

## **PEACE III PROGRAMME (2007-2013) PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Structural Funds Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (Article 65a) states that the Monitoring Committee should consider and approve the selection criteria for operations within 6 months of the approval of the Operational Programme and approve any revision of those criteria in accordance with programming needs. As Managing Authority for the PEACE III Programme, SEUPB is seeking your agreement to the Project Selection Criteria.
- 1.2 In order to launch the Programme promptly and to commence the process of drawing down EU funds, it is critical that these criteria are agreed as quickly as possible. The Programme has strict expenditure profiles set down by the Commission (known as N+2 targets) which, if not met, will lead to the decommitment of funds with a subsequent financial loss to the Northern Ireland and Border Region economies.

### **2. PEACE III PROGRAMME (2007 – 2013) Project Eligibility and Selection Criteria**

#### **Purpose**

- 2.1 The Eligibility and Selection Criteria will form the basis of the decision making process for all funding applications under the PEACE III

Programme. The Criteria has been developed in accordance with Article 65(a) of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

### **Stages of Assessment**

2.2 All applications will go through the following stages of assessment:

- **STAGE 1: Basic Eligibility Check:** In the first instance, the applications will be subject to a basic eligibility check. If the application does not meet all of the basic eligibility criteria it will not progress any further in the appraisal process; and
  
- **STAGE 2: Full Project Appraisal and Scoring:** Projects will be appraised and scored against the following criteria;
  1. They will be appraised and scored according to the programme, priority and theme specific selection criteria. (60% of the marks); and
  
  2. They will be appraised and scored according to generic selection criteria – efficiency, effectiveness and the cross cutting themes. (40% of the marks).

2.3 Where necessary, applications will be subject to full economic appraisal. This shall be commissioned and paid for by the SEUPB and will inform the overall score applied to the application.

2.4 Once appraisal and scoring is complete, applications will be presented to an independent Steering Committee with a recommendation and a supporting rationale for that recommendation. The Steering Committee will make the final decision on the application.

## **Stage 1: Basic Eligibility Check**

2.5 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 of the application form must be completed accurately and in full;
- Applications must be submitted on time (in the case of a published closing date).
- If the project involves partners, the willingness for project partners to engage in the partnership must be fully demonstrated in the application; and
- The project must be in accordance with the governing EU-Regulations (in particular rules on the eligibility of expenditure of Structural Fund support in relation to public procurement, state aid, environmental assessment and equal opportunities).

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

2.7 If deemed ineligible the application will not progress any further in the appraisal process.

2.8

### **Stage 2: Full Project Appraisal and Scoring**

2.9 Projects will be fully appraised and scored against the following criteria.

#### **Programme:**

2.10 The applicant must provide evidence of how the project contributes to the overall objective of the Programme (30%).

2.11 The overarching objective of the Programme is to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation.

2.12 The project must match with the overall Programme objective. Details of the Programme objectives are available in Annex Format.

#### **Priority and Theme:**

2.13 The applicant must provide evidence of how the project contributes to the Priority and Theme (30%)

2.14 There are two priority objectives within the Programme; 'Reconciling Communities' and 'Contributing to a Shared Society'. The Programme themes are: 'Building Positive Relations at the Local Level'; 'Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past'; 'Creating Shared Public Spaces' and 'Developing Key Institutional Capacities for a Shared Society'.

2.15 The project must contribute to one of the above priorities and themes. Details of the Priority and Theme specific objectives are available in Annex Format.

### 3. **Generic Selection Criteria – Efficiency, Effectiveness and Cross-Cutting Themes**

3.1 40% of the marks will be awarded on the basis of meeting the generic selection criteria. These criteria will help assess the efficiency and effectiveness of proposals and how they address the cross cutting themes.

3.2 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.

3.3 Evidence of **Need**: The need for the project must be well established and described. Any relevant research should be included to show how the project links with or complements government strategies or initiatives.

3.4 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 these areas:

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

#### **4. Scoring System**

4.1 All projects will be scored out of 200. The quality threshold is 65%. Projects that do not score at least 65% of the total marks available will not be selected for support. A score equivalent to 65%, or above, will not guarantee funding as applications will be scored and ranked and the finite amount of funding will be allocated to the highest ranked projects.

4.2 Annex 1 provides detailed selection criteria in relation to Building Positive Relations at the Local Level (Theme 1.1). This is for illustrative purposes and the information in relation to the other themes is available to Monitoring Committee members upon request.

#### **5. Recommendation**

5.1 The Monitoring Committee is requested to:

- **Approve** Project Selection Criteria as outlined in this paper.

## ANNEX 1 - DETAILED PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

### PEACE III PRIORITY 1: RECONCILING COMMUNITIES THEME: BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

#### Proposed Scoring System:

- 60% of the scoring from the selection criteria must be awarded on the basis of meeting the Programme, Priority and Theme specific objectives.
- 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.

