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Minutes of the PEACE III Review Panel Meeting

Wednesday 8 July 2009, 10:30
SEUPB, 11 Kevlin Road, Omagh

In Attendance:	Pat Colgan	SEUPB (Chair)
	John Anderson	Panel Member
	Angela Holohan	Panel Member
	Maire Hunt	Independent Member
	Lisa McMullan	SEUPB (Secretariat)
	Christine Markey	SEUPB (Secretariat)
	Sarah Reid	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 Junction – Building a Rights Respecting and Shared
Society (Ref – 001057)**

Representatives from The Junction and the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) were invited to enter the room.

In Attendance:	Maureen Hetherington	The Junction
	Eamonn Deane	The Junction
	Frances McAneny	Towards Understanding and Healing
	Howard Keery	JTS
	Eimear Murphy	JTS

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

The representatives for The Junction presented their case. The main points from this included:

-) There had been no consultation or request for clarification on any aspect of the application, was this applied to all applications?
-) The score for Need was 10/20. This was very low considering need was based on a wide range of expertise; it would tackle problems, fill gaps and exploit opportunities.
-) There was a diverse range of partners yet the score for this was very low. Derry City Council is a key institution and it is important to have a partner with their level of expertise and credibility on board.
-) The project is innovative, groundbreaking, challenging and targets key institutions.
-) The project will develop an international collaboration that systematically compiles examples of best practice, something that has not yet happened.
-) There are two key areas within the project: the interfaith encounter and dialogue and social healing and transformation, both of which tackle peace and reconciliation.

The Chair thanked the Project applicants for outlining their points and invited the JTS to respond.

A representative from the JTS made the following points:

-) This was a difficult priority in attracting projects with an appropriate fit with the Operational Programme.
-) The Steering Committee (SC) recognised The Junction's background in peace and reconciliation.
-) Applicants were invited to discuss project ideas with the JTS; The Junction did not avail of this opportunity.
-) Debriefing has proved useful for unsuccessful applicants in providing reasoning for SC decisions; The Junction did not avail of this.
-) There is €40m available within this theme; to date 3 calls have opened with 36 full applications received. Only 5 of these have been approved by SC. Those 5 projects have a strong link with public service delivery and delivering institutional capacity.
-) Although the aims of the project have an overarching peace and reconciliation focus they are not specifically linked to the requirements of the call.
-) The SC asked that projects scoring above 60 progress to Economic Appraisal (EA), lower scoring applications did not progress to EA therefore applicants were not contacted.
-) There was a concern whether The Junction is best placed to act as lead partner for a networking project of this size.
-) The application was not backed up with a detailed needs analysis.
-) There was concern about the achievability of the targets set.
-) The costs were high, particularly for foreign travel.
-) Whilst there is an impressive list of partners, the application lacks a level of public sector support. It is not clear how active the partners will be.
-) The focus on learning is only valid if it impacts institutional capacity.

The Chair thanked the JTS for their comments.

The Chair asked the project to confirm that they were only appealing on the basis that the decision was unreasonable. The applicant confirmed that this was the case.

The Chair then asked if the Review Panel had any questions.

A Review Panel Member asked if the applicant had applied under any other themes of the PEACE III Programme.

The applicant stated that they only applied under Theme 2.2 because of the European and International fit.

A Review Panel Member asked the applicant for more information on resources, who they would be used by and how they envisage change in the delivery of key capacities.

The applicant explained that in part, they had difficulty with public bodies engaging as they had little experience with some of the issues. The project has a creative partnership that drew in key stakeholders including public bodies. The dialogue would be for those at the grass roots level within public bodies so that they could engage directly with the surrounding communities. The idea of reconciliation dialogue allows people to create resources and deliver those at the level they are comfortable with.

A Review Panel Member recognised the applicant's passion for the project and asked if the public institutions can also see the need for the project.

The applicant stated that they have worked with LSPs, the Good Relations Forum and the Health and Social services. Feedback from those indicates a huge need.

The JTS highlighted that the SC had no issue with the proposed services, but had difficulty identifying the project's fit with the priority and evidence of need for the project.

The applicant challenged this, stating that the partners would not give any buy in if there was no need.

The applicant noted the apparent different interpretations of a key institution. They asked what constituted public services and stated that if this was limited to local government then the key influences in society would not necessarily be considered. Derry City Council is a key institution that can influence other councils, and given the project's location in the North West it was felt to be the most appropriate public institution.

