

Implementation Arrangements Paper

Ireland Wales Cross Border Programme 2014 – 2020

Implementation Arrangements

The Joint Secretariat (JS) will be based at the Welsh Government Offices in Carmarthen and Llandudno Junction and in the Southern Regional Assembly Offices in Waterford, Ireland.

The Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme will operate an Open Call for projects.

Throughout the programme period the level of commitment and spend within each Priority Axis will be closely monitored. At certain points within the programme period the decision may be taken to suspend a Priority Axis if sufficient operations have been approved to achieve full commitment. In these instances operations could be placed on a reserve list to allow the 'mopping up' of returned funds to the programme from completed operations.

As a direct result of beneficiary feedback; lessons learnt evaluations and general discussions at consultation events the appraisal process for the 2014-20 programme has been modified.

Appraisal of a funding proposal will be a three stage process as outlined below.

Pre-planning

Contact us via the website link or our Ireland Wales inbox
(IrelandWalesCrossBorderProgramme@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Your contact details will be forwarded to the Operations Officer who will engage in early discussions with you to discuss the potential for advancing your proposal.

Beneficiaries can take advantage of the Wales Ireland Networking Scheme (WIN3) to assist with the costs associated with the brokering of partnerships for a proposal. Please ask your Operations Officer for further information on accessing the WIN scheme.

Proposals with promise will be invited to complete an Operation Logic Table. An Operation Logic Table will provide us both with an indication of the activity, the strategic fit, the indicators and results you are looking to achieve and a rough estimate of the financial package.

When the beneficiary and the Operations Officer are content that sufficient information has been provided, the proposal will be forwarded to the Technical Group for a decision.

Membership of the Technical Group will comprise of senior officials from WEFO and the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA).

Technical Group Decision Options:

- Accepted into the first stage business planning
- Advised to work with another operation looking to deliver similar activity
- Advised to strengthen proposal – clear guidance will be provided
- Rejected/Declined/Withdrawn

All Technical Group decisions will be provided to the Programme Monitoring Committee and Programme Steering Committee for information.

Gateway 1 – Business Planning Stage:

Only if a proposal is approved to proceed by the Technical Group does it move to the next stage – business planning.

Organisations will be invited to register on e-Gateway to access WEFO Online the customer facing platform for the Programme and Project Information Management System (PPIMs). Only the Lead Beneficiary will have access to PPIMs, however, all joint beneficiaries will be identified and linked to the operation.

All document exchanges are via WEFO Online.

The Lead Beneficiary will be invited to complete and submit a business plan template limited to three core criteria - Strategic Fit (including co-operation criteria), Delivery and Finance & Compliance.

Between these three criteria, all aspects of the proposed operation are assessed to a certain level of detail, with the emphasis being placed on the strategic fit of the proposal with the Ireland Wales Cross-border Programme. Financial and compliance checks will be undertaken and proposed delivery plans will be appraised.

You will agree a deadline for the completion of the Stage 1 business plan with your Operations Officer.

The Stage 1 business plan will only be submitted to the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) for a decision with the agreement of the Lead Beneficiary.

The PSC has three options when reviewing business cases at Gateway 1:

- Approval and acceptance into the detailed planning stage.
- Returned for additional work at Gateway 1 –clear guidance will be provided as a proposal that requires fundamental re-writing should be rejected or declined.
- Rejected/declined/placed on reserve/withdrawn.

Gateway decisions will be relayed to the Lead Beneficiary in a formal letter.

Linda Weaver

Detailed Business Plan Stage

An operation approved at Gateway 1 is moved to Detailed Business Planning Stage, and invited to complete evidence on the six remaining criteria:

Indicators & Outcomes; Value for Money; Project Management; Cross Cutting; Suitability of Investment; Long Term Sustainability.

The Lead Officer and Lead Beneficiary will discuss and agree timeframe for the submission of information for an approval decision.

Evidence can be submitted in tranches to facilitate progress on assessment.

The Operations Officer will assist the Lead Beneficiary to complete the Delivery Profile (Expenditure/Income/Outputs/Key Milestones/Claim Cycle/Audit Cycle/Review Meetings/Data Collection) on PPIMs.

The Stage 2 business plan will only be submitted to the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) for a decision with the agreement of the Lead Beneficiary.

The PSC has three options:

- Approval.
- Returned for additional work –clear guidance will be provided as an operation that requires fundamental re-writing should be rejected.
- Rejected/declined/placed on reserve/withdrawn (This is unlikely at this stage but is included for scenarios where a beneficiary has withdrawn, funding has been lost etc.)

Approval Process

A Subsidy Contract will be issued to the Lead Beneficiary which must be returned, signed, to the JS within 20 working days.

Mobilisation – this phase allows an operation to establish a team, procure and complete legal requirements around the Joint Beneficiary agreements. The start date for the activity; the duration of the mobilisation and the expenditure categories to be approved by the JS prior to approval.

Where an organisation fails to complete the mobilisation stage within the agreed timescale, the approval decision is returned to PSC for review.

Post Approval

An Induction meeting will take place within 6 weeks of approval, where all partners will be expected to attend. The meeting will include a review of the subsidy contract, status of beneficiary contracts, mobilisation targets, delivery of activity, policy documents, retention of documents, contacts, levels of authority, specialist advice from CCT, RME, FAT (Finance), etc.

After Care/Reviews – there will be close monitoring of approved operations, with regular reviews linked to claim submission and/or key milestones at three or six monthly intervals.

The Lead Beneficiary will submit a progress report for discussion at post approval review meetings.

Evaluations –operations with a duration exceeding 3 years will need to carry out a mid-term evaluation and all operations will need to undertake a final evaluation. An evaluation framework, to ensure quality and consistency is being established that can be drawn down for use by Beneficiaries.