**Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme: 2016 Annual Implementation Report**

**Annex 1: Citizen’s Summary**

**Overview**

The €100m Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme is funded through the European Union’s European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Programme is supporting projects with partners based in both Ireland and Wales, focussing on activities across three key priority areas which will go some way to providing solutions to common challenges. The Irish Sea is a central focus for the Programme given the maritime nature of the border between Ireland and Wales and the significant benefits which can be derived from this important resource.

This Programme is split into four priority areas:

Priority 1: Cross-Border Innovation

Priority 2: Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change

Priority 3: Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage

Priority 4: Technical Assistance

This is the second Annual Implementation Report for the Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme, covering the reporting year of 2016.

**Key achievements in 2016**

* By the end of 2016, €20.7m of EU funds invested in four projects, driving a total investment of €26.2m.
* The Joint Secretariat worked met with key stakeholders to develop initial ideas into potential projects and attended events in both Wales and Ireland to raise the profile of the Programme and to encourage engagement. This has resulted in a strong pipeline of proposals to date.
* A new Ireland Wales website [http://irelandwales.eu](http://irelandwales.eu/) was launched in May 2016. It aims to further raise the profile and increase interest in the Ireland Wales Cooperation Programme.

**Financial progress**

The following chart shows, at Priority level, the total allocation of EU funds, how much has been invested in projects, and how much has been spent by projects.

**Chart 1: EU Funds: Budget and Approved**

**Projects approved up to the end of 2016**

Descriptions of projects approved within each Programme Priority and case studies are available on the Welsh Government website at [www.irelandwales.eu](file:///\\hba76\ERDMSCache\mercerj\DefaultHome\Objects\www.irelandwales.eu)

**Priority 1: Cross-Border Innovation**

By the end of 2016, 39% of this Priority’s allocation had been invested in two projects. These were 'Dwr-Uisce', a proposal for integrated low carbon and smart energy solution for the water sector, and 'CALIN', a nano-health technology project. A further project - 'pISCES' - had been approved by the Programme Steering Committee but not formally approved.

A further eleven proposals were in the pipeline. Not all the operations in the pipeline may necessarily progress to the business planning stages, or be taken through to funding decision. No significant problems were identified whilst implementing the Priority during 2016.

**Priority 2: Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change**

By the end of 2016, 15% of this Priority’s allocation had been invested. This was in the 'CHERISH' project, a proposal to gather evidence and develop knowledge and indicators for assessing threats and opportunities posed by the impact of climate change upon the cultural and maritime heritage of small islands and reefs in the Irish Sea. Two further projects had been approved by the Programme Steering Committee but not formally approved.

A further five proposals were in the pipeline. Not all the operations in the pipeline may necessarily progress to the business planning stages, or be taken through to funding decision. No significant problems were identified whilst implementing the Priority during 2016.

**Priority 3: Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage**

By the end of 2016, although no projects had been approved interest from stakeholders in developing potential projects had grown, particularly in the latter part of 2016, with six proposals in the pipeline.

Not all the operations in the pipeline may necessarily progress to the business planning stages, or be taken through to funding decision. No significant problems were identified whilst implementing the Priority during 2016, however the Managing Authority, Joint Secretariat and operational partners in Ireland recognised that progress with developing proposals in this Priority was slower than was the case in the other two Operational Priorities which had resulted in a lower rate of implementation. The PMC also discussed this issue during 2016 and noted that the nature of this Priority and historically, the type of organisations which traditionally engaged in the type of activity was a key reason for the slower pace in developing ideas. The Managing Authority took steps early in 2017 to set up a specific call for operations.

**Priority 4: Technical Assistance**

By the end of 2016, 97% of this Priority’s allocation available had been invested. This was in a project to help WEFO and the Southern Regional Assembly successfully manage programme implementation.

No significant problems were identified whilst implementing the Priority during 2016.