



European Union

European Regional
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INTERREG IVA Programme

Guidance Note on Project Selection G1/IIVA

1.0 Introduction

This Guidance covers some of the key aspects of project selection as agreed by the Programme Monitoring Committee.

Only those application forms which have been properly completed, signed and received by the relevant cut-off date, will be considered. In some measures, applications will be considered on an ongoing basis, and a cut-off date will not apply.

1.1 Projects will be eligible for consideration if they:

- Meet the Basic Eligibility Check (Stage 1)
- Achieve a minimum of 65% following full Project Appraisal and Scoring (Stage 2)

Where a project's funding request exceeds £500,000, applications will be subject to a full economic appraisal. This will inform the overall score applied to the application.

- 1.2 Projects which meet both stages will be presented to an independent Steering Committee with a recommendation and a supporting rationale. The Steering Committee will make the final decision on the application.
- 1.3 Project applicants which have been rejected by the Steering Committee may request consideration via the Review Process as outlined in the Review Process Guidance Paper (G2).

2.0 Stages of Assessment

- 2.1 All applications must go through the following stages of assessment:

Stage 1 – Basic Eligibility Check

The following basic eligibility criteria must be met by all project applicants:

- The project proposal must clearly address one of the priorities outlined within the Operational Programme;
- The project activity must be within the eligible area as defined in Council Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006, (Article 21);
- All sections in the application form must be completed accurately and in full;
- Applications must be submitted on time (in the case of a published closing date);
- The willingness for project partners to engage in the partnership must be fully demonstrated in the application;
- The project must be in accordance with the governing EU Regulations (in particular, rules on the eligibility of expenditure of Structural Funds support in

relation to public procurement, state aid, environmental assessment and equal opportunities);

- All projects must be cross-border in nature. In order to demonstrate this, partners must cooperate in a minimum of at least two of the following four elements: joint development; joint implementation; joint staffing; joint financing (as required by Council Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 Article 19(2)); and
- In the case of projects which include partners from Scotland, appropriate levels of match funding must be identified.

2.2 From a corporate governance perspective, the Lead Partner in the application should, where possible, be a Public Sector Body or equivalent.

2.3 Applications which are deemed ineligible must not progress any further in the appraisal process.

Stage 2 – Full Appraisal and Scoring

2.4 Projects must be fully appraised and scored against the following criteria:

Programme:

2.5 The applicant must provide evidence of how the project contributes to the overall objective of the programme (30%)

2.6 The overarching objective of the programme is to support strategic cross-border co-operation from a more prosperous and sustainable region.

2.7 The project must match with the overall programme objectives.

Priority and Theme:

- 2.8 The applicant must provide evidence of how the project contributes to the priority and theme (30%)
- 2.9 The two priorities within the programme are; Co-operation for a more Prosperous Cross-Border Region; and Co-operation for a Sustainable Cross-Border Region. The programme themes are: Enterprise, Tourism, Collaboration and Infrastructure.
- 2.10 The project must contribute to one of the above priorities and themes.
- 2.11 Generic Selection Criteria – Efficiency, Effectiveness and Cross-Cutting Themes: This criteria will be utilised to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of Proposals and how they address the cross-cutting themes.
- 2.12 40% of the marks will be awarded on the basis of meeting the Generic Selection Criteria.
- 2.13 Evidence of **Value for Money/Value Added**: Projects must be realistically Costed. The project must have the capacity to provide a lasting legacy to the Programme. Projects must build on the experiences and lessons learned from the previous programmes and bring added value. Sustainability and/or mainstreaming must be considered. Projects must provide assurance that activities would not otherwise be achieved without EU funding.
- 2.14 Evidence of **Need**: The need for the project must be well established and described. Any relevant research must be included to show how the project links with or complements government strategies or initiatives.
- 2.15 Evidence of **Contributing to Cross-Cutting Themes**: Projects must Contribute to the cross-cutting themes of the Programme. These are:
- **Equality** – Projects must show due regard for the need to promote equality of opportunity and adherence to the equality legislation in relevant jurisdictions.

- **Sustainable Development** – Projects must illustrate how they will promote sustainable development which is concerned with the integration of environmental, economic and social issues.

Projects must not have a detrimental effect on any of the following areas:

- **Impact on Poverty** – Projects must demonstrate adherence to the relevant anti-poverty strategies in Ireland, Northern Ireland; and
- **Partnership** – Projects must demonstrate the development of an active partnership in the preparation and implementation of the project.

