



IRELAND WALES
2007 – 2013

Ireland Wales Programme 2007-13 (INTERREG 4A)

Programme and Project Management Guide



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FOREWORD

This is the Programme and Project Management Guide which will serve as an essential reference document for all who are interested in applying for funding under the Ireland Wales Programme 2007-2013.

It replaces the Programme Complement which was used under the last Ireland Wales Programme. However the style and content of this document will be quite different in order to provide a greater level of assistance to project applicants.

We hope that this, in conjunction with our programme website, www.irelandwales.eu or www.wefo.wales.gov.uk will prove to be useful and provide concrete assistance to applicants either when submitting their application form or when looking for essential information regarding managing their approved project.

**Joint Technical Secretariat Team
November 15th 2007**

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

The Ireland Wales Programme (INTERREG 4A) was submitted for approval to the Commission on March 6th 2007 and was approved on September 17th 2007¹. It constitutes a set of proposals for the development of joint Irish Welsh initiatives envisaged under the terms of Article 6 of EC Regulation No 1080/2006 which covers the provisions made for the European Territorial Cooperation Objective.

The programme area will benefit from almost €52.7 million in ERDF grant support over the period of its operation. It will be matched by approximately €17.6 million by Welsh and Irish partnership interests. In total the programme will be worth €70.3 million.

The eligible programme area incorporates the NUTS III regions of Dublin, Mid East and South East in Ireland and Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey (Yns Mon), Conwy and Denbighshire and South West Wales.

1.2 The Purpose of this Implementation Document

The purpose of this document is to provide details regarding the operating procedures of the Ireland Wales Operational Programme.

We aim to provide practical information, advice and assistance to potential applicants and to organisations which are approved for funding under the programme.

For example it will include guidance on the application procedures and processes, the scoring and appraisal system and the management and decision making structures.

It also provides important information on changes which apply in the new programming period which will have important implications for project sponsors.

¹ Commission Decision C (2007) 4231

1.3 Significant Operational Changes compared to the 2000-06 INTERREG IIIA Programme

This Ireland Wales Programme has been developed in the context of a changed regulatory framework. What this means is that a new set of EU Regulations have been drawn up which form the legal basis for all Structural Funds Programmes including this one.

As a result this has led to a number of important changes in how the new Ireland Wales Programme will be structured. What follows is a short summary of the key changes that project applicants should familiarize themselves with as a priority. More detailed explanations follow later in this guide.

1.3.1 Change of Managing and Certifying Authority

Under the 2000-06 Ireland Wales Programme the Managing and Paying Authority were both based in the Welsh European Funding Office, firstly in Cardiff and then Merthyr Tydfil. This was supplemented by a Contact Office in the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly in Waterford.

Under the 2007-13 Ireland Wales Programme the roles will be reversed. The Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly will act as the Managing and Certifying Authority which will be supplemented by a Contact Office in the Welsh European Funding Office.

1.3.2 Use of the Lead Partner Principle

Under the 2000-06 Ireland Wales Programme each project had one Irish and one Welsh partner. One partner acted as the Lead which in practical terms meant that they coordinated appraisal correspondence with the Joint Technical Secretariat and in principle coordinated the return of payment claim forms to the payments team.

Under the 2007-13 Ireland Wales Programme the role of the Lead Partner will be enhanced considerably. This is required under the terms of EC Regulation No 1080/2006, Article 20. The Lead Partner will have overall responsibility for the project and the aim will be to increase cross border coordination, increase joint working and streamline administration.

More information is available on this point in Chapter 2.

1.3.3 All grant payments will be paid to the Lead Partner and paid in Euro only

Under the 2000-06 Ireland Wales Programme Irish organizations were paid in euro while Welsh organizations were paid in Sterling. Both organizations were paid separately.

Under the 2007-13 Ireland Wales Programme the Lead Partner will be the only partner to receive grant directly from the Certifying Authority. That organization will then distribute the necessary funds to the other partners in the project. Payments will be made in euro only and will be on a six monthly basis. Arrangements regarding advanced payment of grants for certain categories of project applicants are still under discussion and will be published in due course.

1.3.4 *New arrangements for Development Officer Service*

The Development Officer Service, which has been widely acknowledged as being essential to the success of the last Ireland Wales Programme is being retained for the new programme. However there are important changes in process and personnel.

