

**Minutes of the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and
Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020
3rd Monitoring Committee meeting
Friday 11th November 2016
Clock Tower, Marlborough Street, DES.**

CHAIRPERSON: Ms. Mary McGarry, Dept. of Education and Skills

Attendance: See Appendix 1 – Attendance List

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOMING COMMENTS

The Chairperson welcomed the members of the Committee to the third meeting of the PEIL PMC. She welcomed in particular Mr Nicolas Gibert-Morin, DG Employment, European Commission, on his first visit to Ireland for the PEIL PMC, as well as Mr Marc Vermyle, also from the European Commission.

1. AGENDA

The Chairperson presented the agenda for adoption. No additional items for inclusion were proposed and the Agenda was adopted.

2. MINUTES OF 2nd PMC

The Chairperson presented the minutes of the second Monitoring Committee meeting for adoption. A number of textual amendments had already been received and, on that basis, the minutes were adopted.

3. EU Developments

The Chairperson updated the Committee on the latest developments at EU and National level.

1) YEI

With regard to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee and the YEI, in the EU as a whole nine million young people had taken up offers under the YG and 1.4 million young people have been directly supported by the YEI. YEI Implementation was relatively slow to start across Europe, but was speeding up. In all, seven Member States, including Ireland, have returned the pre-financing received from the Commission. In Ireland's case, re-imburement was required as the MA was unable to make the required interim payment claim by the deadline of May 2016. This was due to delays in the implementation of the required IT system, and has not resulted in either the loss of funding to Ireland or delays in the implementation of the relevant activities.

The total allocation for the YEI under Priority 4 in PEIL is €204m, and covers BTWEA, JobsPlus, JobBridge, Tus, Youthreach, Momentum and SICAP. While all of the activities have commenced (and in certain cases also ceased), only SICAP has, to date, achieved its targets.

As a result of persistent high levels of youth unemployment across the EU and encouraging initial results, the Commission has now proposed additional funding of €1bn for YEI for the years 2017-20, bringing the total funding up to €8bn. The eligibility of regions for this additional funding, and the breakdown of resources will be determined on the basis of the latest available annual data, which is for the year 2015. Accordingly, six Member States, including Ireland, won't qualify for the additional funding as their youth unemployment rates have fallen below the threshold.

2) Designation

The European Commission has strongly urged Member States to complete the designation of the Managing and Certifying Authorities and to accelerate the implementation of ESI Funds.

3) Additional Funding

An additional allocation of €3.6m in current prices has been proposed for Ireland under new legislation to be finalised in the near future. This may result in an increased allocation for ESF and the Committee will be kept informed.

4) Omnibus Regulation

Under the new proposed Financial Regulation, the focus was on simplification. There were also proposals for changes to reduce administrative burden under the ESF Funds, including enhancing the Simplified Cost Options (SCOs), to streamline the financial instruments and to increase flexibility/synergies.

5) Europe 2020 Targets and Ireland's NRP Targets

The EU target for Ireland in relation to the percentage of the population (20-64) in employment is 69-71%. By 2015, Ireland had reached 68.7%. Ireland's target for the percentage of early school leavers is 8%. Currently the early school leaving target in Ireland stands at 6.9%. In relation to the percentage of 30-34 year olds completing tertiary education, the target is 60% and by 2015, Ireland stood at 52.3%.

6) Employment and Unemployment rates

- The employment Rate for 15-64 year olds was 64.7% at the end of Q2 2016, an increase of 2.9% over the same period in 2015.
- The unemployment rate at the end of Q2 2016 had reached 8.4%, the rate was 9.8% for the same quarter in 2015.
- 51% of all unemployed persons were long-term unemployed (Q 2, 2016). The corresponding percentage for Q2, 2015 was 56.1%, a drop of 5.1%.
- The unemployment rate stood at 7.7% Oct 2016 (9.2% Oct 2015) and the Youth unemployment rate was 15.1% Oct 2016 (20.9% Oct 2015).