The JTS stated that when an application is received they have to deal with the information as it is presented. Once the appraisal process has begun the JTS cannot assist in developing the application.

A Review Panel Member stated that applicants need to be specific in terms of what they are trying to do as not everyone on an appraisal panel will know the details surrounding their work.

The applicant stated that they would take that on board but that they had talked about their key stakeholders and partners in the application.

A Review Panel Member asked about the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Derry City Council and what that involved.

The applicant stated that the SLA was to deliver a diverse range of services including a programme to the educational sector; working with victims; acting as an advisor to the Good Relations Forum; assisting with Community Relations week; and informing policy.

A Review Panel Member asked who would deliver the academic papers and workshops.

The applicant stated that there is a variety of expertise within the partner organisations and there was money within the budget to complete these.

A Review Panel Member asked if the project would be duplicating work already being completed by INCORE.

The applicant stated that INCORE were a partner within this project and therefore they may complete some of the papers. INCORE would feed into the delivery at the grass roots level.

The JTS stated that the decision of the SC was based on the information in the application and that the project would have benefited from pre-consultation and a debrief meeting.

The Chair asked the JTS to confirm the process for contacting applicants.

The JTS confirmed that if a project scored lower than 60 the applicants would not be contacted.

A Review Panel Member asked the applicants why they did not avail of the debrief meeting.

The applicant stated that they were not aware of the pre-consultation or debrief and assumed that further consultation and clarity would automatically have happened. The applicant also reiterated that the score of 11/20 for partnership was unreasonable.

The JTS stated that information on pre-consultation is provided on SEUPBs website and the within the details of the call.

The Chair asked if there was a higher success rate from applicants that availed of this opportunity.

The JTS stated that it was too early to tell at this stage but the 5 that have been recommended were aware of the pre-consultation. The score on the partnership element fell into the evident band because the SC wanted to see a strong response on how the project would impact on the key institutions.

The applicant stated that if they had been aware of the pre-consultation then they would have availed of it. They also noted the variety of partners stating that they take a lot of time to consider these applications and the fact that they supported the project spoke for itself. The applicants then thanked the panel for the opportunity to present their case.

The Chair asked the Project applicants and the JTS 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 applicants and the JTS confirmed that they were happy with the process.

The Project applicants and the JTS exited the room.

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

-) The applicants made a good case but a lot of what was said was not in the original application form.
-) The application did not demonstrate a strong fit with the programme priority.
-) Limited evidence was presented to demonstrate the need for project activities; detail of proposed partnership working; and impact of activities.
-) There should be more partners from the public sector involved.

The Review Panel concluded that in light of the information provided and the arguments put forward the SC decision was not unreasonable. The Panel also acknowledged that the proper decision making procedures had been followed.

The Panel recognised the considerable effort made in preparing this application and would encourage the applicant to liaise directly with the JTS to develop any future proposals.

The Review of West Tyrone Voice – Looking to the Future (Ref: 000856)

Representatives from West Tyrone Voice (WTV) and the Consortium of Pobal and the Community Relations Council were invited to enter the room.

In Attendance:	Dr Hazlett Lynch	WTV
	Leslie Finlay	WTV
	Raymond Finlay	WTV
	Paul Skinnader	Consortium
	Jim Dennison	Consortium
	Colette Nulty	Consortium

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

The representatives for WTV presented their case, identifying factors demonstrating the unreasonableness of the decision, including:

-) Questions were not asked on mistakes made, learning achieved or lessons learned, it is unreasonable to reject a project for not answering questions that were not asked.
-) There was a problem with a project officer in 2004, this issue was resolved and the project was then successful. WTV believe they have been penalised for this.
-) The political and security environment affects victims, when perceived negatively it causes social withdrawal and affects project delivery. This was not considered in the decision making.
-) There will be unknowns in the context of the project, WTV will act to minimise disruption to and secure success in project delivery.
-) WTV disagree with the statement that 'the response fails to demonstrate the impact on more than 20 participants'. WTV stated that the potential participants outlined in the application were overlooked.
-) Positive impacts of the project were ignored.
-) It is unreasonable to criticise WTV for the project's short time-frame when the PEACE III Programme prescribes it.