The Development Officers will now be employed centrally by the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly and WEFO. The aim is to provide a more focused and integrated approach to project development.

Also all project promoters will now be required to register their interest with the Development Officer team in both Ireland and Wales. Project promoters **will also need to document and provide evidence of their engagement and working relationship with the Development Officers in the application form.**

Further information is available in Chapter 2.

1.4 Programme Objective and Priorities

The full programme strategy is outlined in the main Operational Programme document. What follows is a summary of the programme objective and the priorities that are meant to ensure the delivery of the strategy.

The two priorities are the areas under which interested parties can apply for funding to deliver joint projects in the programme area.

1.4.1 *Programme Objective*

The overall objective of the Ireland Wales Operational Programme on cross border territorial development (2007-2013) is as follows:

Through an integrated approach to economic, environmental, social and technological issues the Ireland Wales Territorial Cooperation Programme seeks to further develop the cross border region and

- Contribute to its greater competitiveness and sustainable development;
- Improve its overall economic, environmental and social well-being;
- Achieve a more cohesive, balanced and sustainable development of the Ireland Wales cooperation area, and thus to contribute to the overall competitiveness of the Community territory in a globalised world.

This objective will be taken forward and delivered through two operational priorities.

1.4.2 Priority 1: Knowledge, Innovation and Skills for Growth

This Priority is divided into two separate but related themes as follows:

Theme 1 - Innovation and competitiveness

Theme 2 - Skills for competitiveness and employment integration

The main focus of this priority will be on how the cross border region can make a real contribution towards delivering on the objectives of the revised Lisbon Agenda of creating more and better jobs and creating an environment that can foster innovation and the knowledge economy. From the analysis it is clear that this is an area that is a high priority for both parts of the cross border region as well as the EU. This subject will be developed further in the next chapter.

1.4.3 Priority 2: Climate Change and Sustainable Regeneration

This Priority is divided into two separate but related themes as follows:

Theme 1 – Climate Change and Sustainable Development

Theme 2 – Sustainable Regeneration of Communities

The main focus of this priority will be on how the cross border region can address the challenges of the Gothenburg agenda and make a real contribution towards building a more sustainable future for the region. Both parts of the region face common challenges in terms of climate change and sustainable development and also in relation to the regeneration of communities. This subject will be developed further in the next chapter.

1.5 Programme Budget

The budget for the programme is similar to the 2000-2006 Ireland Wales INTERREG IIIA Programme. This is summarised below for information.

Payments are made as reimbursement of actual expenditure according to the following plan².

Priority axes by source of funding (in euros)

	Community Funding (a)	National Public funding (b)	National private funding (c)	Total funding (d)=(a)+(b)+(c)	Co-financing rate (e)=(a)/(d)	For information	
						EIB contributions	Other funding ³
Priority Axis 1 Knowledge, Innovation & Skills for Growth	29,720,147	9,906,716	-	39,626,863	75%		1,000,000
Priority Axis 2 Climate Change & Sustainable Regeneration	19,813,431	6,604,477	-	26,417,908	75%		1,000,000
Priority Axis 3 Technical Assistance	3,161,717	1,053,906	-	4,215,623	75%		-
TOTAL	52,695,295	17,565,099	-	70,260,394	75%		2,000,000

1.6 Conclusion

The rest of the document will outline the practical information and arrangements that will facilitate the operation of the programme and will provide practical information to potential applicants on how they can access funding and manage an approved project.

² The Financial Plan has been constructed on the basis of total public eligible expenditure.

³ Including national private funding where priority axes are expressed in public costs.

CHAPTER 2

Partnership and Project Development - Essential Information

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides potential applicants with the essential information that they need to start developing partnerships and some of the fundamental requirements which have to form the basis of each Ireland Wales project application.

It will be subdivided into four sections

- 2.2 Being a Lead Partner** – What it is and what it involves
- 2.3 4 Cooperation Criteria** – What they are and what are the implications
- 2.4 Partnership Development** – The services which are available
- 2.5 Development of Project Ideas** – Essential information

2.2 Lead Partner - Change of Role for New Programme

A major new feature of the Ireland Wales Territorial Cooperation Programme is the full adoption of the Lead Partner Principle. This is to facilitate a more structured and effective approach to building and managing partnerships and projects.