Mr Nicolas Gibert-Morin, Head of Unit, DG Employment, Inclusion and Social Affairs, concurred with the Chairperson's outline of the latest developments at EU level. He summarised the YEI and youth employment situation in general in the EU and the progress made since September 2013, but he maintained that youth unemployment was still very high. He referred to a package of measures to be introduced on the 7th December in relation to Apprenticeships and the EU Solidarity Corps (a new initiative proposed by the Commission in Sept 2016 for young people to volunteer with NGOs in times of crisis). He also referred to the new EU Semester Cycle which will commence on the 16th November 2016.

He also referred to the Country Report for Ireland and the Country Specific Recommendations; the Commission will commence a dialogue on the Reports to agree new recommendations, which will be adopted in February 2017.

4. Developments in Simplified Cost Options (SCOs)

Mr. Tom Whelan, Certifying Authority, gave an overview on the latest developments in Simplified Cost Options (SCOs). The purpose of SCOs was to reduce the administrative burden, resulting in less errors and an increased focus on outputs and results. The European Court of Auditors (ECA) is encouraging the Commission and the Member States to make greater use of SCOs. With that objective, the Commission wanted to see 50% of the ESF Activities using SCOs by 2017.

In September 2016, the Commission published a Proposal to amend Regulations arising from the Midterm Multi-financial Framework (MFF) review carried out. While these legislative proposals are primarily concerned with the overall Budget mechanics of the EU, the Commission has taken the opportunity to bring forward a number of proposals for amendments to the CPR and a number of Fund Specific Regulations, including amendments in the YEI funding and increased SCOs areas.

Under the HCIOP 2007-2013, only one Activity used the Commission's SCO, which was equivalent to 1.2% of the expenditure in the Programme. In relation to PEIL 2014-2020 over half of the Activities (12 out of 23) plan to use SCOs and this was equivalent to €167m (15%) of the total expenditure allocated to the Programme. The percentage of overall expenditure was low due to the use of the staff costs plus flat rate (15% or 40%). The ESF SCO option, Article 14.2 of ESF Reg. 1304/2013, was direct staff costs plus 40% for all other costs. The Commission favoured another option under Article 14.1 of the ESF Reg. 1304/2013 based on standard scales of unit costs, which required a Delegated Act to be passed first, which must be submitted to the Council and Parliament and no objections arising before the Delegated Act is entered in force. The Commission also plans to introduce EU-level Unit Costs for the Member States.

This would provide legal certainty (under the previous Regs for the 2007-13 round, applications for the SCO option became a very cumbersome and drawn out process requiring supporting data from a number of the previous years to make the case for an SCO). The SCO proposals in the future `Omnibus Regulation` include the removal of the upper limit of €100,000 for Lump sums, extend ESF-only SCOs to all the ESIF funds, and the inclusion of allowances for participants as an eligible cost when using the direct staff costs plus 40%..

The next steps in relation to the introduction of the SCOs included:

- Amend 2014-2020 ESF Eligibility Rules Circular 1/2015 & AIPs - to allow existing & future SCO developments to be available for PEIL Activities

- Conclude Article 14.1 SCO examination of two PEIL Activities (ETB Training for the Unemployed and SICAP) and, where appropriate, seek EU level Delegated Act (i.e. MS-specific legal certainty)
- Review of SCOs for PEIL Activities based on developments & IE experiences gained during two previous Article 14.1 processes
- Omnibus Regulations with increased SCOs are adopted by EU bodies

There were a number of questions from the Members in relation to the proposals for revisions to the SCOs, on the removal of the upper limit of €100,000 for lump sums, not achieving the targets, suitability of hybrid mix of projects/courses, length of courses (very short or up to six months), lack of control over the outputs achieved due to the number of bodies involved in certification and different levels of certification (minor awards/ certificates, certificates from QQI), certificates issued directly to the participant (Activity not aware of this), etc.

Mr David Salter, Audit Authority, commented on the effect the introduction of output based results and SCOs would have on the work of his Unit. Previously, the focus was primarily on financial checks; however, the proposed changes would put the emphasis on outcomes and outputs, taking them away from the financial checks.

