



*PROGRESS REPORT ON
THE BORDER, MIDLAND AND WESTERN REGIONAL
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME.*

SUMMARY

For The Period Ended
December, 2000



Local Infrastructure Priority

1. Introduction

The Local Infrastructure Priority (sub-programme) consists of nine measures as follows:

- Non-national Roads (co-financed)
- Rural Water (co-financed)
- Waste Management (co-financed)
- Urban and Village Renewal (co-financed)
- E-Commerce and Communications (co-financed)
- Regional Airports
- Seaports
- Culture, Recreation and Sports
- Technical Assistance (co-financed)

The overriding objective for the BMW Region is to reduce the impact of peripherality by sharpening the competitive position of the Region, enhancing its attractiveness as a place to work and live, promoting inward investment and developing indigenous potential. The Economic and Social Infrastructure Inter-regional Programme will contribute significantly to this objective by improving the linkages within the Region and from it to the East and the South and to the Ports and Airports which link Ireland to the EU and its other international markets. The Public Transport element of the Economic and Social Infrastructure OP will complement the investment in non-national roads network and contribute to improved modal split. The objectives of the Local Infrastructure Priority (Sub-Programme) in the BMW Region are to:

- complement and reinforce the impact of investment under the Economic and Social Infrastructure OP;
- contribute to the economic and social development of the Region;
- improve access within the Region to employment, training and social opportunities;
- counteract those factors which restrict the potential of the Region as a place to live, work and visit either for tourism or for business and
- support the retention of population in remote and rural communities.

2. Sub-programme Expenditure

2.1 Total Expenditure

B.M.W. Regional Operational Programme	Total Sub-programme spend	Total co-financed (CSF expend)	EU Structural Funds	National Public co-financed	Private co-financed	Total non-cofinanced	Public Non-cofinanced	Private Non-cofinanced
Local Infrastructure development sub-programme	C1	C3	C5	C10	C14	C24	C25	C29
OP Forecast 2000	251.87	74.35	36.63	13.0	24.72	177.52	173.41	4.11
Actual spend to end December 2000	188.27	38.76	29.05	9.61	0.1	149.50	145.73	3.77
Spend as a % of forecast	74.7%	52%	79%	74%	-	84%	84%	91%

2.2 Expenditure on Co-funded Measures

B.M.W. Regional Operational Programme	Total Sub-programme spend	Total co-financed (CSF expend)	EU Structural Funds	National Public co-financed	Private co-financed	Total non-cofinanced	Public Non-cofinanced	Private Non-cofinanced
Local infrastructure development sub-programme	C1	C3	C5	C10	C14	C24	C25	C29
OP Forecast 2000	229.15	74.35	36.63	13.0	34.72	154.8	150.85	3.95
Actual spend to end December 2000	149.59	37.25	27.94	9.31	-	112.34	112.34	-
Spend as a % of forecast	65%	50%	76%	72%	-	73%	75%	-

3. Progress to date

The Department of the Environment and Local Government is satisfied that output targets for the Non-national Roads and Rural Water Measures will at a minimum be achieved in 2000 and 2001. Due to delays in the adoption of waste management plans, the Waste Management measure has been delayed. No urban and village renewal schemes were approved in 2000. The first call for proposals under the E-Commerce and Communications Measure took place in 2000, for projects that will be funded over the next two years. The call for proposals for the Seaports Measure will take place in early 2001. A call for proposals from the six Regional airports will be launched in early 2001. Work has commenced on Inland Waterways, Habitat Protection and Heritage Conservation projects in the Culture, Recreation and Sports Measure.

