



Border, Midland & Western
Regional Assembly
Investing in Your Future

BMW Regional Programme invests €63m in the Region

The progress in the implementation of the EU co-financed BMW Regional Operational Programme 2007-13 was reviewed at the third meeting of the Monitoring Committee for the Programme which took place in the BMW Regional Assembly Offices in Ballaghaderreen on May 19th.

Mr. Gerry Finn, Director of the BMW Regional Assembly, informed the Monitoring Committee that implementation had commenced on 13 measures under the new programme by the end of 2008 and that total expenditure of €63m had been reported by the Implementing Departments and Agencies. Mr. Finn welcomed the progress being made by the County Enterprise Boards under the micro-enterprise measure and he also highlighted the roll-out of the National Broadband Scheme which will bring the benefits of broadband availability to every county in the BMW region. In addition, the implementation of several Sustainable Energy Ireland renewable energy schemes has commenced and investment was increasing under the programme for research in third level institutions and in marine research in the region. Mr. Finn also reported that significant progress had been made on the N52 Tullamore Bypass and on the Portarlinton rail project. Work is also progressing on the two EU co-funded national parks in the region.

Arising from the current economic circumstances the Monitoring Committee approved a range of additional initiatives in order meet the financial targets of the programme and to ensure that there is no loss of structural funds to the region. These include provisions for the additional road projects, new railcars serving the region, ocean energy research and investment in strategic research initiatives in the third level sector in the region. These were seen as contributing to the economic development of the region.

In addition, Mr. Finn stated that it was intended to introduce an investment fund for the designated gateways and hubs in the BMW region to avail of the additional funds advanced by the EU Commission in light of the economic crisis. Local authorities will be invited to submit integrated development projects for their designated gateways or hubs which contribute to economic development.

The EU Commission delegation led by Mr. Jonathan Denness stated that the Commission the need for the proposed changes in the Operational Programme and pledged to co-operate with the Irish authorities to conclude these changes in a timely manner.

Mr. Finn informed the committee that the Operational Programme will continue to focus on 3 priority areas: Innovation, ICT and the Knowledge Economy; Environment and Renewable Energy; and Urban Development and Secondary Transport links and will invest over €500m in the region by 2013.

The Monitoring Committee plays a key role in reviewing the implementation of the measures included in the Regional Operational Programme. The Committee is comprised primarily of Government Departments and Agencies, Social Partners, and Regional Interests. The European Commission is represented as Observers on the Committee.

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