

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE EDC 05-01(p4)**

**Date:** Wednesday 21 March 2001  
**Time:** 2.00 – 5.30pm  
**Venue:** Committee Room 1, National Assembly for Wales Building  
**Title:** Note of Meeting of PMC representatives and Chairs for Objectives 1, 2 and 3 - held at Cardiff Bay on 5 March 2001

### **Present:**

Chris Chapman AM Objective 1  
Ron Hughes  
Anne Meikle  
Stephen Cole

John Griffiths AM Objective 2  
Karen Latham

Michael German AM Objective 3  
Kirsty Williams AM  
Howard Sinclair  
Huw Kyffin

John Clarke Officials  
Emyr Roberts  
Sheila Maxwell  
Damien O'Brien

Val Feld – EDC Chair  
John Grimes – EDC Clerk  
Siân Wilkins – EDC Deputy Clerk  
Nick Bennett – Special Adviser

1. Mike German opened the meeting by saying that they had invited representatives of the Programme Monitoring Committees for Objectives 1, 2 and 3 to the meeting. However, PMCs would be established also for the Rural Development Programme, Leader, Urban and Interreg. There would also be a management committee for Equal. Altogether these constituted a major range of programmes and involved a large number of people, he said that he and Val Feld had felt it was important to try to establish some synergy between them.

2. The purpose of this meeting was to explore the possibilities and to try and establish a basis for further meetings. He suggested that they might structure this meeting by talking first about how best to feed the overall Assembly strategies into the programmes; then discussing how the financial packages of support operated; then best practice in monitoring and the scope for sharing experiences; and finally the size, representation and frequency of future meetings.

## Linking into National Assembly Strategies

3. Mike German referred to the National Economic Development Strategy and the EDC Review of Business Support and Development. In addition, there was the Entrepreneurship Action Plan, part of which was the Business Birth-rate Strategy. He said that proposals for funding parts of the various strategies would be coming forward and it was important to know how European funding fitted into them.
4. In discussion, participants referred also to programmes for sustainable development, the remit letter from Jane Davidson to ELWA and also to UK programmes such as Welfare To Work. It was agreed that it would be helpful to map out the projects against the various strategies **[Action: John Clarke]**.
5. The meeting warmly endorsed the principle that all these programmes should look to encourage synergy with the Assembly's programmes and policies. It was noted that to some extent this had to be done at the very early stages of developing a project and it was important that the support available for programmes was marketed with the overall programmes and policies in mind.
6. A number of participants commented that they believed existing mechanisms already took account of Assembly policies such as in the scoring of projects for support. However, it was important that PMC members clearly understood what the priorities were and this highlighted the need for training of members and chairs and sound briefing generally for them.
7. There was some discussion of the underlying organisational structure. Mike German referred to the paper on roles submitted to EDC on 17 January, which explained the formal position. It was noted that notwithstanding the need to support Assembly policies, PMC members were appointed to take, and be accountable for, decisions. This was manifestly not the responsibility of the Assembly because the Assembly had members on the various PMCs.
8. It was also noted that in Ireland, for example, the processes were much simpler because the power to make decisions was given to an individual. However, Wales had adopted an approach which encouraged partnership and, while this might lead to a more convoluted decision process, it was considered this was appropriate.
9. Representatives from WEFO pointed out that they were the common thread between the various programmes and they ought to be able to provide a means by which information, and best practice, was shared. This could lead, for example, to changes in the scoring system used for projects to enable these to align more closely with Assembly policies.

## Funding

10. Mike German commented that significant levels of funding were now available for projects in Wales – the challenge was to put together an appropriate funding package to achieve support through the various schemes. There was a general feeling that it was difficult to identify all the sources of match

funding and, while information was available from many sources, what was really needed was a 'one stop shop'. It was suggested that alongside any system of providing information it was also necessary to have somebody who could provide expert advice and support and someone off whom one could bounce ideas.

11. Officials said that an exercise had been tried recently to develop a match-funding guide but it had proved very difficult to put this into a useful format. This of itself confirmed the complexity of the situation and emphasised the problem for people outside. It was suggested that this work should be resurrected and the problems re-examined.

12. It is again noted that WEFO was in a central position to provide and exchange information and John Clarke said that he would produce a list of who does what within WEFO as a start. **[Action: John Clarke].**

13. Summing up, Mike German said that this had been a very useful debate and it was important to keep it going if there was to be any hope of solving these very difficult problems. He said that officials would give further thought to the issues and of how to address them before a future meeting. **[Action: Emyr Roberts/John Clarke.]**

## **Best Practice**

14. It was suggested that there were 3 areas where, at first sight, progress could be made in sharing best practice:

- a. sharing information about the policy process – participants were invited to e-mail John Clarke with any ideas that they might have;
- b. training for PMC members;
- c. training for PMC Chairs.

## **Further Meetings of this Group**

15. There was a general feeling that there needed to be further meetings of this kind and that 3 members from each PMC was probably the appropriate number. The feeling was that the Group should meet less frequently than the PMCs although it might at first be useful to meet more often. It was agreed there was a need for a more formalised agenda and that the next meeting should be in 3 months' time.

16. There was also a discussion of whether it would be desirable to bring together all members of the PMCs, perhaps once a year, together with members of EDC. While this would be a very large

gathering, it seemed the most effective way to bring some cohesion and co-ordination into developing an overall strategy. It was suggested that one might also bring members together in perhaps regional meetings. The key thing was to ensure that people talked with each other, shared ideas and developed a sense of common purpose. It was agreed that this should be considered further at the next meeting.

**14 March 2001 Committee Secretariat,**