# Workshop Report Summary
## Monitoring & Evaluation
## 19th June 2012, CRC Offices, Dungannon

**Introduction**

The following is a report of the Consortium organised workshop on **Monitoring and Evaluation** which was held in the offices of the Community Relations Council in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone on the 19th June 2012.

**Purpose of the event**

The purpose of the event was to take a practical look at **"how to make monitoring more effective"** in the context of theme 1.1 of the Peace III Programme, and to provide Peace Partnerships with the opportunity to:

- Review where they are in relation to their Monitoring and Evaluation
- Discuss key issues currently facing Peace Partnerships in relation to Monitoring and Evaluation
- Network and share "best practice", methodologies, approaches, and tools
- Work with the Consortium and SEUPB to inform a future practical programme of support for Peace Partnerships in relation to Monitoring and Evaluation

The event was attended by Partnership staff and members, SEUPB Case Officers, and Consortium Development Officers.

**Format**

The format of the workshop was practically based and did not involve presentations.

Following a brief introduction by the Consortium, which set the context of the workshop and outlined its aims and objectives, a Cafe Dialogue approach was adopted.

Three tables were set up covering the topics of:

A. What is in place now in relation to Monitoring and Evaluation and what are the requirements of the Programme
B. Monitoring and Evaluation at a Partnership level
C. Planning your Monitoring & Evaluation/Aid for Peace Process

Participants were allocated to a table and three facilitated 25 minute "round table" discussion sessions were delivered with participants moving between tables at the end of each session.

Further to feedback from each table by the facilitators, the event ended with a summary of the key findings of the workshop and next steps by the Consortium followed by the opportunity for the Partnerships to network and/or to discuss particular issues with the SEUPB Case Officers.

**Key points from the Cafe Dialogue Session**

**Table A**

Table A, facilitated by SEUPB Case Officers, discussed what is in place now in relation to monitoring and evaluation and what the requirements of the Programme are.

The **key questions** at this table were:

- What are the Partnerships doing now?
- What needs to be done?
- What needs to be put in place?

**Feedback** from this table highlighted the following key points:

- Phase I was a huge learning process for everyone involved in relation to Monitoring and Evaluation
- Monitoring and Evaluation in Phase II was considered much more structured
- All Partnerships had indicated they were aware of the Monitoring and Evaluation requirements of the Programme
- All Partnerships had some form of Monitoring and Evaluation structure/system in place.

Proposed **Outputs** from Table A include:

- The requirement for Partnerships to be able to run a regular monitoring and evaluation report from the database in relation to their projects – **SEUPB are currently in discussion with RMA systems regarding the possibility of making this report available**.
- The possibility of developing a "step by step" flowchart in relation to the Monitoring and Evaluation requirements of the Programme – **SEUPB Case Officers to take forward.**
- The potential to put the indicator codes which are on hard copy letters of offer onto the database – **SEUPB Case Officers to take forward.**

**Table B**

Table B focused on monitoring and evaluation at a Partnership level.

The **key questions** at this table were:

- To what extent are members involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the Programme?
- What tools are used to involve members in monitoring and evaluation?

**Feedback** from this table highlighted the following key points:

- The priority of most Partnership members in Phase I in relation to monitoring was largely on project spend in response to the priorities of the managing authority.
- For a number of Partnerships the legacy of this financial focus in Phase I has rolled over into Phase II, and there is work to be done by all the stakeholders involved in terms of repositioning the monitoring and evaluation of project outputs and impacts on the agenda of Partnership members.

- However it was recognised by most Partnerships that “Partnership level” monitoring in Phase II was more structured than in Phase I, was “more of a process”, “less frenetic”, “more targeted” and “more focused” and one Partnership reported a significant “buy in” and “hunger” from members for Partnership level monitoring in Phase II.
- Mostly “Partnership monitoring” was reported to rely on Programme Managers bringing to the attention of members any particular project issues which have arisen in relation to monitoring and evaluation.
- Whilst for some Partnerships this reflected an issue in terms of members being removed from the delivery of the Programme, for the most part it was seen to be reflective of a confidence by members in the Programme Managers and staff to deal with the practical day-to-day issues relating to Monitoring and Evaluation and to recognise those issues that required to be brought to the attention of members.
- It was recognised that a greater involvement of members in the Monitoring and Evaluation of the impact of the Programme needed to be encouraged and facilitated however it was felt that this engagement needed to be at a strategic rather than at a practical day-to-day operational level.
- Tools which were currently used by various Partnerships in terms of engaging their members in project Monitoring and Evaluation included:
    - ✓ Delivery agent/project presentations to Partnership meetings
    - ✓ Partnership meetings located in project venues
    - ✓ The establishment of thematic steering groups from within the Partnership membership which report to the full Partnership meetings. Some Partnerships also engaged external organisations to support these steering groups.
    - ✓ The circulation of “Partner Delivery Progress Reports” to all members
    - ✓ The development and circulation of case studies to members
    - ✓ The involvement of Partnership members at project launches
    - ✓ The active involvement of Partnership members in the process of revising the format of the progress report.
    - ✓ The inclusion of an Action Learning Programme within the Phase II Plan specifically in relation to Monitoring and Evaluation and the incorporation within this Programme of a monitoring action which looks at/gauges and reports regularly to the Partnership on the impact of the Phase II Plan and which identifies issues which need to be addressed at a Partnership level.
    - ✓ The production and circulation of a regular Partnership Newsletter to members
    - ✓ The active participation of Partnership members in the production of a publication in relation to the work of the Partnership.
    - ✓ An annual/six monthly “time out” session for Partnership members away from general Partnership business and dedicated to reviewing the delivery, progress and impact of the Programme and its inherent parts against the original vision, aims and objectives. This session could potentially involve other stakeholders such as SEUPB and the Consortium.
    - ✓ “Adopt a project” offered to all Partnership members - although this requires to be managed appropriately as it may raise potential conflict of interest issues.
    - ✓ Encouragement to members to attend Project Forum meetings