Mr Nicolas Gibert-Morin, DG Employment, Inclusion and Social Affairs, commended the level of discussion on the SCOs. For clarity, he pointed out that there was no single EU-level SCO rate being proposed, rather single Delegated Act prepared by the Commission with separate SCOs unit rates for each MSs by certain types of education programmes. At EU-level, the Commission was considering a simplification of technical assistance, e.g. based on absorption under the 2007-2013 programme. In relation to Article 14.1, the Commission planned to have a Delegated Act issued by mid-2017. Article 14.1 does not prevent Ireland from having a suitable version for Ireland's needs.

5. Evaluation Plan for PEIL 2014-2020

Mr Hugh Geoghegan, ESF Managing Authority, introduced the revised Evaluation Plan which also included at Annex V, the proposed Response Paper on the completed evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) implementation in Ireland. The Plan has been updated as a result of comments received from the European Commission. In addition, the updated plan now incorporates a table on pages 16-18 setting out research activities which are of relevance to the implementation of the overall PEIL Operational Programme.

The Managing Authority intended to update the Plan at each Monitoring Committee meeting and he requested that the ESFMA be informed, on an ongoing basis, of any other relevant research activities which would be of interest to the Committee. The ESFMA would also publish completed research in a new "Evaluations" section on the ESF website, to be created shortly. A Steering Group would also be set up to oversee the implementation of the Evaluation Plan in the coming weeks, and members of the Committee should let the ESFMA know if they are interested in being part of this Group. The ESFMA is open to discussing proposals for new and relevant research activities with bodies involved in the implementation of the PEIL OP, with a view to those activities being supported through ESF Technical Assistance funding. The ESFMA is co-funding a SICAP evaluation/research on NEETs (under 25s not in Employment, Education or Training) in early 2017.

Response to the YEI Impact Evaluation

Annex V contained the ESFMA's Response to the YEI Evaluation. The main findings of the Evaluation (some of the Activities only commenced in 2015) were that the approach taken was an important aspect in a mostly positive implementation for the YEI and there was some early evidence that the programmes were making a collective contribution to the objectives of YEI.

There are six main recommendations contained in the Report. Recommendations 1 and 2 relate to D/Social Protection and have been addressed by that Department. Recommendation 3 refers to JobBridge, but is no longer of relevance as that activity has now ceased new enrolments. Recommendation 4 proposed a research programme on NEETS; in that regard, research is being commissioned by SICAP on young NEETs and it was being supported by the ESFMA under Technical Assistance. Recommendation 5 has been brought to the attention of the relevant bodies. Recommendation 6, which relates to measuring the impact of softer outcomes for 'hard to reach' groups that were more removed from the labour market, will be further considered in the context of the Mid-Term Evaluation.

Mid-Term Evaluation

Mr Geoghegan informed the Committee that the Mid-Term Evaluation for PEIL would be carried out before the end of 2017. The ESFMA was in the early stages of planning the evaluation, which would examine whether the assumptions underpinning the Programme were still relevant. The evaluation would also look at the integration of the horizontal principles into the Programme. A Steering Group would be established for the evaluation and the ESFMA would welcome any comments or proposals for the evaluation.

The Committee was reminded that the ESFMA was seeking details of any other evaluations taking place or planned that were relevant to the OP. The revised Evaluation Plan would be circulated to the Members for any further comments and their approval for the document in the next two weeks. Mr Gerard Gasparro, SOLAS, informed the Committee that there was a Youthreach Evaluation planned and a VTOS Evaluation.

6. Progress on Implementation and the Financial Summary

Mr Hugh Geoghegan, ESF Managing Authority, introduced the Financial Progress Report to the Committee and referred to the various tables and figures set out in the Report as follows –

- Table 1, outlining the allocations of the Fund for the term of the Programme broken down by ESF (€542m), Exchequer (€542m), YEI (€68.145m) with the overall programme allocation totalling €1.15bn.
- Figure 1, showing the overall Regional balance for PEIL for 2014-2020 as 39% for the BMW Region and 61% for the Southern and Eastern Regions, although it was noted that a regional split is no longer required for the purpose of reporting to the European Commission. The Committee was also reminded that expenditure for a number of Activities in the BMW region for the years 2014 and 2015 was retained for the HCIOP to meet the shortfall of expenditure required in that Region under that Programme
- Figure 2, showing the breakdown of the allocation by Priority.
- Table 2, showing allocations by activity.