3.1 Performance Indicators

Local Infrastructure development sub-programme	Output Indicator	Mid-term output target	Out-turn to date	Cumulative out-turn as % of mid-term target
Non-national Roads (Co-financed)	Kilometres of roads improved /maintained	384	110	28.6%
Non-national Roads restoration	Kms restored/improved	6000	2102	35%
	Kms improved/maintained	5,875	2150	36.5%
Rural Water	No. of water disinfection / treatment plants constructed /upgraded	125	Not available	
Regional Airports	Volume of passenger throughput	430,000 p.a.	318,489	74%
Heritage Conservation	Number of heritage sites improved	6	Work commenced on 7 sites in 2000	
Inland Waterways	Length of additional public moorings	1500m	906m	60%

4. Horizontal Issues

Environment

Non-national road projects likely to have a significant effect in the environment are subject to the comprehensive E.I.A. process. The implementation of source protection programmes under the Rural Water Measure will have a positive impact on the quality of surface water and waste- water collection and treatment systems will abate pollution. No significant progress made on the Waste Management Measure. The Urban and Village renewal Measure will have a significantly positive impact on the environment. The installation of advanced communications and E-Commerce infrastructure will have long-term benefits for the environment. All infrastructural works at ports will comply with national regulations on E.I.A. The airports measure will have minimal impact on the environment. The facilities funded under the Culture, Recreation and Sports Measure will have a positive impact on the environment.

Gender Equality

The Non-national Roads, Rural Water, Waste Management, Urban and Village Renewal, Seaports, and Regional Airports Measures are gender-neutral. The E-Commerce and Communications Measure will facilitate greater levels of home-working by women. The facilities provided under the Culture, Recreation and Sports Measure will as a matter of principle be provided on an equal access basis.

Poverty

Investments in local infrastructure, though not direct anti-poverty measures, improve the development potential in the Region, thus having a positive impact on poverty. These measures will lead to improvements in quality of life, will create employment opportunities and will create access to facilities for the socially disadvantaged.

Rural Development

Local infrastructure investments such as non-national roads, water services, waste management, E-Commerce and village renewal will all have a positive impact on rural development. The facilities provided at regional airports, seaports, inland waterways and national parks etc will also be of benefit to rural areas.

5. Information and Publicity

The need to comply with the publicity requirements has been formally notified to those involved in implementing and publicising the sub-measures, including EU Publicity Requirements in the case of E.U. co-financed measures. In the launches of the individual initiatives, the necessary acknowledgements were made to the N.D.P and, where appropriate, Structural Funds' contributions.

6. North/South Co-operation

The significant non-national roads grants available will be of particular benefit to the Border Counties and will make travel between and within this country easier. Block grant allocations to Border Counties will also improve these areas. North-South elements are eligible for supports under the E-Commerce and Communications Measure. The Inland Waterways investment programme is managed by Waterways Ireland, a North/South Implementation Body set up under the Good Friday Agreement.

7. Future Prospects

It is expected that the non-national roads grants allocation will be fully expended and that all targets will be met. Expenditure on the rural water measure will rise sharply over the next three years. The implementation of the waste management measure will be expedited in the Waste Management (Amendment) Bill, 2001. The Urban and Village Renewal Measure will be launched in March 2001. Future initiatives under the E-Commerce and Communications Measure will be developed after further consultation in 2001. Decisions in relation to the first call for proposals under the Regional Airports Measure will be made in mid-2001. The Sports Facilities sub-measure will not draw down significant funding pre 2003 subject to the finalisation of the National spatial strategy. All other sub-measures in the Culture, Recreation and Sports Measure are on target.

8. Proposed adjustments

Adjustments will be required in order to make up the underspend during 2000.

Local Enterprise Development Priority

1. Introduction

The Local Enterprise Development Priority (sub-programme) consists of five co-financed measures as follows:

- Tourism (co-financed)
- Micro-enterprises (co-financed)
- Regional Innovation Strategies (co-financed)
- Forestry (co-financed)
- Fishery Harbours Infrastructure, Aquaculture Development and Gaeltacht Islands (co-financed)

The overriding objective for the BMW Region is to reduce the impact of peripherality, enhance the competitive position of the Region and promote inward investment. More specifically, the objectives of the Local Enterprise Development Priority (Sub-Programme) are as follows: :

- Enhance the quality and availability of employment within the Region;
- Provide opportunities for alternative sources of income for the unemployed and under-employed, in particular, farmers and rural dwellers;
- Upgrade and improve the capabilities and capacity of indigenous firms and their personnel;
- Attract new inward investment and develop the base of non-indigenous industry in the Region and
- Build-up the marketing capabilities within firms to enable them to avail of opportunities in the global marketplace; and enhance research and technological development within the Region generally and enhance the contribution of the Region's natural resources to social and economic development particularly in the area of tourism, fisheries, forestry and aquaculture.

