

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**Date** 18 October 2000  
**Time** 2 – 5.30pm  
**Venue** Committee Room 1, National Assembly for Wales Building

**Title: INTERREG IIIA: IRELAND/WALES COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME (CIP)**

### **Purpose**

1. To provide the Committee with an update on development of the INTERREG IIIA: IRELAND/WALES CIP.
2. To seek the Committee's views on the draft CIP.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

1. Note the action taken;
2. Comment on the draft CIP.

### **Background / Update**

1. A report entitled '**Community Initiatives**' was previously submitted on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2000 and served to brief Committee members on the status of all four new Community Initiative Programmes. This was followed by a report entitled "**INTERREG III Community Initiative (2000-2006)**" on 8 June 2000, which provided specific details on the development of the INTERREG III Programme.

2. The Committee on European Affairs has received two reports on INTERREG III, on 9 March 2000 and 8 June 2000, both of which gave background details and an up date on developments.

3. Time Table - The INTERREG III Programmes Guidelines were published in the Official Journal on 23 May 2000. This marked the start of a six month period in which Assembly and

Irish Government officials had to prepare a **Joint CIP**, which to be submitted to the European Commission by the 22 November 2000. This will be followed by negotiations with the Commission, over a period of up to five months and the preparation of a Programme Complement within three months of the Commission decision approving the CIP. The INTERREG Programme is therefore likely to be operational from the summer of 2001.

The critical deadlines are:

*November 14* Draft CIP to be considered in Plenary;

*November 17* Submission of final draft CIP to the European Commission.

4. Partnership Group - An INTERREG Partnership Drafting Group was established in June and to date, has met on five occasions. They considered the responses to the consultation exercise, which closed on 9 June and have since been assisting Assembly and Irish Government officials in drafting the CIP. The advice and guidance provided by the Group has been invaluable.

5. Ex Ante Evaluation - The European Commission require the ex ante evaluation of all CIP's. This consists of an independent evaluation of the draft by consultants whilst the CIP is being drafted to ensure that it meets the Commission's requirements. ECOTEC in association with Fitzpatrick Associates were awarded the contract. Since being appointed, Assembly and Irish Government officials together with the ECOTEC team have been working very closely together, meeting on several occasions, and working to tight reporting deadlines.

### **Community Initiative Programme**

6. The INTERREG CIP derives from the socio-economic baselines of both Ireland and Wales, the environmental profile, the evaluation of the INTERREG II Programme and the momentum for broadening, deepening and strength the relationships it created.

7. Three Informal Drafts of the CIP have been considered by the INTERREG Partnership Group and the ECOTEC team. A First Formal Draft CIP for consultation was be circulated to a broad range of organisations in Wales on 5 October with a deadline for written responses of 20 October. Irish colleagues are consulting via a seminar on 12 October. A revised version, taking on board any comments received will be prepared and tabled for discussion by the Assembly in plenary on 14<sup>th</sup> November, before submission to the European Commission on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2000.

8. Assembly officials would very much appreciate the comments of Committee members on this draft CIP.

## **Compliance**

9. Under Section 33 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 the Assembly may consider and make appropriate representations about any matter affecting Wales. Statutory Instrument 2000/906, European Communities Wales, which came into force on 31 March 2000, delegates powers under the European Regional Development Fund which co-finances the Programme.

## **Financial Implications**

10. The UK has been allocated the sum of 384.6meuro for INTERREG III for the period 2000-2006. Within Strand A Wales receive 28meuro / £17.5m (ex. Rate: 0.625, as at 23.06.00). The indicative Irish allocation is 17meuros, giving a global budget of 45meuros.

11. Financial Planning Division has been consulted about this submission and is content with the financial aspects.

## **Contact Point**

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DIVISION