- Table 3, outlining the Targets and Milestones for each of the main Priorities within the Programme, which are of particular relevance to the Performance Reserve, information on which is set out on page 5 of the Report. It was noted that a review of the Milestones was planned as part of the Mid-Term Evaluation in 2017
- Table 4, outlining the current status of activities of the activities under PEIL. The Committee was informed that a number of the Activities have not yet commenced while one Activity (Social Inclusion of Prisoners/ex-offenders) had been withdrawn from the Programme by DJE.
- Table 5, showing the financial allocations by Priority for the years 2014 to 2016 versus the total forecast expenditure by Priority for the same period. The Committee's attention was drawn to the fact that forecast expenditure exceeds the allocation for period, although the figures are provisional for now. The Committee was informed that it is the ESF MA's intention to submit a claim to the Commission in 2017 and this would firm up a lot of the expenditure figures provided.
- Table 6, showing a more detailed breakdown of allocations and forecast expenditure by Activity. The allocation for the Social Inclusion of Prisoners/Ex-offenders Activity will be re-profiled to the GYDP Activity, with the agreement of the PMC.

Ms Bríd O'Brien, INOU, enquired why there were no 2 year part-time courses available under ICT Conversion Courses for the unemployed as flexibility is particularly needed in a programme supporting the unemployed to get back to the labour market. The reduction in the numbers of the unemployed was good news, but there were people on the margins who were no better off now.

Ms Clodagh McDonnell, DHPCLG and SICAP, referred to the numbers of young people in unsustainable jobs and minimum wage jobs. While there was a lot of quantitative data available, there was a need for more qualitative data, as issues for youth still prevailed.

The Chairperson informed the Members that new proposals had been received in relation to Springboard and the ICT Skills Conversion Courses. The funding already allocated to both activities related to the years 2014-2016 only. The new proposals are currently being considered by the ESF MA. The courses are being expanded to include part-time courses as well.

Mr Tim Maverley, DJE, provided an update on the current position of the Activities for the Department of Justice and Equality. The Activity for the Integration of Migrants (ESF 2.7) and the Gender Equality Activity (ESF 2.9) had both launched calls for proposals in September and the closing date was the 10th November. The Activities are expected to commence in Qtr 1/Qtr 2 of 2017. The activities GYDP, Young Persons Probation and Tus Nua all commenced in 2015. These three Activities supported up to 5,000 participants. The Activity for the Social Inclusion of Prisoners/ex-offenders (ESF 2.5) is not going ahead under PEIL.

Mr Stewart Roche, HEA, in relation to Springboard and the ICT Skills Conversion Courses, informed the Committee that Publicity Roadshows were held in Dublin and Cork during the summer promoting the Activities' courses. The ESF Managing Authority had attended both events. Under the Third Level Access Activity, a training video for students with disabilities was produced to provide details of how supports could be accessed.

Mr. David Waters, DSP, stated that the Disability Activity had not commenced as yet. A working group was set up to examine the evaluation report of the former DACT projects and it was proposed to develop the following three projects:

- Project A will be a pre-activation and training programme, whose objective would be the provision of a range of “pre-activation” projects run by community groups.
- Project B will be a toolkit for workplace psychological health that would assist employers to address the discrimination and misconceptions faced by many workers living with mental health conditions at their workplace.
- Project C relates to the development of “centres of excellence” where people with disabilities would be provided with a formal service coordination or case management support service to assist them to progress into employment or other appropriate services.

With regard to timing, Project A will be proceeded with in the New Year, and for Projects B and C preparatory work on RFTs would take place in Q4 2016, an RFT will be issued in Q1 2017, contracts finalised in Q2 2017 and implementation commencing in Q3 2017.

Ms Clodagh McDonnell, DHPCLG, gave an update on the current position of SICAP. She informed the Committee that research had been commissioned by Pobal on NEETs and youth and on the outcomes so far. She stated that the next iteration of SICAP was planned for 2018. In relation to the area of prisoners/ex-offenders, addiction, etc. SICAP could look at providing supports to this area too. SICAP focussed primarily on areas of disadvantage. For instance, Donegal had more access to SICAP, but more money was spent on participants in Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown. A Conference on SICAP was held recently in Dublin, which was attended by the ESFMA.