- For some Partnerships a steering group/sub group structure to facilitate and enhance Monitoring and Evaluation at a Partnership level worked well, for other Partnerships it became a burden and the “added value” and purpose was questioned.
- There was a need to strengthen a sense of ownership of and “buy in” to the projects within Partnership members.

Proposed **Outputs** from Table B include:

- The Partnerships are to review their Monitoring and Evaluation at a Partnership level with a view to engaging members in the process and improving the Partnership’s overall approach to Monitoring and Evaluation –**Partnerships to take forward supported by the Consortium.**

**Table C**

Table C considered the area of how the Partnerships planned their Monitoring and Evaluation/Aid for Peace process and the tools and guidance that is available.

The **key questions** at this table were:

- How have Partnerships planned their Monitoring and Evaluation/Aid for Peace Process in Phase II?
- What tools/resources have they developed to facilitate this process?
- What work are they doing with their projects to feed into the process?
- What works/doesn`t work?
- What are the key issues?

**Feedback** from this table highlighted the following key points:

- Monitoring is a huge task but each Partnership only has a small team of staff
- Writing up is time consuming
- Analysis of hand written attitudinal surveys is very time consuming and secretariats don’t necessarily have the skills to analyse what they find
- Some Partnerships included Action Research action with the Phase II Plan. This is enabling them to engage external expertise to: -
    - ✓ build the capacity of groups in relation to Aid for Peace through workshops
    - ✓ facilitate bi-monthly project forum or 6 monthly monitoring reviews
    - ✓ support projects in developing their individual Aid for Peace Frameworks
    - ✓ carry out the attitudinal survey with participants both at the start and completion of Phase II.
- A toolkit is still needed: templates, questionnaires, session evaluation forms, what tools work with what groups? How do you measure attitudinal change in children? CAN circulated a copy of the Aid for Peace Toolkit they have provided for every delivery agent.
- NISRA addressing the projects supported by the Partnerships, as happened in Louth, could prove very helpful (the presentation used is available from Louth Partnership)

- Partnerships have learnt from the Phase I experience, and for the most part have included the Post Project Evaluation and monitoring /Aid for Peace requirements into their Service Level Agreements and Letters of Offer/contracts. One Partnership had included an Annex to their Letters of Offer to projects which details; project specific indicators, outputs and impacts, and requirements for reporting.
- Partnerships are now strict with promoters: no progress reports, no payments.
- Partnerships in the main have a good handle on quantitative information. The qualitative information and tools are not finalised and support is required for this.
- One Partnership reported using the Programme level evaluations for Phase I reports. A query was raised as to whether SEUPB are planning a programme level evaluation for Phase II? How can Partnerships feed into this /utilise it for their reports/Aid for Peace?
- A copy of the attitudinal survey developed by the Monitoring & Evaluation Working Group during Phase I was circulated with the Communications Plan which is required to be carried out at the start and end of a project.
- The QR does not fit well with the Aid for Peace process.
- The database only captures high level quantitative information.
- Feedback on the reports submitted would be welcome and would assist Secretariats in their Aid for Peace process.

Proposed **Outputs** from Table C include:

- ✓ Tidy up of resources section on POBAL/CRC website – **the Consortium to bring forward**
- ✓ Recommend using Survey Monkey to carry out the attitudinal survey – councils should also have access to it – it will collate and do basic analysis. Could the Consortium assist with setting this up and doing graphs? – **Partnerships and Consortium to bring forward**.
- ✓ Consortium to provide samples of monitoring frameworks – **the Consortium to bring forward**
- ✓ Promotion of "gold standard" toolkits: toolkit is still needed: templates, questionnaires, session evaluation forms, what tools work with what groups, how do you measure attitudinal change in children? – **Individual Partnerships to liaise with CAN Partnership re possible access to their toolkit**
- ✓ Can Partnerships submit a request for a change to include an Action Research action? – **SEUPB to advise**
- ✓ Can Partnerships feed into and utilise any programme level evaluation planned for Phase II? – **SEUPB to advise**
- ✓ The development of a flow chart of the Aid for Peace / M&E process - **SEUPB to provide (see table A outputs above)**

**<u>Next Steps</u>**

In relation to "Next Steps" it was the view of those present that the networking and face-to-face opportunity provided by this workshop was of greatest value to the Partnerships and that future support would be best targeted at providing a similar networking event on a regular basis rather than via a specific working group.