3.0 Application Scoring System

- 3.1 All projects must be scored out of 200. The quality threshold is 130 i.e. 65%. Projects that do not score 65% of the total of the total marks available should not be selected for support. All projects which score 65% or more must be ranked and funding should be allocated in order of ranking to prevent over-commitment of funds.

4.0 Scoring System

- 4.1 60% of the scoring from the selection criteria must be awarded on the basis of meeting the programme, priority and theme specific objectives.
- 4.2 40% of the scoring from the selection criteria will be awarded on the basis of efficiency and effectiveness and will have due regard to the cross-cutting themes.

Breakdown of scoring system

	Criterion	Maximum Score	Weighting	Weighted Final Score
1	PROGRAMME, PRIORITY AND THEME SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES			
1.1	Programme Specific Objectives (including target groups and areas)	20	x3	60
1.2	Priority and Theme Specific Objectives	20	x3	60
2.	EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS			
2.1	Value for Money / Added Value	20	x1	20
2.2	Need	20	x1	20
3	CROSS CUTTING THEMES			
3.1	Equality	20	x0.5	10
3.2	Sustainable Development	20	x0.5	10
3.3	Impact on Poverty	20	x0.5	10
3.4	Partnership	20	x0.5	10
	TOTAL			200
	QUALITY THRESHOLD (65%)			130

4.3 The following table gives details of the questions which should be taken into consideration for the overall score for each criterion. Taking weighting into consideration, all projects must be scored out of 200. A minimum score of 130 (or 65%) must be achieved in order for a project to be recommended for funding.

As well as achieving an overall score of 65%, successful applications must Score 65% in both programme, priority and theme objectives; and in efficiency and effectiveness objectives. Additionally, an application must achieve a minimum scoring band of 9-12 (evident) for each cross-cutting theme.

4.4 Programme, Priority & Theme

Programme Specific Objectives (60 marks)

Factors for Consideration
The project must contribute to the overall objective of the INTERREG IVA Programme in demonstrating that it is supporting strategic cross-border co-operation for a more prosperous and sustainable region.
The project must demonstrate how it is addressing an 'infrastructure gap' and how it is contributing to broader economic and social disadvantage in the eligible region.
The project must promote integrated development and delivery which creates synergies and leads to a more diverse economy.
Is the project cross border in nature? <i>(Draw on Regulation 1080/2006 identifying areas of cross border cooperation – joint development / joint implementation / joint staffing / joint financing)</i>

4.5 Priority and Theme Specific Objectives – Enterprise – Business - Support (60 marks)

Factors for Consideration
Shared Opportunities/Knowledge The project will provide assistance to sectors in the economy that can capitalize on the shared opportunities of the region and should demonstrate how a sharing of knowledge and experience will add value to the sector.
Human Resources The project should demonstrate how it will lead to improvements in human capital or improved skills in the business community.
Developing Linkages The project will demonstrate that necessary linkages/partnerships have been developed to ensure the sustainability of the operation/sector between industry and other stakeholders.

4.6 Efficiency and Effectiveness

4.6.1 Evidence of Value for Money / Added Value (20 marks)

Factors for Consideration
Has a well costed budget been provided with a clear breakdown of all supporting costs?
Are overhead / management charges apportioned on a justifiable basis?
Does the project demonstrate efficient use of the goods and services purchased for the project? The Lead Partner must show efficiency in terms of prices paid, which should be in line with the market average.
Is there evidence of public procurement procedures being followed where applicable?
Does the proposal have the potential to make a difference and have a lasting impact on the target communities/beneficiaries?
Is the project once-off in nature or does it have ongoing operational funding implications?
If yes, there are ongoing issues of financial sustainability, what is the likelihood of the proposal being sustained beyond period of INTERREG IV funding? Have any potential sources been identified at this stage?
Does the Lead Partner have a proven track record – i.e. knowledge and proven ability in a field relevant to the proposed project?
Does the project implementation plan provide a level of assurance that the promoter has the capacity to complete the project within the stated timeframe?
Are potential mainstream funders involved in the design and implementation of proposal?
If not, have relevant stakeholders been kept informed about the project?
A Communication Plan is a basic eligibility criterion for each Programme. The quality of the Plan needs to be taken into consideration. Has it been well costed in relation to the overall project? Will it be effectively implemented?
Complementarity with other EU Programmes – is your project in receipt of any other EU Programme funding? Ensure this is complementary and there is no duplication.
Is the project additional? Does it provide assurances that without ERDF funding would not otherwise have been achieved?
Will the project result in a higher level of quality / better outputs than it would without the benefit of ERDF funding?
Displacement should be considered. Will the proposal result in any other similar operation/ activities being adversely affected?