7. Overview of Third Level Access Activity

Ms Orla Christle, Head of Access Policy (acting) HEA, introduced her presentation on the Third Level Access Activity, which is comprised of two separate funding streams (1) the Student Assistance Fund (SAF) and (2) the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD). Both funds have been the subject of recent reviews. The report of the review of the SAF was published in September 2016. The review of the FSD commenced in June 2016 and was currently on-going and the report was expected to be delivered to the HEA and DES in 2017, with publication of the report to follow later in the year. The presentation by Ms Christle can be found on the ESF website at:

<http://www.esf.ie/en/Programmes/ESF-Programme-for-Employability-Inclusion-and-Learning-PEIL-2014-2020/Monitoring-Committee/PEIL-Monitoring-Committee-Meetings/PEIL-2014-2020-Monitoring-Committee-Meeting-11-November-2016/>

The Report on the SAF can be found on the HEA website at:

<http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/safreport.pdf>

8. Overview of IYJS Activities

Mr Patrick Murray, Irish Youth Justice Service, DJE, gave a presentation on the activities of the Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS). The primary responsibility of the IYJS is to improve the delivery of youth

justice services and reduce youth offending, through diversion and rehabilitation programmes involving community-based organisation and the promotion of initiatives to deal with young people who offend or are at risk of offending. The purpose of youth crime intervention work is to engage young people in a process of learning and development that enables them to make positive lifestyle choices. The youth justice system through its community based projects aims to ensure that early interventions are applied in relation to those most at risk of engaging in offending behaviour and links with other service providers in supporting pro-social messages to young people. There are 106 GYDPs located across the country. See full presentation on the ESF website at:

<http://www.esf.ie/en/Programmes/ESF-Programme-for-Employability-Inclusion-and-Learning-PEIL-2014-2020/Monitoring-Committee/PEIL-Monitoring-Committee-Meetings/PEIL-2014-2020-Monitoring-Committee-Meeting-11-November-2016/>

9. 2014-2020 ESIF-IT System Ecohesion

Ms Anne Marie Caulfield, Dept of Public Expenditure and Reform, introduced her presentation on ecohesion and the e-cohesion project for the 2014-2020 Operational Programmes. She outlined the reasons for the establishment of the electronic data exchange system, i.e. required by the Regulations governing the 2014-2020 funds, (EU Regulation 1303/2013, Article 122), for the exchange of information between the beneficiaries, the intermediate bodies, the managing and certifying authorities, the audit authority. The system must also store data in a computerised format on each operation necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit, including data on individual participants in operations (for the ESF). She summarised the progress of the project so far and the timeline for the individual stages. See full presentation on the ESF website at: <http://www.esf.ie/en/Programmes/ESF-Programme-for-Employability-Inclusion-and-Learning-PEIL-2014-2020/Monitoring-Committee/PEIL-Monitoring-Committee-Meetings/PEIL-2014-2020-Monitoring-Committee-Meeting-11-November-2016/>

10. Designation update

Mr Hugh Geoghegan, ESF Managing Authority, outlined the requirements for compliance with designation under Regulation 1303/2013 (Articles 123 and 124) which stipulates that “the MA and CA have the necessary and appropriate Management and Control systems (MCS) set up from the start of the period to ensure they can fulfil the responsibilities assigned to them under Articles 125 and 126 CPR”. He referred to the guidelines provided by the Commission for a common methodology for the assessment of management and control systems which also contained a checklist for assessing the compliance with the designation criteria. Annex XIII of the same Regulation outlines the requirements for the internal control environment, risk management, the management, control and monitoring procedures for both the Managing Authority and the Certifying Authority. The Independent Audit Body must examine the MCS description documents, the Administrative Agreements and Service Level Agreements, the Procedures Manual for the IBs. He updated the Committee on the current status of the designation process documentation.

