

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

Location: DECLG, Custom House

Date: 29 October 2013 (14.00 – 16.00)

In attendance:

- Mr. Dave Walsh, Assistant Secretary, Environment Division, DECLG (DW) (Chair)
- Ms. Laura Burke, Director General, EPA (LB)
- Dr. Ann McGarry, Chief Executive, RPII (AMG)
- Mr. Paul McDonald, Principal Officer, DECLG (PMD)
- Mr. Micheál Ó Cinnéide, EPA (MOC) (item 1 and 2, via video conference)
- Ms. Majella Byrne, EPA (MB) (item 1 and 2, via video conference)
- Ms. Beatrix Aigner, DECLG (Secretariat)

Apologies:

Ms. Fiona Quinn, Principal Officer, DECLG

1. / 2. Introduction and Feedback/Update from Merger Project Group (MPG)

The Chair welcomed participants and expressed the appreciation of DECLG for all the work done by the MPG and the MWG on this process so far. He also thanked both the EPA and RPII for their commitment and efforts. He then invited MOC and MB to update members on the progress of the MPG.

In his update, MOC focussed on three headings: (a) the on-going work, (b) requirements and (c) risks.

With regard to (a), he advised that the MPG had submitted a proposed Governance Structure and the updated Terms of Reference for the MPG to the MWG for consideration. He noted that MB will dedicate two days a week to her work as Project Manager for the implementation of the merger. The MPG has met twice already and six subgroups have been established that correspond to the headings of the six theme papers, with five to six people in total, from both organisations working for each of these subgroups. He also emphasised the importance of promoting exchanges between the two organisations.

Under (b), he pointed out that the MPG required in particular, engagement with the MWG on legislation, financial provisions and direction on documents submitted.

Among the main risks (c), he named the stretched human resources to deliver the elements of the merger within the timeframe set by Government and the timely enactment of the merger legislation. He also identified that the Core HR project, which is essential for back office functions related to the merged organisation, is on a very tight timeline, with little allowance for slippage.

MB advised that the reporting template on the high level actions would be updated on a regular basis. At their next meeting on 6 November, the MPG will look at how to address risks and suggest a format for the risk register for the merger.

The Chair pointed out that funding had now been secured for specific resources related to the merger process and these financial resources should be used wisely. He thanked the MPG for their update. MOC and MB left the meeting at this point.

3. Review

3.1 Merger Governance Structure

The document proposed by the MPG was discussed and one amendment was agreed.

3.2 Amended Terms of Reference of the MPG

The amended ToRs were discussed and some minor amendments were agreed.

4. Updates

4.1 / 4.2 Implementation Phase and Action Plan

The Group agreed that the High Level Implementation Plan and Report presented a good snapshot of where the process was at but that more information would be helpful, particularly where actions were not on track or where alerts were flagged. To restrict the size of the overview document, it was agreed that separate notes should be prepared by the MPG on items which are flagged as 'on alert', to include, where possible, suggestions to address any difficulties or potential risks. It was also agreed that the numbering should be amended to reflect the Action plan.

4.3 Legislation

DW informed the Group that the work on the legislation was on schedule. Both Bills were approved by Government and are now being drafted by the Office of the Parliamentary Council (OPC). The Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 is on the A List of the Government Legislation Programme and the Radiological Protection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill is on the B list, but should both be ready for publication and passage through the Oireachtas in early 2014. DECLG will continue to consult with both organisations as the Bills proceed. A response to the detailed RPII comments on the draft Heads of the RP (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill will be forwarded in the next week or so.

4.4 Resources

DW confirmed that additional financial resources had been granted towards the costs of the merger in both 2013 and 2014.

With regard to the two invitations to tender, a few minor amendments were suggested and agreed.

5. Directions to MPG

It was agreed to ask the MPG to:

- Note the revised ToRs;
- Note the revised Governance Structure; and

- Note the revised invitations to tender.

The MPG is also asked to circulate an updated version of the High-Level Implementation Plan in advance of the next MWG meeting on 29th November and to provide supplementary information on items which are flagged as ‘on alert’, identifying risks to their implementation, and proposed solutions.

6. AOB

The MWG agreed to have standing agenda items for future MWG meetings on Risks to the Merger and on Communication.

It was also decided that the MWG would continue to meet on a monthly basis.

7. Future meetings of the MWG

Friday, 29 November 2013, DECLG, Custom House, 14.30 – 16.30

Thursday, 19 December 2013, place TBC, 10.00 – 12.00