
3RD MEETING OF THE MONITORING COMMITTEE
for the
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA (EEA) FINANCIAL MECHANISM
& the
NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISM

20th September 2007, 13:00 – 15:00hrs

**The Victoria Hotel,
Sliema**

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Present for the meeting were:

Dr. Godwin Grima, Principal Permanent Secretary (Chairperson)
Mr. Francis Borg, Permanent Secretary MEYE
Mr. Peter Portelli, Permanent Secretary MTAC
Mr. Anthony Mifsud, Permanent Secretary MRES
Mr. Joseph Ebejer, Permanent Secretary MFSS
Ms. Marlene Bonnici, Director General Planning and Priorities Coordination Division, OPM
(National Focal Point)
Mr. Joseph Fenech, Director EU Affairs OPM
Mr. Alexander Magro, Director Corporate Services OPM
Mr. Mario Caruana, Director Policy Development MJHA
Mr. Angelo Mallia, Director Programme Implementation MCMP
Mr. John Cremona, Officer in Scale 5, Ministry Secretariat MGOZ
Mr. Joseph Degiorgio, Director EU Affairs MRAE
Ms. Carmen Grech, Assistant Director EU Affairs MIIT
Ms. Mariel Sacco, Programme Manager Planning and Priorities Coordination Division, OPM
(Secretariat)
Mr. Paul Farrugia, Programme Manager MFIN (Paying Authority)

Mr. Aaron Farrugia, EU Fund Manager MHEC

Mr. Michael Fiorini, Assistant Director EU Affairs Policy Development and Programme Implementation MUDR

Mr. Alexander Formosa, EU Fund Officer Planning and Priorities Coordination Division, OPM (Secretariat)

Dr. Romina Bartolo, Union Haddiema Maqghudin (UHM)

Ms. Doris Bingley, National Council for Women (NCW)

Ms. Doris Borg, Local Councils Association (LCA)

Ms. Jeanelle Catania, Malta Federation of Industry (FOI)

Mr. Vincent Farrugia, General Retailers and Trailers Union (GRTU)

Apologies

Mr. Paul Zahra, Permanent Secretary (Policy) OPM

Mr. Charles Deguara, Permanent Secretary MJHA

Mr. Frank Mifsud, Permanent Secretary MHEC

Mr. John Gatt, Permanent Secretary MIIT

Mr. Philip von Brockdorff, Permanent Secretary MRAE

Mr. Vincent Cassar, Permanent Secretary MUDR

Mr. Arne Gjermundsen, Minister Counsellor, Royal Norwegian Embassy

Mr. Josef Formosa Gauci, Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association

Mr. Victor Galea, The Malta Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise

Absent

Mr. Alfred Camilleri, Permanent Secretary MFIN

Ms. Cecilia Attard Pirota, Permanent Secretary MFA

Mr. Keith Scicluna, Farmers' Central Cooperative

Mr. Vincent Attard, Nature Trust (Malta)

Mr. Noel Formosa, Regional Project Committee for Gozo

Mr. Paul Fava, Malta Employers Association

MAIN POINTS OF THE MEETING

1. Welcoming remarks by the Chairperson

The Chairperson opened the meeting by welcoming all present and thanking members for finding the time to attend the meeting. The representative of the Local Council Association was formally welcomed to the meeting since this was the first time the association was participating in the MC.

The Chair gave a brief overview of the year's events..

In this regard he also referred to the fact that the Annual Reports (which were disseminated prior to the meeting) can be considered as working documents. Any comments arising from the discussion and also additional comments received from the FMO will be incorporated into a revised version which would be re-circulated in the coming days.

2. Adoption of minutes of previous meeting (decision)

The minutes of the previous MC were adopted with no changes.

3. Approval of the agenda (decision)

The Agenda was slightly amended prior to the meeting and circulated revised agenda to members. Item 6 on the agenda, originally entitled "Approval of the Addenda to the MoU" was not for the approval of the MC but merely for endorsement. The Chair highlighted this change to the members who agreed with the final version of the agenda.

