

Summary Minutes of First Meeting of the EPA – RPII Merger Working Group (MWG)

Location: EPA Offices, Clonskeagh

Date: 12th February 2013 @ 4pm

In attendance:

Dr. Brian Cawley, IPA, Chair, (BC)

Ms. Laura Burke, Director General, EPA, (LB)

Dr. Ann McGarry, Chief Executive, RPII, (AMG)

Fiona Quinn, Principal Officer, DECLG, (FQ)

Terry Dunne, Principal Officer, DECLG, (TD) and ,

John McCarthy, Assistant Secretary, DECLG (JMC) (attended for the opening agenda item only).

Introductory Remarks

Chair – Dr. Brian Cawley

BC formally opened the meeting, indicated he looked forward to working with the MWG, and pointed out that the main objective of the first meeting was to consider the most effective process to develop an Action Plan by July 2013.

Assistant Secretary Mr. John McCarthy

JMC thanked the Chair for agreeing to lead the group and the agencies for their continued engagement. He recognised the challenge ahead and the need for structured management / organisation of the project. He also noted the challenging timeframe involved and the need to progress proactively for the sake of both organisations and their staff.

Project structure and Process / Review of Terms of Reference

MWG agreed that before the next meeting on 28th February, we would need to have considered the mechanisms / process required to achieve the objective of producing an Action Plan by end June 2013. The establishment of a single Project Group (PG) that would report to the MWG, involving key persons with overarching expertise in areas such as governance, HR, IT, Accommodation & Finance from both Agencies and DECLG was considered appropriate and necessary by the MWG. It was recognised by the MWG that there were limitations to what could realistically be achieved given the mid-2014 merger timeframe, but that this should not preclude the MWG from considering immediate synergies in other areas, or how the new Agency might possibly develop in the longer term. Members of the PG will be invited to the next meeting of the MWG

TOR/Governance / HR Issues

It was accepted that the governance and HR issues are of critical importance, and in some cases are inextricably linked, and there may also be other synergies under other headings.

It was considered that the PG should be asked to produce papers under the Governance and HR headings for the meeting of the MWG at the end of March 2013 which would set out the current

arrangements, the optimal outcome, and option(s) as regards what can be achieved within the set timeframe.

Accommodation

It was agreed that accommodation would be the first issue to be considered and that EPA and RPII would prepare a paper on this issue for the meeting of 28th February 2013.

Communications

The importance of communicating effectively with all stakeholders was noted – staff, partnership committees, external stakeholders, unions, the Departments / Ministers (DECLG, DPER). It was agreed that communication with union representatives would continue through the normal channels within both organisations. A Draft Communications Plan is to be prepared by 28th February 2013.

Next Meetings

28th February – 11am Custom House

28th March – 11am IPA