

Minutes of the Eleventh Meeting of the EPA-RPII Merger Working Group (MWG)

Location: DECLG, Custom House

Date: Monday, 3rd February 2014(2:30pm – 4:30pm)

In attendance: Mr David Walsh, Assistant Secretary, Environment Division, DECLG (DW) (Chair)
Ms Laura Burke, Director General, EPA (LB)
Dr Ann McGarry, Chief Executive, RPII (AMG)
Ms Emer Connolly, Principal Officer, DECLG (EC)
Mr Paul McDonald, Principal Officer, DECLG (PMD)
Mr Micheál Ó Cinnéide, EPA (MOC) (Item, via conference call)
Ms Majella Byrne, EPA (MB) (Item 2, via conference call)
Ms Stella Mc Kervey, DECLG (Secretariat)

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the tenth meeting of the MWG were approved.

2. Feedback and Update from Merger Project Group Chair and Project Manager

The Chair invited MOC to update members on the progress of the MPG on the High Level Implementation Plan and the Risks to the merger.

i. High Level Implementation Plan

HR – MOC stated that the HR Sub-Group hoped to have the report referred to under Action 2 (review of superannuation schemes) ready by the end of the month. MOC confirmed that work had not yet begun on Action 4 (harmonising grade structures). It was recommended by the MWG that this work should commence shortly and that it would be of interest to the staff, the three organisations as well as to DPER. MOC also pointed out under Action 5 (review of corporate resources) that more consultation was required but that there was a clear sense of progress being made. A formal proposal would be made to the EPA Board and the CEO RPII in line with the deadline of the end of March.

Finance –MOC referred to the finance papers and gave a summary of the progress for Actions 1 and 3. More work on these actions is required and a project plan for a fully integrated finance system will be submitted to the EPA Board and CEO RPII within 2 months. There was some discussion on the financial and staff resources required. MOC acknowledged the work that the Finance Sub-Group had carried out to-date and said that the Sub-Group was making good progress.

Accommodation - A review of arrangements for a single reception has been carried out and the paper was presented to the MPG. Based on the findings of the review, it was concluded that a single reception in EPA Richview was feasible, subject to a number of requirements. The MWG noted progress on the single reception and that any operational matters will be considered by the EPA Board. The MWG also agreed that that the deadline on Action 1(single building optimal solution) be

amended as this action is not considered critical to the merger - that this date will be changed to 'Q2 2015'.

ICT – MOC stated that the standards under Action 6 (introducing a standardised user environment) have been agreed with the majority of the relevant tasks nearly complete. He also stated that the additional funding that had been provided (in late Q4 2013) by the Department had been fully utilised and that there was good engagement between the two ICT Teams, with the RPII attending the EPA IM&T meetings as detailed under Action 9 (integration of RPII into EPA's existing IM&T strategic and governance structure).

Communications – MOC stated that the Communications Strategy Paper and Appendices were for noting by the MWG and that all requested changes had been made.

MOC also stated that the MPG, thematic Sub-Groups and relevant staff were fully engaged at this point in approximately 35 actions listed on the High-Level Implementation Plan.

ii. Risks to the Merger

MOC informed the MWG that at the last MPG meeting it had been decided that as there were different mitigation factors in relation to the combined risk on resources (under Risks 3 and 5), that this risk should be split, the appropriate likelihood and impact ratings would be applied and the risk description would be expanded. This was agreed by the MWG.

MOC also stated that the timeframe for the implementation of the Core HR project is still tight with resources of both the EPA and Core HR stretched but that delivery is on track.

The Review of the grading structures was raised and it was agreed that the Risk Register should be updated to reflect the actions required in harmonising the grading structure of the two organisations.

3. Updates

i. Legislation

PMD gave an update on the current status of the legislation and also distributed a document detailing the proposed timeline for progressing the Bill. The Department is examining all the proposed provisions, including ones from the Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (EMPB), and all elements are expected to be with the OPC in the coming week. The Department stated that the legislation is still on track for finalisation by July 2014. It was agreed by the MWG that there would be a meeting between the OPC, DECLG, EPA and RPII before the end of February to discuss the legislation.

In relation to several legislative issues, AMG stated that the MWG is tasked under its Terms of Reference with ensuring that there is no diminution, or perception of any diminution, amongst stakeholders with regards to Ireland's commitment to radiological protection. It was also agreed by the MWG that any outstanding legislative items would be discussed between the DECLG, EPA and RPII.

The MWG did not agree with the recommendation in the note on Merger Legislation Issues (dated 28th January 2014), that all staff in both organisations be circulated terms and conditions of employment. It was noted that the MPG should liaise with the DG EPA and CEO RPII and that Staff should be briefed on merger related issues via normal internal communications channels, including Partnership Committees.

ii. Finance

Update provided by the MPG Chair under Agenda Item 2 and the MWG noted the papers and the progress made by the Finance Sub-Group.

iii. Communications Strategy (for noting)

The MWG noted the papers submitted by the MPG Chair.

iv. Accommodation – Single reception

Update provided by the MPG Chair under Agenda Item 2 and the MWG noted the progress on a single reception.

4. Discussion on a General Review of the Merger

The Chair stated that, in the context of a general review of the merger which had been brought up in previous MWG discussions, it is envisaged that the MWG will be reconvened in early 2015 to assess how matters are progressing within the Agency post-merger. The aim of the Review would be to monitor progress in the integration of the two organisations including achievements, lessons learnt and experiences of staff and other stakeholders. The MWG agreed that the MPG would play an important role in the Review of the Merger, in reporting on the completion of the actions in the Implementation Plan, identifying any issues arising and also any further legislative changes required.

It was also noted that the implementation Plan for the Merger includes a number of actions for completion post July 2014 and that the MPG would continue to have a role in the delivery of these actions.

5. Directions to the MPG

It was agreed to ask the MPG to:

- publish the minutes from the ninth and tenth meetings of the MWG on the EPA and RPII websites and to also update the merger web content, i.e. the new Chair and members of the MWG, etc., on both websites;
- amend the deadline date (from '31-Dec-14' to 'Q2 2015') under Accommodation Action 1 in the High Level Implementation Plan document;
- progress HR Action 4 re a review of grading structures and prepare a proposal re harmonisation of structures as soon as possible; and
- amend Risk 5 (Human Resources – Interdependency) in the Risks and Issues Log to reflect the actions required in finalising the grading structure. The MWG noted and agreed with the separation of the HR risks in relation to resources (Risks 3 and 4).

The MWG did not agree with the recommendation in the update on Merger Legislation Issues, that all staff in both organisations be circulated terms and conditions of employment. It was noted that the MPG should liaise with the DG EPA and CEO RPII and that Staff should be briefed on merger related issues via normal internal communications channels, including Partnership Committees.

The MWG noted the progress on implementation of a single reception for the merged organisation.

The MWG noted the progress on the identification of a finance system that best meets the needs of the merged organisation and that a business case would be presented to the EPA Board/ RPII CEO on a fully integrated system within 2 months. The MWG further noted that the later date now envisaged for a fully integrated enduring system does not present a medium term risk to the merger.

The MWG noted the updated paper on the Communications Strategy and associated papers.

6. AOB

No matters were raised under this Item.

7. Future meetings of the MWG

Dates for the next meeting of the MWG were discussed and the following proposed dates were agreed:

- 12th Meeting – Friday, 7th March 2014 (10am- 12pm), Custom House, DECLG
- 13th Meeting – Friday, 4th April 2014 (10:30am – 12:30pm), Custom House, DECLG