programme in Ireland;
- Disseminate information on the programme in Ireland and provide information on programme priorities, eligible area, calls for proposals etc;
- Undertake the first level control function by carrying out desk-based and on-site verification checks on expenditure declared by Irish programme participants;
- Assist project partners in developing project ideas and identifying appropriate partners throughout the eligible territory; and
- Liaise closely with the Joint Technical Secretariat of the programme based in Copenhagen, Denmark.

6.3 INTERREG IVC Programme

The Interreg IVC Programme promotes public sector co-operation projects across the entire EU in order to exchange experiences and transfer of good practice.

During 2009 the BMW Assembly will:-

- Promote the Interreg IVC Programme to potential beneficiaries;
- Provide advice and assistance to applicants in the BMW Region;
- Carry out the first level of financial control (certification) for project partner expenditure in the BMW Region; and
- Participate, as appropriate, in Programme Monitoring and Steering Committee Meetings.

6.4 Atlant-KIS Programme

The aim of this transnational co-operation project is to develop and pilot tools to assess the development of knowledge-intensive business services in the Atlantic Area. The BMW Regional Assembly is a project partner. The activities under this programme will commence with a programme Steering Committee meeting in early 2009 at which the work schedule for the three year project will be agreed.

7. Innovative Actions (2006 – 2008)

The second two year programme of innovative actions 2006-08 will be completed in 2009. The programme which involves an investment of €1.8m consists of six pilot initiatives aimed at increasing the innovation absorptive capacity of firms and improving academic and industrial linkages in the BMW region. The pilots are:

- Food Technology Transfer Programme;
- Research and Intelligence Briefings;
- Business mentoring for Winners Programme;
- Innovation Management Training Programme;
- Research Vouchers Scheme; and
- Resourcing Innovation and Technology Transfer.

The BMW Regional Assembly will, during 2009:

- Finalise Programme extension request of six months with the European Commission in order to conclude outstanding programme issues;
- Complete Implementation of each of the pilot initiatives and progress the rollout of individual schemes;
- Report on a regular basis to a Regional Steering Committee which oversees progress on each of the pilot initiatives;

- Disseminate and communicate the results of the programme within the region and beyond;
- Liaise closely with project promoters and provide assistance and guidance where necessary;
- Process Grant Claim applications submitted by Project promoters;
- Facilitate a final audit of the programme by the ERDF FCU;
- Oversee the finalisation and publication of an independent evaluation of the programme in order to identify best practice and the potential for mainstreaming the actions, and
- Prepare a final report and claim for the European Commission and comply with all other written requests for information, as requested by the EU.

8. North-South Co-Operation

- Continue the activities of the North-South Committee of the Assembly in reviewing the North-South dimension of the Regional Operational Programme;
- Liaise with cross-border bodies and institutions including the Northern Ireland Assembly, North-South Ministerial Council, and other cross border bodies in relation to their activities;
- Continue the close links with the Special EU Programmes Body in relation to managing authority functions, financial management and major projects;
- Continue to participate on the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Monitoring Committees and other joint committees and working groups;
- Continue to participate on the Border Action (formerly ADM/CPA) Joint Management Committee of the PEACE Programme; and
- Compile Reports on the extent of North-South co-operation under the BMW Regional OP at the request of SEUPB.

9. Operational Issues

- Prepare and publish an Annual Report on the activities of the Regional Assembly in 2008;
- Implement the Official Languages Act 2003 as it relates to the Assembly;
- Update the work place Safety Statement and keep it under review;

- Provide staff induction and on-going training and specific training in relation to expenditure certification, website maintenance, freedom of information, IT and other areas that are necessary to staff training as indicated in the Training Needs Analysis 2007 – 2009;
- Continue close co-operation with the Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly on operational issues;
- Respond to Freedom of Information requests, as they arise, in accordance with the relevant legislation, and continue to participate in the FOI network;
- Continue to respond to requests for information on sources of funding;
- Support the joint sub-committees which were established in the light of the structure of the programmes under the NDP 2007 – 2013, Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013 and of the Regional Operational Programme 2007 – 2013;
- Support representatives on all Monitoring Committees;
- Continue to participate in the following committees:
 - National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee
 - National Rural Development Forum
 - Childcare Project Appraisal Committee
 - Rural Development Programme Monitoring Committee
 - Peace III Monitoring Committee
 - Interreg IV A Monitoring Committee
 - Lónra Regional Higher Education Network Management and Operational Committee
 - Interreg IVB (Atlantic Area) Programme Monitoring and Steering Committees
 - Interreg IVB (Northern Periphery) Programme Monitoring Committee
 - Freedom of Information Public Service Users Network
 - Local Government Management Services Board HR Committee
 - Interreg IVC Programme Monitoring Committee as appropriate
- Provide administrative back-up to the Regional Assembly, Operational Committee and the joint sub-committees during 2009;
- Facilitate delegations and study groups visiting the Assembly and the Region;
- Arrange the use of Assembly facilities by regional and other bodies;
- Prepare Financial Statements for 2008;
- Prepare Estimates for 2010;

- Act as Secretariat for the Association of Irish Regions and organise the AIR Annual Conference;
- Provide assistance to the BMW Committee of the Regions members as required;
- Continue to disseminate information to the Regional Authorities and their EU Operational Committees;
- Facilitate attendance at relevant conferences by Assembly members; and
- Participate in the EU Commission Open Days event October 2009.

PART THREE
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2009

Month	BMW Regional Assembly	North/South Co-Operation Committee	Joint Sub – Committees	Monitoring Committee
January	30 th January	30 th January		
February			13 th February	
March	6 th March (Joint BMW and S&E Meeting)			
April	24 th April	24 th April	3 rd April	Early April
May				
June				
July	17 th July (AGM)			
August				
September	4th September	4th September	25 th September	
October			23rd October	End of October
November	13 th November (Estimates)	13 th November		
December				

Meetings	BMW Regional Assembly
Meeting 1: January	Adoption of Programme of Work 2009 Overdraft Approval Review National Broadband Scheme Workshop
Meeting 2: March	BMW & S&E Joint Meeting
Meeting 3: April	Adoption of Accounts Adoption of Annual Report 2008 Progress Report on BMW Regional OP Address by NI Executive Minister Gerry Kelly
Meeting 4: July	AGM – Election of Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach Introduction/ Induction of new Assembly members
Meeting 5: September	Speaker: To be confirmed Adoption of Policy Papers
Meeting 6: November	Consideration of Estimates 2010 Review of Implementation of BMW Operational Programme Review Programme of Work

Meetings	Joint Sub-Committees
Quarter 1: February	Agree Sub-Committee Programme of Work 2009 Identification of specific policy issues Consideration of draft Regional Airports Policy Document
Quarter 2: April	Presentation by Implementing Bodies Progress Report on Regional Sub-Programmes Feedback from Monitoring Committee Meeting
Quarter 3: September	Presentation on Regional Sub-programme by Implementing Body Policy Formulation on relevant regional issues
Quarter 4: October	Progress Report on Regional Sub-programme Presentation on Regional Sub-programme by Implementing Body Policy formulation on relevant regional issues