Will it complement / add value to existing services?
Is it clearly addressing gaps in existing provision?
Is an evaluation built in to the proposal as a part of best practice / sustainability strategy?

4.6.2 Evidence of Need

Factors for Consideration
Has the applicant provided concrete evidence of need for the project for the proposed target group? For example, is there evidence that the target group has been consulted with during the design of proposed operation?
Has relevant local and / or national research been provided or been cited in support of this need?
Is the plan compatible and complementary with activities delivered at a local level?
Has the plan taken consideration of how its proposed activities can fit within, and influence, the broader strategies in the eligible region and beyond at the macro level?
Is relevant and full supplementary information provided: Research reports, business plans, drawings, plans, financial statements, project implementation plan with timeframe etc.?
Does the proposal provide a clear and defined strategy of implementation? Key components should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of Need • Project Objective(s) clearly stated • Programme of Activities • Anticipated Outputs / Results / Impacts • A Plan for Monitoring • Timeframe for roll out • Detailed Associated Costings •
Has the applicant included a monitoring and evaluation strategy for tracking outputs, results and impacts? <i>(NOTE – This Plan needs to link with table 4.1 in the OP which outlines the targets and indicators.)</i>
Are the stated project outcomes achievable and realistic?
In the assessment of need, has the applicant identified different options that may meet the need and provided a rationale for the option that they have pursued?
Has the applicant identified the main risks associated with the various options and

factored these into the final option identified?

4.7 Cross-Cutting Themes

Note: The cross-cutting theme of cross-border will be factored into the priority specific criteria as there is a derogation that PEACE III may be delivered on a single jurisdiction basis.

4.7.1 Focus on Equality (10 marks)

Equality:

How will the project contribute to the development of opportunities for socially excluded groups? For example, opportunities for all those groups listed within Section 75 Legislation / Equal Status Act.

- i.e. Have key target groups been meaningfully involved in the consultation and drawing together of the Local Plan and will the project outcomes positively affect them?

4.7.2 Focus on Sustainable Development (10 marks)

Sustainable Development:

How does the project demonstrate compatibility with the environmental sustainability objectives of the Programme?

- i.e. Has the applicant considered any potential negative environmental impacts the project may incur and have they proposed any steps or actions to mitigate against these?
- i.e. In the case of any capital / construction projects, have basic environmental standards been incorporated into the design of the proposed projects?

Sustainable development is concerned with the integration of environmental, economic and social issues. Project work should preferably contribute to

environmental, social and economic goals and should not have a detrimental effect on any of these aspects.

4.7.3 Focus on Poverty (10 marks)

Impact on Poverty:

Does the proposal demonstrate that it will target resources and effort on people, groups and areas which, according to current research, are shown to be the most socially disadvantaged?

- i.e. Do they show that particular effort was made to facilitate the involvement of New TSN (or equivalent) and of marginalised and disadvantaged groups?

4.7.4 Focus on Partnership (10 marks)

Partnership:

Does the proposal build on the experiences of local partnerships in previous programmes and / or does it facilitate a strong partnership approach at a local level?

- i.e. Are the guiding principles of Partnership embedded in the proposal? – Participation / Openness / Shared Ownership / Representation / Mutual Respect

The score bands are as follows:

Score	How Evident?	Link to Criterion	Link at Project Level
0-4	Not Evident	The application failed to meet a basic standard under this criterion.	The project proposal does not demonstrate that it has the capacity to deliver basic project outcomes that would be expected in order to be awarded funding.
5-8	Less Evident	The application met some of the basic requirements of this criterion.	The project proposal demonstrates some ability to deliver key outputs and outcomes in areas, but overall it is below the standard expected in order to be

			awarded funding.
9-12	Evident	The application met the requirements of this criterion.	The project proposal demonstrates an ability to deliver project outcomes to an acceptable standard and it may be considered suitable for funding.
13-16	Very Evident	The application fully met the requirements of this criterion.	The project proposal is strong in the manner in which it has described a range of activities that will result in good outputs and the achievement of key goals.
17-20	Highly Evident	The application was an excellent fit with the requirements of this criterion	The project proposal demonstrates an excellent ability to deliver and shows a high degree of competency in achieving the outcomes described.

Issue Date: 19 December 2007