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**Minutes of the
PEACE III Review Panel Meeting**
Tuesday 23 June 2009, 14:00
The Belfast Office, 5 Cromac Place, Belfast

In Attendance:	Pat Colgan	SEUPB (Chair)
	Noel Casserly	Panel Member
	Pamela Dooley	Panel Member
	Dominic Mullan	Independent Member
	Lisa McMullan	SEUPB (Secretariat)
	Christine Markey	SEUPB (Secretariat)

1. Agree Agenda

The agenda was agreed.

2. Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Register of Interests/Conflicts of Interest

None

4. Reviews

The Review of the Educational Trust – Choices and Voices Project (001340)

Representatives from Educational Trust and the Consortium of Pobal and the Community Relations Council were invited to enter the room.

In Attendance:	Olwen Lyner	Educational Trust
	Heather Reid	Educational Trust
	Michael Culbert	Coiste
	Robert Campbell	EPIC
	Colette Nulty	Consortium
	Gordon Walker	Consortium

After introductions, the Chair outlined the procedures to be followed at the review meeting. The Project Promoters were then invited to outline the reasons for their request for a review.

The representatives for the Educational Trust (ET) presented their case. The main points from this included:

- . The decision was based on a misreading of the application. Funding had been awarded to Coiste under Theme 1.1 of the PEACE III Programme and while this project did incorporate educational bursaries these would only be available to Coiste members.

- . The assessment stated that the main thrust of the application was financial. This is not the case and not enough weight had been given to the target group that the project was aiming to engage.

- . Statements and scores in the efficiency and effectiveness section were contradictory. The comments appear to be positive but the low scores do not reflect these.

- . The target group is not being catered for through any other project.

The Chair thanked the Project Promoters for outlining their points and invited the Consortium to respond.

A representative from the Consortium made the following points:

Strand 2 of Theme 1.2, Support for Participation was to provide advice, counselling and support services for victims, their relatives and those who care for them; and to build the capacity of individuals to deal with the transition to peace and reconciliation and ensure victims and survivors are able to deal with the past.

The Steering Committee were looking for projects that included activities such as counselling and befriending services; essential high quality services to victims and survivors; that peace and reconciliation was addressed in a coherent way; partnership approaches; and complementarity with existing services.

The Steering Committee accepted that the project would work with and engage a specific target group within the eligible area.

The project received a low score for reconciliation because only one third of the participants would be dealing with conflictual issues. There would be no contribution from two thirds of participants in terms of attitudinal change and cross-border/cross-community links.

In terms of efficiency and effectiveness the project could complement two projects funded within Theme 1.1, however there was no reference to these.

There was no justification for four full time positions therefore it did not represent value for money.

The options for meeting the need of the project were not explored.

The Chair thanked the Consortium for their comments and asked if the Review Panel had any questions.

A Review Panel Member asked why the project was formulated as it was in terms of additionality, complementarity and the need for the existing structures.

The ET Representative stated that it was not a new structure. Staffing levels reflected feedback from a debrief meeting for a previous project, indicating that two members of staff were unrealistic.

The Chair asked if it was fair to assume that the project placed particular emphasis on the loyalist ex-prisoners and their families.

The ET Representative stated that there was particular focus on loyalist ex-prisoners but that other groups were not excluded.

A Review Panel member noted that the ET had a good track record and asked if there was a plan of tracking participants in the longer term.

The ET Representative stated that there were no resources in place at present and therefore tracking of participants was unrealistic.

The Chair asked if this project was trying to do something distinct and complementary with the other two projects under Theme 1.1.

The ET Representative stated that it was. The mechanism used to draw people into the programme is one of personal development. There is confidence on the Board that there will not be a problem in engaging people. The project is unique in that the target group are not being reached by any other project.

The Consortium Representative stated that the Steering Committee accept the initial engagement to draw people in; however, they would have liked to see that all participants would have engaged in the peace and reconciliation aspect of the programme.

A Review Panel Member asked about the idea of a link between the workshops and the bursaries.