Such a networking event should be open to all Partnerships, remain fluid and practical in its structure, and if possible should be attended by all the key stakeholders including SEUPB and NISRA – **Consortium to bring forward in consultation with the Partnerships and SEUPB**.

A report from the workshop is to be drawn up and circulated – **to be completed by the Consortium**.

Resources on Monitoring and Evaluation are to be found at:

http://www.community-relations.org.uk/eu-news/peace-iii/
www.pobal.ie

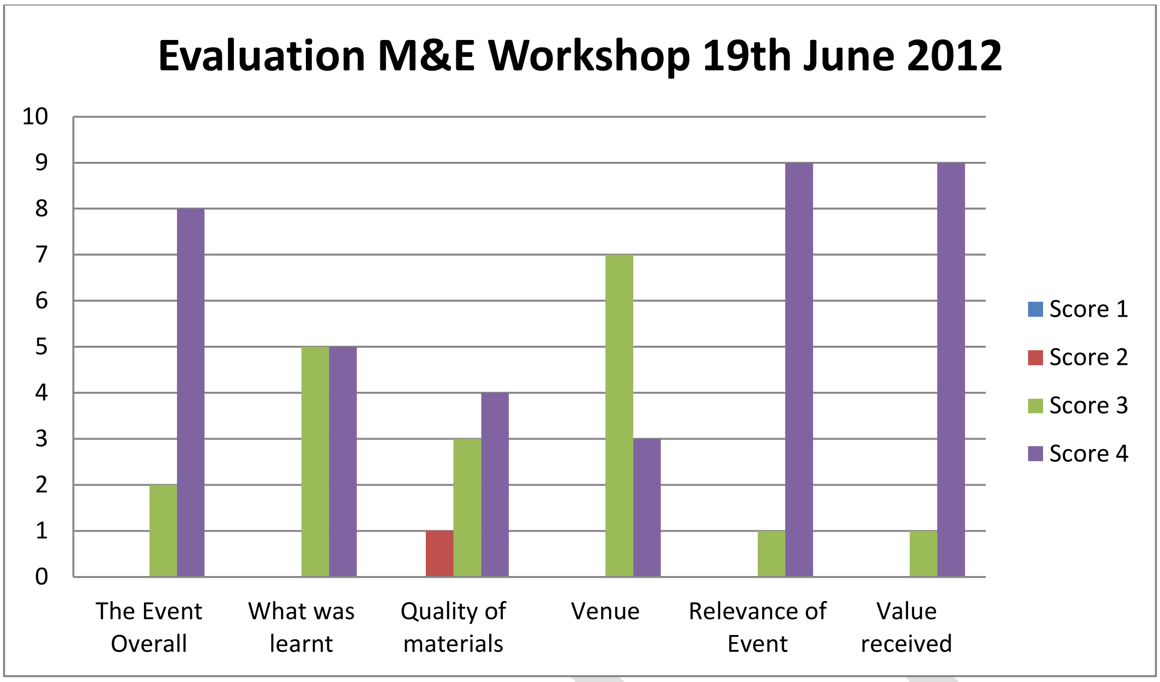
**Feedback and Evaluation**

≈ Attendees were asked to rate the event in terms of:

- The overall event.
- What was learnt
- The quality of the materials provided
- The venue
- The relevance of the event
- Value received for time given

A total of 10 evaluation responses were received and collated from an attendance of 12 participants i.e. 83%.

Rating of the event was high – with 67% attendees scoring the event at 4 and the remainder at 3




Attendees were asked the following questions:

**1. What did you like about this event?**

- The face to face opportunity provided
- The informality of the event
- Everything within the session and exercise was useful
- The networking opportunity provided
- The Café Dialogue format
- The themes and topics discussed were very relevant to my current work
- The practical resources and information shared
- Information sharing between Partnerships
- The opportuinity to find out what was expected by SEUPB
- It was good to hear about other Partnerships experiences and to take from their knowledge and expertise
- The sharing of information and best practice around monitoring and evaluation
- The networking with other Partnerships and learning about how they are dealing with the challenges of monitoring and evaluation.

**2. What did you like least about this event?**

- NISRA not being in attendance
- The confusion that exists between the Partnerships, SEUPB and the Consortium

**3. How will you use what you learnt at this event?**

- To consider how monitoring and evaluation information is fed back to the Partnership
- To improve my Partnership's approach to evaluation
- To further develop ongoing monitoring and evaluation within my Partnership

- To inform Partnership management and members as to the monitoring and evaluation requirements, resources and “best practice” models
- To ensure our monitoring and evaluation for Phase II is carefully planned and implemented
- To apply SEUPB learning points to monitoring and evaluation at a Partnership level
- To develop templates and other monitoring and evaluation tools
- To enhance our existing monitoring and evaluation processes
- To make the relevant changes to our monitoring and evluation systems

**4. Topics for future events:**

- Monitoring and evaluating attitudinal change in young people/children
- How to adequately resource effective and quality monitoring and evaluation.