2. Sub-Programme Expenditure

2.1 Total Expenditure (all co-financed)

B.M.W. Regional Operational Programme	Total Sub-programme spend	Total co-financed (CSF expend)	EU Structural Funds	National Public co-financed	Private co-financed	Total non-cofinanced	Public Non-cofinanced	Private Non-cofinanced
Local Enterprise Development sub-programme	C1	C3	C5	C10	C14	C24	C25	C29
OP Forecast 2000	60.04	29.45	12.42	5.27	11.76	30.6	22.43	8.17
Actual spend to end December 2000	34.28	22.22	7.53	2.51	12.17	12.06	9.18	2.89
Spend as a % of forecast	57%	75%	60%	47%	103%	39%	41%	35%

3. Progress to date

Detailed Operational Guidelines for project promoters are being prepared at present by Bord Failte and the three schemes will be launched subject to state aids approval. Both the recreational angling and the marine tourism sub-measures will be launched shortly. Significant levels of job creation and training participation have been reported for each of the County/City Enterprise Boards in the B.M.W. Region. The call for proposals for the Regional Innovation Strategies Measure was launched in early 2001. Three of the four sub-measures in the Forestry Measure are currently operational and are on-target. Work has progressed on the fishery harbour improvement programme, there has been some progress on Gaeltacht/Island harbours, and the Aquaculture sub-measure was launched in early 2001.

3.1 Performance Indicators

Local Enterprise Development sub-programme		Mid-term output target	Out-turn to date	Cumulative out-turn as % of mid-term target
Micro-enterprise Measure	Number of enterprises supported/created	1000	527	52.7%
	Number of recipients of training total m/f	1500 645/855	2625 1314/1311	175%
Forestry Measure	No. of ha grant-aided	7,880	2,148	27.25%
	Ha improved	2,740	107	4%
	Ha reconstituted	3,000	2,041	68%
	Prop. of grant aid to sustainable harvesting machines	50%	2%	4%
	No. of forestry development projects funded	29	47	162%
	Extent of completion of inventory/planning System	85%	60%	70%
	Kms of forest roads constructed or upgraded	300km	110km	37%

4. Horizontal Issues

Environment

Tourism projects are generally not harmful to the environment and there is a specific sub-measure which aims to develop best practise in reconciling the needs of tourism and the protection of the environment. Projects which are harmful, or potentially harmful to the environment are ineligible for grant aid from County Enterprise Boards. Enterprises supported in regional incubation centres will not have an appreciable impact on the environment. There are now comprehensive guidelines and codes of practise in place which all forestry projects must comply with. Harbour infrastructure projects must comply with environmental regulations and there are strict requirements in relation to the co-financed aquaculture measure.

Gender Equality

County Enterprise Boards specifically target women to participate in their programmes. The selection criteria for Regional Innovation Strategies require applicant I.T.s to demonstrate how projects will impact on equality of opportunity. Financial assistance under the Forestry Measure is provided to all beneficiaries, regardless of gender, although the harvesting sector is currently male dominated. Projects funded under the Harbour Infrastructure/Aquaculture and Gaeltacht/Island Harbour Measure will have equally positive impacts for men and women.

Poverty

Tourism applications will be assessed to take account of poverty issues. The projected level of new job creation by the Enterprise Boards will assist in poverty alleviation. Incubation Centres at Regional I.T.s will support job creation. Assistance for forest improvement, supports for forest harvesting, forest roads and the development of the forestry sector will have a positive impact on viability, employment and poverty. Improved employment opportunities in coastal areas arising from the Harbour Infrastructure/Aquaculture and Gaeltacht/Island Harbour Measure will have a positive impact on poverty.