See full presentation on the ESF website at: <http://www.esf.ie/en/Programmes/ESF-Programme-for-Employability-Inclusion-and-Learning-PEIL-2014-2020/Monitoring-Committee/PEIL-Monitoring-Committee-Meetings/PEIL-2014-2020-Monitoring-Committee-Meeting-11-November-2016/>

11. Horizontal Principles

Mr Hugh Geoghegan, ESF Managing Authority, outlined the obligations in Regulation 1303/2013 and the ESF Regulation 1304/2013 (Article 7 “promote equality between men and women” and “support specific targeted actions” and Article 8 “promote equal opportunities for all” and “support specific actions”) for reporting on the Horizontal Principles under the Programme. Completed Reports were received from some of the Activities. The two HP reporting bodies, i.e. the Gender Equality Division/DJE for the Gender Equality HP and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission for the Non-Discrimination HP carried out reviews of the reports received and he invited them to present their papers to the Committee. See full presentation on the ESF website at:

<http://www.esf.ie/en/Programmes/ESF-Programme-for-Employability-Inclusion-and-Learning-PEIL-2014-2020/Monitoring-Committee/PEIL-Monitoring-Committee-Meetings/PEIL-2014-2020-Monitoring-Committee-Meeting-11-November-2016/>

(a) Gender Equality Reports

Ms AnnMarie Quarry, Gender Equality Division, DJE, introduced her review paper in relation to the Gender Equality Reports for the Activities under PEIL. She reminded the Activities of their requirements in meeting their statutory obligations under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014 (Section 42). Public sector bodies are required, under law, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights in carrying out their functions. She stated that this was an important development in Irish equality and human rights legislation and presents a valuable opportunity to public sector bodies. She also provided some comments on individual reports. She summarised by stating that specific examples of efforts being made to ensure gender mainstreaming would be a positive outcome. Finally she informed the Committee of a planned Seminar on Gender-Proofing to be hosted by the Department of Justice and Equality (details to follow). A copy of the full review paper can be found on the ESF website at: <http://www.esf.ie/en/Programmes/ESF-Programme-for-Employability-Inclusion-and-Learning-PEIL-2014-2020/Monitoring-Committee/PEIL-Monitoring-Committee-Meetings/PEIL-2014-2020-Monitoring-Committee-Meeting-11-November-2016/>

(b) Equal Opportunities and Non-discrimination

Mr Walter Jayawardene, Senior Human Rights and Equality Officer (Policy and Review), IHREC, introduced his summary feedback paper on the Equal Opportunities and Non-discrimination Horizontal Principle. He stated that the AIPs were largely very strong on the horizontal theme of promoting equal opportunities, including references to reasonable accommodation for PWDs and positive action. In relation to the majority of the reporting templates reviewed, the primary answer to question four (“what contribution is the measure making to the promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination”) a top-level answer was given to the effect that access to the initiative or application was open to all regardless of the grounds. He noted that detail was largely not provided on specific steps taken to promote equal opportunities and non-discrimination and information on reasonable accommodation measures and detail on who requested such measures, positive action to encourage involvement from disadvantaged groups, no specifics on the breakdown of people accessing the service of programme – e.g. the numbers who were Travellers, PWDs, minority ethnic groups etc. He identified one exception to this was the report on SICAP (4.7) which recorded concrete steps and innovative measures that sought to ensure that the aims of the horizontal theme

were achieved in practice. Particularly welcome are the steps taken to record the level of discrimination experienced by SICAP clients. A copy of the full review paper can be found on the ESF website at: <http://www.esf.ie/en/Programmes/ESF-Programme-for-Employability-Inclusion-and-Learning-PEIL-2014-2020/Monitoring-Committee/PEIL-Monitoring-Committee-Meetings/PEIL-2014-2020-Monitoring-Committee-Meeting-11-November-2016/>

The Chairperson stated that there was a lot of work to be done in relation to the reporting on the Horizontal Principles. The ESFMA will look at the templates and consult with the two Reviewing Bodies on revising the contents in line with the requirements. The review papers produced by the Reviewing Bodies will be put on the ESF website. Mr Pat Murray, IYJS, stated that information on the gender breakdown of participants on projects has since been collected but that it wasn't available at the time the report was submitted. Mr Stewart Roche, HEA, stated that a lot of advertising had been done to promote the Springboard and ICT Conversion Courses; they were at a loss as to how they could change the gender balance of the applicants. Mr Gasparro, SOLAS, indicated that due to structural changes in SOLAS/ETBs, there were delays in producing the reports.