While approved projects under the 2000-2006 Ireland Wales Programme did have a Lead Partner it did not involve many responsibilities and they were very loosely defined.

For the purposes of this programme the responsibilities are more significant and are clearly defined in Article 20 of EC Regulation No 1080/2006⁴.

⁴ **Article 20 of EC Regulation No 1080/2006**

The legal basis for this is outlined in Article 20 of EC Regulation No 1080/2006 which states the following:

" 1. For each operation, a lead beneficiary shall be appointed by the beneficiaries among themselves. The lead beneficiary shall assume the following responsibilities:

(a) it shall lay down the arrangements for its relations with the beneficiaries participating in the operation in an agreement comprising, inter alia, provisions guaranteeing the sound financial management of the funds allocated to the operation, including the arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid;

(b) it shall be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the entire operation;

(c) it shall ensure that the expenditure presented by the beneficiaries participating in the operation has been incurred for the purpose of implementing the operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between those beneficiaries;

The aim is to focus and streamline the administration requirements for project managers and ensure greater levels of joint working. Compared to the arrangements in place for the 2000-2006 programme it is a more structured and organized way of managing projects.

What this means in practice for projects is as follows;

1. Project partners will initially have to decide who takes on the role of Lead Partner. When deciding this it is important to be sure that the Lead Partner has sufficient capacity in place to manage the project on behalf of all partners and deal with the administrative requirements of running an Ireland Wales funded project.
2. The Lead Partner will have to coordinate the drafting of the application in cooperation with the other partners, liaise with the Development Officer team, and submit it on time via the Development Officer team to the Joint Technical Secretariat.
3. The Lead Partner will have to draw up a partnership agreement between it and the other partners to govern their relations and to ensure that the partnership works effectively. An overview of the issues that need to be addressed in such an agreement are outlined in a document which is available at Annex II and available for download on the programme website www.irelandwales.eu.
4. The Lead Partner will be responsible for signing the grant offer letter on behalf of the entire project partnership and will be the sole point of contact between the partnership and the programme management team from the submission of the project to its completion.
5. The Lead Partner will be responsible for the overall management of the project and ensuring that all of the project work packages are delivered in accordance with the project proposal and the grant offer letter.

(d) it shall verify that the expenditure presented by the beneficiaries participating in the operation has been validated by the controllers;

(e) it shall be responsible for transferring the ERDF contribution to the beneficiaries participating in the operation.

2. Each beneficiary participating in the operation shall:

(a) assume responsibility in the event of any irregularity in the expenditure which it has declared;

(b) inform the Member State in which it is located about its participation in an operation in the case that this Member State as such is not participating in the operational programme”

6. The Lead Partner will be responsible for collecting all project information and monitoring and reporting about progress of the whole project in the framework of the agreed monitoring and reporting system.
7. The Lead Partner will be responsible for collecting all financial information and progress reports and will submit these as one single claim for payment to the payments section of the JTS. They will also need to ensure that all spend by the partners is directly related to the delivery of the project. Notwithstanding this it should be made clear that all partners are equally responsible for financial control and coordination and will be liable for any irregularities or ineligible costs which are claimed.
8. The Lead Partner will receive all ERDF payments on behalf of the partnership and will be responsible for distributing them to their project partners.
9. The Lead Partner is only the administrative head of the project. **All partners have equal responsibilities regarding its successful delivery.**
10. Each project has to be a joint project. The Lead Partner Principle is simply a management and organizational tool.

Organisational Structures of Each Partner

Further to this article 13(1) of EC Regulation 1828/2006 states that the Managing Authority has to satisfy itself that the beneficiaries, in particular the Lead Partner has the capacity to fulfill the conditions outlined in the grant offer letter.

Partner organisations will have to demonstrate the following:

- Their legal status
- Financial management competence;

Lead Partners will need to provide their constitution/articles of association and details of their main financial management and control procedures to the JTS as part of the application procedure.

2.3 Cooperation Criteria – Essential Building Block

Another essential building block in developing cross border partnerships is the 4 cooperation criteria. The aim of these criteria is to link them to the Lead Partner Principle which should maximize the level of joint working between partners. The Lead Partner Principle will work best if it is based around these

criteria. These criteria are aimed at ensuring joint working, true cooperation and greater transparency.