Rural Development

The majority of tourist attractions, in particular special interest pursuits will be located in rural areas. The projected level of new job creation by County Enterprise Boards will assist in rural development, particularly through the support of viable 'on-farm' enterprises. Firms located in Regional Incubation Centres will support developments in rural areas. Forestry is primarily a rural-based activity with direct benefits to rural areas. Projects supported under the Harbour Infrastructure/Aquaculture and Gaeltacht/Island Harbour Measure will have a positive impact on rural areas.

5. Information and Publicity

The need to comply with the publicity requirements has been formally notified to those involved in implementing and publicising the sub-measures, including EU Publicity Requirements in the case of E.U. co-financed measures. In the launches of the individual initiatives, the necessary acknowledgements were made to the N.D.P and, where appropriate, Structural Funds' contributions.

6. North/South Co-operation

Many of the Enterprise Boards in Border Counties are involved in north/south initiatives. Efforts will be made to network incubator management with equivalent groups in Northern Ireland. There is an opportunity for beneficiaries of the woodland development measure in the border region to develop cross-border initiatives and the People's Millennium Forest initiative under the Forestry Development Measure is a cross border project. Facilities at fishery harbours improved under the Fishery Harbour Infrastructure sub-measure are available to fishermen on both sides of the border.

7. Future Prospects

Detailed Operational Guidelines for project promoters are being prepared at present by Bord Failte and the three schemes will be launched subject to state aids approval. Both the recreational angling and the marine tourism sub-measures will be launched shortly. Job creation and enterprise supports by Enterprise Boards are in line with targets. The first round of incubation centres will be approved in June 2001. New initiatives under the forestry measure will be launched in 2001 and a revised grant scheme for environmentally sustainable harvesting systems. The 2001 fishery harbour programme will be announced shortly and the first round of applications for the aquaculture measure have been received.

8. Proposed Adjustments

Adjustments will be required in order to make up the underspend during 2000.

Agriculture and Rural Development Priority (Sub-programme)

1. Introduction

The Agriculture and Rural Development Priority (sub-programme) consists of four measures relating to:

- General Structural Improvement (co-financed)
- Alternative Enterprises
- General Rural Development (co-financed)
- Services for Agriculture and Rural Development

The overall objectives for agriculture and rural development as set out in the National Development Plan are as follows:

- to ensure that primary agriculture becomes more competitive and market oriented;
- to foster environmentally sustainable systems of production;
- to provide other sources of income for farmers through diversification both on and off farm and
- to promote rural development generally by harnessing voluntary and community effort at local level.

2. Sub-programme expenditure

2.1 Total Expenditure

B.M.W. Regional Operational Programme	Total Sub-programme spend	Total co-financed (CSF expend)	EU Structural Funds	National Public co-financed	Private co-financed	Total non-cofinanced	Public Non-cofinanced	Private Non-cofinanced
Agriculture and rural development sub-programme	C1	C3	C5	C10	C14	C24	C25	C29
OP Forecast 2000	86.092	45.645	14.6	4.867	26.178	40.447	23.717	16.730
Actual spend to end December 2000	5.468	0	0	0	0	5.468	5.468	0
Spend as a % of forecast	6.35%	-	-	-	-	13.5%	23%	-

2.2 Expenditure on Co-funded Measures

B.M.W. Regional Operational Programme	Total Sub-programme spend	Total co-financed (CSF expend)	EU Structural Funds	National Public co-financed	Private co-financed	Total non-cofinanced	Public Non-cofinanced	Private Non-cofinanced
Agriculture and rural development sub-programme	C1	C3	C5	C10	C14	C24	C25	C29
OP Forecast 2000	72.271	45.645	14.6	4.867	26.178	26.626	15.208	11.418
Actual spend to end December 2000	0.38	0	0	0	0	0.38	0.38	0
Spend as a % of forecast	0.5%	-	-	-	-	1.4%	2.5%	-

3. Progress to date

In the absence of the necessary state aid approval from the EU Commission neither the General Structural Improvement nor the Alternative Enterprise Measures commenced in 2000. Under the General Rural Development Measure, funding has been provided on an interim basis to Local Action Groups funded under LEADER II, and the Western Investment Fund commenced. Under the Services to Agriculture and Rural Development Measure, Teagasc has put the Rural Viability Service in place.