-) The project hopes that learning can be passed on to others.
-) No alternative to EMU was proposed because other groups have taken victims to EMU therefore no justification was felt necessary.
-) WTV is a broad minded organisation that understands the need to use inclusive language but knows when to differentiate. The assessors preferred a uni-dimensional language which was unreasonable.
-) The application was rejected because the organisation seeks justice for relatives.
-) Reconciliation is at the forefront of the application and is not incidental as is claimed.
-) There is an imbalance between funding awarded to ex-prisoner linked groups and victims groups therefore there is a significant inequality issue.
-) Funding the project would be an opportunity to get people back into reconciliation activity.
-) The application was rejected because it focuses primarily on the membership of WTV. WTV needed to concentrate on their members to get them involved again. The circumstances surrounding the members were overlooked.
-) Only matters were recorded that would serve to justify a decision not to fund the project.
-) If the members are not reconciled through PEACE III no other reconciliation will take place.
-) Financial resources are needed to cover lost ground.

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

A representative from the Consortium made the following points:

-) The Consortium gave an overview of Theme 1.2, Strand 2 Support for Participation and what the SC were looking for in terms of project applications.
-) The highlighted the decision making procedure followed: the application received; clarification meeting occurred; SC consideration and deferral; Deferral Report presented to the SC for final decision; and the debriefing meeting.

-) General comments made by the SC included: that the project would target mainly victims; it would work mainly with the members of WTV; there was a specific need for this membership; and particular courses and modules on reconciliation were identified.
-) The application was deferred by the SC as it sought further information, the final submission did not address some of these issues.
-) The rationale of the SC scores. The PEACE III Programme Objectives scored 33 because of the internal focus and reconciliation was incidental and outward facing. The priority and theme score was 30 because of the ripple effect, building of positive relations was not clearly demonstrated and it did not fit with the Strand. Value for Money was given a score of 9.5 because of issues with additionality and concerns surrounding a trip to EMU. Need received a score of 14.5 because of feedback on visitations and the academic reports.
-) The SC acknowledged the great work of WTV but the application was below standard.
-) The assessors initial score was 65; this went to the SC, who requested more information, when it went back the SC reduced the score to 55.

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

A Review Panel Member referred to reconciliation at a local level and asked how the applicants would reach out to projects that were already funded through the PEACE III Programme and the PEACE Action Plans.

The applicant stated that the context in which the group are working at the present time has been overlooked, there are still significant set backs and the group need to build confidence in their members. WTV have good relations with other groups in the immediate area but it is difficult to have a relationship with other groups because of differing viewpoints and what they feel is a lack of moral equivalence. There are very few groups that use the same language as WTV or have their experiences; this was not taken on board by the assessment panel.

A Review Panel Member asked if WTV had had any discussions with any element of the governments in Northern Ireland and Ireland.

The applicant stated that they had a good relationship with Martin McAleese and also with members within the Department of Foreign Affairs in the South. They also confirmed that they have a good and open relationship with OFMDFM and work with William Redpath.

The Chair asked the applicant to explain what he understood reconciliation to be.

The applicant stated that reconciliation is a precious term and involves a process. The offended party needs to take the initiative to approach the offenders and try to establish reconciliation. It involves acknowledgment of hurt caused, an apology, remorse, repentance and a commitment not to engage in that activity again.

The applicant also noted that the group does work to reach the standards expected in the PEACE Programme and that SEUPB and the Consortium should be helping WTV reach those standards.

The Chair acknowledged WTVs position and recognised the experiences of and issues faced by WTV members. He confirmed that WTVs understanding of reconciliation is a component part of the PEACE III Programme.

The Consortium stated that the SC did not reject the organisation, they rejected an application. At the debrief meeting the opportunity was presented to WTV to work with the Consortium to submit an application when the Strand re-opens.

The Chair asked the Consortium to address the issue around partnership and what would be appropriate for WTV.

The Consortium stated that they would not force an organisation to engage with any groups they were not comfortable with. The Consortium asked who WTV

would be prepared to engage with and that information was not supplied, therefore the score is based on the information that was available.

The applicant stated that WTV exists to complete projects, when a project is rejected so is the organisation. WTV have a proven track record in delivering projects. WTV believe that the project was marked down because of the organisation.

The Chair asked if the applicant felt they had been rejected due to their refusal to work with certain groups.

The applicant stated that they felt that this was a possibility. They felt there had been an element of social engineering and noted that although the programme encourages North/South links it does not encourage East/West links.