	Criterion	Maximum Score	Weighting	Weighted Final Score
<b>1</b>	<b>PROGRAMME, PRIORITY AND THEME SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES</b>			
1.1	Programme Specific Objectives (including target groups and areas)	20	x3	60
1.2	Priority and Theme Specific Objectives	20	x3	60
<b>2.</b>	<b>EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS</b>			
2.1	Value for Money / Added Value	20	x1	20
2.2	Need	20	x1	20
<b>3</b>	<b>CROSS CUTTING THEMES</b>			
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
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>200</b>
	<b>QUALITY THRESHOLD (65%)</b>			<b>130</b>

The following tables give details of the questions which are taken into consideration for the overall score for each criterion.

Taking weighting into consideration, all projects will 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.

## 1. PROGRAMME, PRIORITY & THEME SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

### 1.1 Programme Specific Objectives - including target groups and areas (60 marks)

Factors for Consideration
Does the plan, as presented, clearly promote cohesion between communities and does it provide a meaningful focus on Peace and Reconciliation?
Are the concepts of reconciliation, cultural diversity and equality ingrained into the objectives of the proposal?
Does the plan build on the experiences and learning from the two previous PEACE Programmes?
Does the plan have the capacity to provide a lasting legacy to the PEACE III Programme?
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>
<i>IN ADDITION, FOR STRATEGIC / REGIONAL PROJECTS</i>
Is the project strategic in focus?
Is it to be implemented on a regional basis across the whole eligible region? (Northern Ireland and the Border Region)
<b>TARGET GROUPS AND AREAS</b>
Is the project targeted at a clearly identified area that has been affected by the conflict and has experienced particular problems of segregation, marginalisation and isolation? (Refer to OP 4.17 for list of specific areas) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sectarian interface areas where segregation is high and inter-community conflict and dispute is high and community relations correspondingly poor;</li> <li>• Disadvantaged areas suffering the effects of physical dereliction as a consequence of the conflict;</li> <li>• Areas that have experienced high levels of sectarian and racial crimes, incidents and tensions;</li> </ul>

- Areas and communities in decline due to lack of inward investment and isolated by limited economic and social cross border linkages;
- Areas where economic and social development has been inhibited by the conflict and problems of exclusion and marginalisation exist illustrated by low levels of income, skills and qualification and consequently display high levels of multiple deprivations.

Does the proposal intend to work with any of the target groups named in the OP? (Refer to OP 4.18 for details of target groups)

- Victims of the conflict;
- Displaced persons;
- People who have been excluded or marginalised from economic, social and civic networks as a result of problems related to sectarianism;
- Former members of the security and ancillary services;
- Ex-prisoners and their families.

NOTE: A higher score may be awarded if the project clearly demonstrates the positive outcomes for these people (groups) and places (areas). Therefore, although marks will be awarded for working with the target groups and/or areas, an analysis of the project outputs, outcomes, impacts, long term changes etc. will result in extra marks.

#### **Note on Target areas / Target groups:**

- **It is not necessarily expected that applicants must target a specific area showing the effects of conflict and / or community polarization AND also target communities and groups that have been effected as a result of the conflict or sectarian or racial tensions within the same project.**
- **Rather in any one project, an applicant may provide a cogent reason as to why they are targeting either target areas or target groups.**
- **The implementation of measures for Victims and Survivors within the Peace III Programme in Northern Ireland will be done in a manner that takes full account of the Strategy for Victims that is currently being considered by the Executive.**
- **The Programme will also seek to ensure complementarity and consistency with the work of the Victims' Commissioner once the appointment to this post has been made.**
- **It is important to recognise that single identity interventions can be appropriate where it is deemed necessary.**
- **Groups and individuals will be encouraged to move at their own pace and an enabling facilitative approach will be adopted.**

## 1.2 Priority and Theme Specific Objectives (60 marks)

<b>Factors for Consideration</b>
Will the project challenge attitudes towards sectarianism & racism?
Will the project result in supporting conflict resolution and mediation at the local level?
Is the project collaborative (involving public, private and community sectors)?
Will the project outputs improve levels of trust and tolerance and act as a catalyst for reducing levels of sectarianism and racism?
Has a bottom-up approach been adopted in developing the plan? Has it involved an inclusive consultation process?
Does the plan support the active participation of local people, communities and voluntary organisations in decision making that directly affects them?

## 2. EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

### 2.1 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 PEACE III 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?

## 2.2 Evidence of Need (20 marks)

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"> <li>• Evidence of Need</li> <li>• Project Objective(s) clearly stated</li> <li>• Programme of Activities</li> <li>• Anticipated Outputs / Results / Impacts</li> <li>• A Plan for Monitoring</li> <li>• Timeframe for roll out</li> <li>• Detailed Associated Costings</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
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?

### 3. 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.

#### 3.1 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?

#### 3.2 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.

#### 3.3 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?
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#### 3.4 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 scoring bands are as follows**

<b>Score</b>	<b>How Evident?</b>	<b>Link to Criterion</b>	<b>Link at Project Level</b>
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.