3.1 Performance Indicators

Agriculture and rural development sub-programme		Mid-term output target	Out-turn to date	Cumulative out-turn as % of mid-term target
Western Investment Fund	Supported Projects contributing to the development of the B.M.W. Region	6	2	33%
Teagasc Advisory Service	Number of ongoing users of the Rural Viability Service – Total Male/Female	16,266 13,505 / 2,761	17,635 15,230 / 2,405	108% 112% / 87%

4. Horizontal Issues

(This section reflects Measures that were in operation in 2000 only.)

Environment

Under the Western Investment Fund it is a requirement of all investments that investees comply with all statutory regulations concerning the environment. Environmental issues are central to the Teagasc Farm Viability Service

Gender Equality

All investments to date under the Western Investment Fund have had male and female promoters. The Teagasc Farm Viability Service involves the full farm family in its programmes. Female participation will be facilitated.

Poverty

The Western Investment Fund seeks both a financial and a socio-economic return on the investments it makes and this includes improving the quality of life for all citizens of the Western Region. The Teagasc Farm Viability service and its programmes are focussed on the needs of smaller farmers and their families. No barriers are put in the way of low income households participating.

Rural Development

All investments to date under the Western Investment fund have been in rural areas. The programmes and services being provided by Teagasc are strongly supportive of rural development.

5. Information and Publicity

The need to comply with the publicity requirements has been formally notified to those involved in implementing and publicising the sub-measures, including EU Publicity Requirements in the case of E.U. co-financed measures. In the launches of the individual initiatives, the necessary acknowledgements were made to the N.D.P and, where appropriate, Structural Funds' contributions. A booklet will be published shortly summarising all of the initiatives in the agriculture and rural development areas.

6. North/South Co-operation

Discussions have been initiated with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland on a number of potential initiatives. No agreement has been reached yet on definite areas of North/South co-operation.

7. Future Prospects

With the state aids issue resolved, implementation of the General Structural Improvement and Alternative Enterprise Measures can now proceed and a good level of uptake is anticipated. A lot of interest has also been shown in the General Rural Development Measure. A continued high level of demand for the farm advisory services is expected

8. Proposed Adjustments

Adjustments will be required in order to make up the underspend during 2000.

Social Inclusion and Childcare Priority

1. Introduction

The Social Inclusion and Childcare Priority (sub-programme) consists of six measures as follows:

- **Childcare (co-financed)**
- Equality
- Community Development and Family Support
- Crime Prevention
- Youth Services
- Local Development

The objectives of the Social Inclusion and Childcare Priority (Sub-Programme) in the BMW Regional OP are as follows:

- alleviate poverty and social disadvantage in both urban and rural areas;
- integrate/reintegrate the socially excluded into the community and the labour force;
- reduce long-term unemployment and support the achievement of the NAPs targets;
- support the development of vibrant and sustainable families and communities;
- tackle the causes of social disadvantage amongst young people and communities at risk;
- promote equality and in particular facilitate greater participation of women in the workplace and business and, more broadly, the achievement of equal opportunities generally; and
- reduce the incidence of crime and re-offending.

2. Sub-Programme Expenditure

2.1 Total Expenditure

B.M.W. Regional Operational Programme	Total Sub-programme spend	Total co-financed (CSF expend)	EU Structural Funds	National Public co-financed	Private co-financed	Total non-cofinanced	Public Non-cofinanced	Private Non-cofinanced
Social Inclusion and Childcare sub-programme	C1	C3	C5	C10	C14	C24	C25	C29
OP Forecast 2000	30.67	3.68	2.78	0.9	0	26.99	26.03	0.96
Actual spend to end December 2000	9.24	0.51	0.38	0.13	0	8.78	8.73	.05
Spend as a % of forecast	30%	14%	9%	14%	-	33%	34%	5%