The ET Representative stated that it was a symbiotic process. They added that when applying for a bursary, the applicant would have to show that they have exhausted all other means of possible funding and that they have been affected by the conflict. The application then goes to the Board who takes the decision considering the recommendation made by an assessor and then if a person was successful they would undertake the course and have ongoing engagement with the ET.

The Chair asked the Consortium to confirm that the Steering Committee considered that the project was not doing enough in terms of peace and reconciliation.

The ET Representative stated that the project was pushing for peace and reconciliation and would do this by linking to other projects. He also highlighted that there were elements of the project were it would not be possible to link with the other projects as only the ET could supply those services. The project would only fund courses that no one else will.

The ET Representative noted that the courses also help people to gain self-employment and self-confidence. Their families would not have the resources to support them.

A Review Panel Member asked if family members of ex-prisoners could benefit from the other two projects.

The ET Representative stated that there was some opportunity for family members of republican ex-prisoners to receive funds with the Coiste project but there was no opportunity for families of loyalist ex-prisoners to gain monies in the other project.

A Review Panel Member asked how many educational bursaries would be provided through the Coiste project.

The ET Representative stated that they expected 100-150 in a year but that it would depend on need and demand.

A Review Panel member asked how the project would reach and identify the target group.

The ET Representative stated that they would hold workshops and meetings to identify those that are in need of the funding.

A Review Panel Member asked if there was any money within the project that would assist in identifying those people.

The ET Representative stated that participants would be engaged through existing community and ex-prisoner networks. There are ex-prisoners on the Board and working for the Educational Trust which also gives them credibility and the ability to engage with these groups.

The Chair clarified that the Consortium thought the project was a good idea but was critical of the reconciliation and value for money elements.

The Consortium Representative highlighted that the options for delivery were not considered in the application. Value for money would have included the use of networks; explaining the management capacity; and identifying risks. None of these were demonstrated in the application.

The Chair asked the project promoters if they had considered approaching the other projects.

The ET Representative stated that they were already connected with the other two projects but at the time of putting together their application the funding was not guaranteed for those projects under Theme 1.1.

The ET Representative stated that the project could fall under the umbrella of the Coiste project; however resources would be an issue. The ET is in place to do this specific work and the variety of the Board members would ensure the project achieves progress toward peace and reconciliation.

The Chair clarified with the Consortium that the project fell down on efficiency and effectiveness and the decision to reject was taken on that basis.

The Consortium confirmed that the main stumbling block was the value for money and how the project would be delivered on the ground.

The Chair then asked both the ET and the Consortium for their final statements.

The ET Representatives stated that this project was completely different to anything that was currently being done; it does complement other projects but is also distinct in what it is trying to achieve. The people that this project are trying to target are going to lose out if it is not funded.

The Chair asked the Project promoters and the Consortium if they were happy with the way the Review Panel had been conducted, and if they felt they had been given the opportunity to convey all the main points of their argument. Both the Project Promoters and the Consortium confirmed that they were happy with the process.

The Project Promoters and the Consortium exited the room.

The Review Panel discussed the application and information presented and noted:

- . The applicants had made a convincing case.
- . They would be working toward peace and reconciliation by reaching out to their target group.
- . It was important that a strategic approach to the provision of services be taken, to ensure complementarity with other PEACE III projects
- . The project would fit better under Theme 1.1 Regional of the PEACE III Programme.
- . The value for money aspect of the project required further analysis.

The Review Panel concluded that the decision of the Steering Committee had not been unreasonable. It also confirmed that there had been no failings in the procedures followed.

The Panel recognised both the strategic importance and valuable impact of the activities contained within the application.

In order to maximise the benefits of such activities and to address the concerns raised over value for money and additionality the Panel has recommended that the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) work with the project promoters to develop these proposals into an application that may be considered by the 1.1 (Regional Projects) Steering Committee.

5. Any Other Business

None

6. Conclusion

The Chair thanked the Review Panel members for attending and informed them that he would write, on behalf of the Review Panel, to inform both project applicants and the Consortium of the Review Panel's decisions. He also stated that the minutes from the meeting would be e-mailed to Review Panel members in due course for their approval.