

Highlands and Islands Territorial Committee (08) - Summary of Meeting - 3 May 2018

An operational meeting was held on 22 December 2017. A number of areas were discussed including phase 2, Pan-Scotland operations, guidance and communications. All points have been closed.

Programme Performance

The performance targets and progress made towards expenditure and outcomes were discussed.

EUMIS – members advised that the csv upload can be sensitive which can cause delays.

The Managing Authority (MA) will look to gather feedback from lead partners regarding EUMIS in the coming weeks. There will be a session covering the main points at the next lead partner (LP) event on the 19 June, Edinburgh. Depending on feedback and issues raised we will look to arrange sessions following the event to provide extra support.

Evidence required for Claims – LPs did not fully appreciate the evidence required for claims from the outset. The MA has provided clarification but this has led to LPs having to go back to SMEs and participants to obtain further evidence. Considering the geography of the H&I this is not a simple process, and has an impact on the relationship between LPs and the SMEs and individuals they are supporting. Whilst the MA has relaxed the evidence requirements for the initial delivery period, some LPs may not be able to gather sufficient evidence and claim grant. This will impact on match funding, their ability to deliver against the approved targets, and phase 2 applications.

The MA urges any lead partners to discuss any on-going issues with the relevant growth teams so they can be resolved. All requirements should now be clear and there should be no need to make any further changes to guidance.

There was a general feeling amongst members that confidence levels have been impacted. This is of concern and the MA is committed to working constructively with lead partners.

Errors identified during earlier claim submissions should be reviewed before submitting subsequent ones to prevent repeat errors. It was agreed, however, that as claims move to 'live' time this will become less of an issue.

2018 Targets - N+3 and the Performance Framework

Claims are not being submitted and paid at the rate required to meet the 2018 N+3 target. Some areas are behind schedule for a variety of reasons. However we need as much spend as possible reported, alongside outputs achieved to date.

The MA has issued a request to all lead partners to provide an update on the spend that can be submitted within claims this year. This is a priority as we need to report to Ministers and look to minimise the risk of losses to the programmes.

The performance framework targets are also challenging and may not be met for a number of priorities. Each priority axis must meet the targets to unlock the final 6% of the funding available.

Commitment Levels - The negotiations with the EU to date suggest we will remain part of the programmes and as such will not need to rely on the UK Treasury guarantee. However until this is confirmed, we want to commit as much as possible to maximise commitment levels prior to 29 March 2019.

Members highlighted the need to be open in terms of considering options for phase 2. Options should be considered to maximise take-up and delivery with perhaps more targeting required and identifying synergies between Strategic Interventions and regional priorities. Organisations involved should be able to identify the needs of their area and how they can best address this.

The MA will reflect on the discussion and if changes can be made to ensure all money is committed.

N+3 De-commitment –

HITC members agreed with the proposal outlined in paper 6 regarding the reductions against each priority as a result of the 2017 de-commitment. The deduction will be applied across all priorities.

The MA confirmed that transition area funding will not be impacted by the YEI loss. The reduction against the transition area is the amount de-committed due to not meeting the spend target in the H&I area only.

**JPMC SECRETARIAT
16 MAY 2018**