The Chair stated that the PEACE III eligible region was decided by the Commission. He also stated that there was a provision in Theme 2.2 to establish links throughout Europe and Internationally.

The applicant stated that the project has to be delivered in Northern Ireland and the six Border Counties and asked who advised the Commission that this was the best eligible area.

The Chair confirmed that both the British Government, through the Northern Ireland Executive, and the Irish Government advised the Commission.

The Chair asked the Consortium to explain the reasons for marking down the application.

The Consortium referred to the Corporate Governance and stated that this was to establish how WTV had used other funding that had been made available to them. There were no negative comments in this regard.

The Chair asked about the issue with a previous member of staff as outlined in the applicant's presentation and asked if this had any bearing on the decision. The Consortium replied that it did not.

The Chair noted that there were different interpretations between the Consortium and the applicant of what a partnership was.

The applicant stated that it appeared that the Consortium's interpretation was the accepted one. The Chair highlighted that the purpose of the Review was to discover if that was the case.

The Consortium clarified that the initial assessment presented to the SC recommended the project for approval.

The Chair then asked the Consortium about the value for money aspect of the application.

The Consortium stated that from the application only a small number of people would benefit from the project and had asked the applicant to reconsider this. It was noted that the project would be dealing mainly with the membership and other partners needed to be included.

The Chair asked about the university visit and the other groups that had gone there. The Consortium stated that they had not funded those projects.

The Chair then asked the applicant to address the issues surrounding value for money.

The applicant stated that he had spoken with a few people that had already visited the university and they all spoke very highly of the course, therefore WTV considered it. The applicant noted that value for money was important but that WTV needed a strong magnet to encourage people to avail of the project. The university visit would be for 10 people that had gone through the project. The cost of flights, accommodation and fees are associated with this activity.

The Chair asked the Consortium to confirm the process followed.

The Consortium confirmed that that:

-) there was a meeting with the applicant before the application was submitted;
-) the Consortium's assessment recommended it for approval;
-) the SC then asked for more information; and
-) the SC felt that requests for information had not been adequately addressed and the application was rejected.

The Consortium acknowledged that it was important to have incentives in a project but these also needed to counteract with the impacts. The case was not made in the application of the impact on the ground.

The applicant stated that WTV is here for the long term and were disappointed that the Consortium were considering short term impacts.

The Consortium reaffirmed that they were considering the long term impact but they could not see any evidence of this in the application.

A Review Panel Member stated that there were examples of good groups that WTV could work with and that it would have been good to see the project reaching out to other projects at the local level.

The applicant stated that the application identified other groups through residential in Northern Ireland, Ireland and Great Britain.

The applicant then stated the difficulty in getting funding for their outreach workers.

The Chair confirmed that the PEACE III Programme does fund outreach workers but can only do this through approved projects.

The applicant raised concerns that it appeared that the largest amount of funding within the programme was going to ex-prisoner groups.

The Chair confirmed that €10m of the programme has been allocated to fund such groups, as agreed with the European Commission, and €50m is allocated to fund projects with victims and survivors.

The Chair then stated that the applicant had done an excellent job of helping the Panel to understand the hurt experienced and issues faced by WTV members. The Chair then asked for the final statements.

The Consortium re-iterated that they acknowledge the work done by WTV and the needs of its members. However, the project did not meet the criteria. The Consortium stated that they would be happy to work with WTV to assist with an application for the next call.

The applicant thanked the panel for the opportunity to state their case. They still believe that the decision was unreasonable and would like a list of the names of those in attendance at the SC where the decision was made.

The Chair asked the Project applicants 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 applicants and the Consortium confirmed that they were happy with the process.

The Project applicants and the Consortium exited the room.

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

-) The applicants made a powerful case.
-) The need to support these types of activities and the organisation is apparent.
-) The practical implementation of the project requires further detail, including information on proposed partnership working.

-) Consideration must be given to the project's value for money, particularly the cost elements of foreign travel and fast track training.

The Review Panel agreed that further consideration should be given to the request to review the SC decision of 3 April 2009 to reject West Tyrone Voice.

The Panel has sought additional information to assist in making a final decision. Whilst this process will require some time, the Panel believe that it is necessary. It has been agreed to complete this process over the next couple of weeks and will advise the applicant and the Consortium of the decision no later than 31 July 2009.

In the meantime, the Chair will write to both the applicant and the Consortium to advise them of the Panel's position.

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, the JTS 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.