2.2 Expenditure on Co-funded Measures

B.M.W. Regional Operational Programme	Total Sub-programme spend	Total co-financed (CSF expend)	EU Structural Funds	National Public co-financed	Private co-financed	Total non-cofinanced	Public Non-cofinanced	Private Non-cofinanced
Social Inclusion and Childcare sub-programme	C1	C3	C5	C10	C14	C24	C25	C29
OP Forecast 2000	5.84	3.68	2.78	0.9	0	2.16	1.2	0.96
Actual spend to end December 2000	0.51	0.51	0.38	0.13	0	0	0	0
Spend as a % of forecast	8.7%	13.9%	13.7%	0.14	-	-	-	-

3. Progress to date

A total of 51 capital childcare projects have been approved in the B.M.W. Region, 43 staffing projects and 7 national voluntary childcare organisations. Applications have been received for the women's equality measure and are currently being assessed. There is ongoing work taking place under the Community Development Programme on existing and new target areas. The Prisons Service Training and Development sub-measure is being extended throughout the country in 2001 and the Probation and Welfare Service was extended into further areas. The Youth Services Grant Scheme and the Youth Information Centre Scheme continued, the Grant Scheme for Special Projects to assist disadvantaged youth was extended, new projects under the Young People's facilities and Services fund were approved and there was satisfactory progress under the Garda Youth Diversion sub-measure. Financial allocations have been made to each designated Partnership, Community Group and Territorial Employment Pact.

3.1 Performance Indicators

Social Inclusion and Childcare Priority	Output Indicator	Mid-term output target	Out-turn to date	Cumulative out-turn as % of mid-term target
Childcare	No. of new childcare facilities established	120	23	19%
	No. of childcare facilities upgraded	180	28	15.5%
	No. of childcare workers supported	450	148	33%
	No. of childcare organisations supported	9	7	77%
Equality	No. of equality proposals received	-	126 (BMW)	-
Youth Services	No. of Young People's facilities projects	1	1	100%
	No. of Garda Youth Projects	9	9	100%

4. Horizontal Issues

Environment

Childcare Capital Grant applications are subject to the applicant receiving full planning permission for the work concerned. The women's equality measure has no environmental impact. The Community Development and Family Services Measure may contribute to environmental enhancement. The Crime Prevention Measure is generally environment-neutral. Youth initiatives generally aim to increase young people's awareness of the environment. All plans supported under the Local Development Measure had to demonstrate environment proofing.

Gender Equality

Supports provided under the childcare measure facilitate participation in the workforce and training and education opportunities. The Equality for Women measure is designed to address gender equality issues. The Community Development and Family Services Measure is widely perceived as having a positive impact on gender equality. The Crime Prevention Measure targets both male and female offenders. Youth Service Measures have a positive gender impact. All plans supported under the Local Development Measure had to demonstrate gender/equality proofing.

Poverty

In all cases the Measures supported under the Social Inclusion and Childcare Priority (Sub-Programme) have a positive impact on the socio-economic development of disadvantaged areas and the provision of supports to specific groups.

Rural Development

The provision of childcare facilities supports development in rural areas. Women's equality proposals will be supported in rural areas. Some rural areas have been targeted for new C.D.P. Projects. Crime Prevention Measures will apply equally to both urban and rural areas. Youth Services Measures support youth development activities and facilities throughout the country. All plans supported under the Local Development Measure had to demonstrate rural proofing.

5. Information and Publicity

The need to comply with the publicity requirements has been formally notified to those involved in implementing and publicising the sub-measures, including EU Publicity Requirements in the case of E.U. co-financed measures. In the launches of the individual initiatives, the necessary acknowledgements were made to the N.D.P and, where appropriate, Structural Funds' contributions.

6. North/South Co-operation

Cross-border women's networks have been supported under the Childcare Measure. Some potential cross-border initiatives under the Community Development Measure have been identified. Many of the partnerships supported under the Local Development Programme are involved in cross-border initiatives.

7. Future Prospects

It is envisaged that expenditure under the childcare measure will rise significantly in 2001. A decision on applications under the Women's Equality Measure will be made in April 2001. The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs considers its targets for the Community Development and Family Support Measure to be achievable. The Crime Prevention, Youth Services and Local Development Measures are all progressing broadly in line with expectations.

8. Proposed Adjustments

Adjustments will be required in order to make up the underspend during 2000.