The reason that these criteria have been introduced as a formal European Commission requirement is that there have been a number of criticisms in the past that similar programmes did not demonstrate sufficient levels of cross border working and that many projects were in fact just operating on a parallel basis on both sides of borders.

Article 19 of EC Regulation No 1080/2006 says that projects “*shall cooperate in at least two of the following ways for each operation:*

- *Joint Development*
- *Joint Implementation*
- *Joint Staffing*
- *Joint Financing”*

They shouldn't be viewed as a difficulty, rather an opportunity to work closer together to deliver good quality truly joint projects.

What does this mean in practice?

Joint development means that the project must be designed by representatives of organizations from both sides of the border and demonstrated as such in the application. This means that project proposals must clearly integrate the ideas, priorities and actions of stakeholders in both Ireland and Wales. The work packages for each part of the project should be joint and demonstrate what each partner will bring to the project. The Lead Partner is the coordinator of this process but should include other partners from early on in the design process.

Joint implementation means that activities must be carried out and coordinated on both sides of the border and demonstrated as such in the application. It is not enough that activities run in parallel. There must be clear content based links between what is happening in Ireland and Wales and regular contact between the two sides which should be shown in the project work packages part of the application form. The Lead Partner is responsible for ensuring that activities are properly coordinated, that schedules are kept and that the right quality levels are achieved. The progress reports should clearly demonstrate the joint contribution to the project objectives.

Joint staffing means that the project should not duplicate functions on either side of the border and that staff on both sides of the border should work together on the project. Partners should not merely carry out activities in parallel without coordination and exchange. As a minimum there should be one joint project manager with overall responsibility for project activities on both

sides of the border. It is essential that the Lead Partner allocates sufficient resources for overall project management.

Joint financing means that there will be only one contract per project and there must therefore be one joint project budget. There is also only one project bank account (held by the Lead Partner) and payments are made from the programme to this account. The Lead Partner is responsible for administration and distribution of these funds and for reporting on their use. Match-funding should come from both sides of the border and generally from all partners and illustrates the commitment by each partner to the joint project.

In conclusion projects will have to clearly demonstrate that they satisfy at least two of the above criteria. In conjunction with using the Lead Partner Principle these criteria should ensure greater joint working, stronger partnerships which should mean that each partner knows what is expected of them during the project implementation.

Projects will be ranked higher in the project selection criteria if they can demonstrate that they are cooperating on either three or all four of the criteria.

2.4 Partnership Development – The services which are available

For people and organizations that may have a great idea but are lacking a cross border partner help is available from the programme team. A number of different services are available which will help potential project applicants to source a partner in your partner country.

Wales Ireland Networking Scheme 2 (WIN 2)

The Wales Ireland Networking Scheme is the successor to a similar initiative which ran during the life of the 2000-2006 Ireland Wales Programme.

It will facilitate organisations to travel to other parts of the programme area through a travel and subsistence scheme. It aims to encourage and incentivise the development of cross border partnerships and ultimately increase the number of Ireland Wales project applications.

This will be managed by the Irish Development Officer based in the offices of the Programme Secretariat in Waterford.

Further details and application forms are available on www.irelandwales.eu and from the office in Waterford.

Development Officer Team

The programme employs Development Officers who are charged with helping applicants to find partners in other parts of the programme area. The Irish Development Officer is located in the offices of the Joint Technical Secretariat in Waterford.

The recruitment of the Development Officers for the programme in Wales is ongoing. Richard Hooper of WEFO's Territorial Cooperation Unit in Merthyr Tydfil is acting as an interim Development Officer until the new recruits are in place.

Their contact details are as follows

- **Waterford:**

Ms Antoinette Jordan
Ireland Wales Programme
Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly
Old Port of Waterford Building
Georges Street
Waterford

ajordan@seregassembly.ie

Tel: 051 318105

- **Merthyr Tydfil:**

Richard Hooper
Ireland Wales Programme
Welsh European Funding Office
Rhydycar
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ

Richard.hooper@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 01685 729425

2.5 Application Development – Essential Information

The single most important step that potential project promoters must take is to contact their local Development Officer.

The Development Officer team is employed to help organizations find a partner in other parts of the programme area. Once a partnership has been formed the Development Officer is then on hand to provide advice about the steps that need to be taken to develop a good quality project proposal.