12. Information and Communications

Ms Frances-Mary Long, ESF Managing Authority, provided an update on Information and Communication on the ESF. She summarised the findings of the Eurobarometer Report of October 2013 on its findings on Public Awareness of the ESF. The total percentage of those surveyed in Ireland who had heard of the ESF was 48%, up 2% from the last survey. The Report on Public Attitudes and Awareness of Ireland's European Union Structural Funds Programmes 2007-2013 carried out on behalf of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly and Southern Regional Assembly in October 2016 reported that 38% of those surveyed were aware of the ESF (compared to 35% in 2009).

She referred to the recent changes to the ESF Communications Strategy 2014 – 2020 and the ESF Information and Communication Guidelines (version 2 September 2016). The documents outlined the responsibilities of the ESFMA, the IBs and the Beneficiaries in relation to communicating the ESF; where and how to use the Logos and how to promote the role of the ESF in Ireland. The ESF website now contained the list of Operations, a description of each Operation, including good news stories; details of major events, Citizen Summaries of AIRs; links to other OP websites, and links to various IB websites. A national ESIF website for all the Funds - eufunds.gov.ie was being planned by DPER to showcase several projects from each Fund and IBs were being asked to supply content including good quality images, photos, data and graphs.

- The MA was also proposing to develop specific videos/infographics on the activities supported (such as that developed by Pobal to promote SICAP). The ESFMA was seeking cooperation/collaboration in this area.
- As part of an overall strategy to increase publicity of the ESF, the MA was proposing to create and manage an ESF Twitter page; when the page was created the Twitter username would be circulated.
- Each year the MA will organise or take part in at least one major information activity.
- In 2017, the Commission and the Member States were preparing to celebrate "60 years of ESF".
- The MA took part in the Springboard Roadshows in August in Dublin and Cork and the Pobal Conference in Dublin in October.

- Publicity items were available from the ESFMA such as posters, USB keys, notepads, pens, tote bags and information leaflets.
- The European Commission and the European Parliament Office were planning an event on the Youth Guarantee in Cork in late November; and the ESFMA will link in with it.
- The Newsletter will be published in December.
- A short Questionnaire was circulated to the IBs on Information and Communication.

13. AOB

Revised AIPs

The Chairperson stated that some of the AIPs were currently being revised, mainly technical amendments, and they would be circulated to the Monitoring Committee for approval in the coming weeks.

Next PMC meeting

The date of the next Programme Monitoring Committee will be notified to the Committee shortly.

APPENDIX 1 - ATTENDANCE

	NAME	ORGANISATION
1	Marc Vermyle	European Commission
2	Nicolas Gibert-Morin	European Commission
3	Gerry Roughneen	OPMI
4	AnnMarie Quarry	DJE
5	Elaine Doyle	DJE
6	Paul Dunphy	IYJS
7	Paddy Duffy	IYJS
8	Gerard Gasparro	SOLAS
9	Bríd O'Brien	INOUE
10	T Stewart Roche	HEA
11	Rod Tierney	SOLAS
12	Mary Kennedy	DSP
13	David Waters	DSP
14	Walter Jayawazdene	IHREC
15	Joe Keaney	Probation Service
16	Simon Cornish	Probation Service
17	Margot Dunne	DPER
18	Clodagh McDonnell	DHPCLG
19	Orla Christle	HEA
20	Tim Maverley	DJE
21	Pat Murray	IYJS
22	Breda Hennessy	DAFM EMFF MA
23	Gerry Browne	DJE
24	David Dunne	SOLAS
25	Anne Marie Caulfield	DPER
26	David Salter	DES/AA
27	Mary McGarry	ESF MA
28	Hugh Geoghegan	ESF MA
29	Tom Whelan	ESF MA
30	Michael Kelleher	ESF MA
31	Catherine Ryan	ESF MA

32	Ashling Abbott	ESF MA
33	Frances-Mary Long	ESF MA
34	Catherine Ormsby	ESF MA
	Apologies	
1	Labhaoise McKenna	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
2	Clare Droney	HQ Financial Management Unit/DJE
3	Damien Clarke	EMFF Managing Authority
4	Tony Donohoe	IBEC
5	Brian Liggett	Special EU Programmes Body