4. Presentation by the Maltese Focal Point – Implementation Process until September 2007 (discussion)

Ms. Marlene Bonnici, head of the NFP, introduced the presentation by giving an overview of the general progress of the different projects being co-financed by the Grants. Ms. Mariel Sacco from the NFP then gave a detailed presentation, project by project, as to the stage at which each project had arrived and respective achievements to date. Special mention was made to the publicity measures which each project is undertaking. Presentation is uploaded on the PPCD website.

The presentation was followed by a discussion.

Mr. Peter Portelli, Permanent Secretary MTAC, requested the representative from MGOZ to ensure that MTAC (not just MTA) is kept informed and involved in the discussions on MT0005 Master Plan for the Cittadella project since the site also forms part of MTAC's overall plan for tourism. The involvement of MTAC would ensure the right perspective from a policy dimension. Mr. John Cremona, representative of MGOZ at the MC and also Project Leader for the Cittadella project ensured that this will be done. Ms. Doris Borg, representative of the Local Council Association also enquired whether the Victoria Local Councils are merely attending meetings or actually being consulted on the project. Mr. Cremona assured LCA that the local council's (Victoria) opinion is always sought.

Ms. Doris Bingley from the National Council for Women enquired whether the MT0010 Setting up an Oil Spill Response Capability for the Protection of Our Seas project was solely dedicated to the acquisition of equipment. Ms. Bonnici explained that although equipment formed the larger component of the project, the project also has a capacity building component which includes risk assessment, formulation of response strategies, seminars and workshops. . The Chairperson also stated that the project will strengthen and build upon current experience.

Dr. Romina Bartolo from Union Haddiema Maghqudin (UHM) requested confirmation that there was a minimum budget for projects to be financed under the Grants. Ms. Bonnici replied in the affirmative. The threshold set was Euro 250,000 as the minimum grant amount. Ms. Bonnici added that while such thresholds prevented extreme fragmentation and contribute towards better assessment and measurement of the overall impact of the money, such a threshold could also be inhibiting for small organisations.

5. Approval of Annual Implementation Reports for 2006-2007 (decision)

The Chair gave the floor to the NFP. For the benefit of the members¹, Ms. Bonnici explained that the reports do not cover a calendar year (like those of the Structural Funds) and in the case of the reports presented that day, these cover more than 12 months, given that the last annual meeting (for whom the previous reports were prepared) was held in May of 2006. The reports under discussion covered the period 1 June 2006 - 14 September 2007, and therefore the information presented was very up to date. Ms. Bonnici informed the members that the secretariat had prepared a presentation on the reports. She added that both reports contained common elements given that the same procedures were being followed for both mechanisms, however each report contained specific focus with regard to the projects being co-funded by each mechanism.

Ms. Sacco gave a presentation on the Annual Implementation Reports which highlighted the main points of each of the two reports (one covering the EEA Financial Mechanism, one covering the Norwegian Financial Mechanism). The members approved the reports which were presented. After seeing that there were no comments from those present, the Chair closed this item by stating that any changes that will be made in the coming days will be notified to the members by written procedure.

6. Addenda to MoUs (information)

Ms. Bonnici explained the background to the changes (mainly the role of the Treasury, rather than the Paying Authority, as Government's paying agent) which have been proposed to the Memoranda of Understanding. No adverse comments so far have been received from the Donors, however, this is a lengthy process and the documents are still being processed through their formal channels.

Mr. Vincent Farrugia from General Retailers and Traders Union (GRTU) enquired why it has been proposed to change the paying system which the Donors have suggested should be used on the Grants. Ms. Bonnici explained that the change was done to align the Grants paying system to the system which Malta uses in line with its financial regulations. This was also due to the fact that by virtue of its title 'Paying Authority', the Donors interpreted the Paying Authority as the entity which in fact authorises the payments when in the Maltese system, this role is fulfilled by the Treasury. The Paying Authority's main role is to present requests for payments accompanied by the individual Project Interim Reports to the Donors and receive such payments from the Donors.

7. Any other business

No other business was raised by the members. The secretariat informed that the annual meeting between the Maltese Authorities and the donors was scheduled for 23rd October.

¹ Many of whom are the same for the Monitoring Committee for Structural Funds.

Since there were no other items on the agenda and no further matters were brought up, the Chairperson thanked all those present and brought the meeting to a close

Dr Godwin Grima
Chairman

Ms. Mariel Sacco
Secretary

Date