Experience from the previous Ireland Wales Programme has shown quite clearly that project applicants that used the Development Officer Service developed better quality partnerships and projects and thus had a better chance of being approved for grant aid.

The introduction of the 4 Cooperation Criteria and the Lead Partner Principle which have already been outlined in this chapter also place a far greater emphasis on developing strong joint partnerships and projects.

Having considered the new regulations from the Commission and the experience gained from managing the last programme the JTS have decided that it was important to make a significant change with the Development Officer Service.

In an effort to improve the standard of projects submitted to the Joint Technical Secretariat for the new programme **it is now required that all potential project promoters register their interest with the Development Officer team in both Ireland and Wales.**

This should be done by submitting an expression of interest form which is available from www.irelandwales.eu or by emailing Ireland_wales@seregassembly.ie.

Following this, a member of the Development Officer team will be in touch with you to assist you with the search for a partner and then provide you with advice about putting your application together. **You will need to document and provide evidence of your engagement and working relationship with the Development Officers in the application form.**

What this means in practice is that you should include dates of meetings, phone calls, examples of advice received and where this was integrated into the application form.

Project applications who do not go through this process will not be deemed admissible and will not be considered by the Steering Committee.

CHAPTER 3

Priority 1 and 2 Implementation Plans

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide details on the implementation plans for the 2 main priorities in the programme.

Implementation plans will enable the programme to provide clear messages to potential project sponsors about the types of projects being sought. This should have the effect of focusing investment and ensuring full delivery of the programme strategy.

The implementation plan is something that will be subject to periodic review and will be adjusted to ensure that the programme supports quality projects and that it meets its targets.

It is aligned with the source material in the Operational Programme and interested stakeholders / prospective project sponsors should refer also to that document which can be found via the following links:

www.irelandwales.eu

www.wefo.wales.gov.uk

When considering a project idea, prospective sponsors should first of all assure themselves of its fit with the Programme objectives as outlined in Chapter 4 of the Operational Programme and should consult with the Programme Development Officers to discuss proposals.

The Programme provides funding to support issues that are of common concern and where there will be real added value in collaborating on a cross border basis. Co-operation between partners can improve the quality of results compared to the possible achievements of a partner working alone. Results can also be of relevance to the wider cooperation area and can potentially be transferred to other parts of the region.

For example, when faced with a challenge such as environmental protection or improving the research and development base there are strong grounds for advocating cross border co-operation which can deliver added value and tangible benefits to the population in the area.

Cross border added value is fundamental to the delivery of the Programme at all stages and should be clearly demonstrated by all applicants.

In practice this can mean the following:

- The issue being addressed is of such a nature that it cannot be satisfactorily tackled within one nation-state;
- The project objectives and work plan are consequently shared between partners from different countries;
- Co-operation between partners improves the quality of results compared to the possible achievements of a partner working alone;
- The project results are of relevance to the wider co-operation area and can therefore be transferred to other parts of the region;
- Co-operation is integrated vertically, horizontally and geographically in pursuit of achieving sustainable development and economic competitiveness.

Where partners have collaborated on previous joint Ireland Wales projects it will be important to demonstrate the lessons learnt from these projects and how they have been integrated into the design of any new project. Furthermore they should also demonstrate how the continued joint collaboration is providing increased levels of added value and benefit to the programme area.

3.2 Key Messages on Cross Border Focus

All projects will need to strongly demonstrate their cross border focus and it is important to integrate these considerations into project planning at an early stage.

- All projects will be required to demonstrate a clear cross border focus based on the four cooperation criteria outlined in Chapter 2 of this document.
- All projects will be required to outline the added value that cross border collaboration will bring to their application.
- Any research based application will be required either to have a practical output or a set of guidance that can and will be applied in practical circumstances, for example to SMEs or to local authorities.

3.3 Implementation Plans for Priority 1 and 2

This section provides more detailed information on the types of projects that the programme wishes to attract. These plans have been formulated based on the Operational Programme objectives and developed in consultation with key stakeholders. They give a more practical effect to the Priority and Theme level objectives which are explained in detail in Chapter 4 of the Operational Programme Document.

The findings from the stakeholder consultation exercise concluded that the early stage of the Programme should not be too prescriptive regarding the focus of projects that should be encouraged to apply for funding and the following areas of potential collaboration are not exclusive. Any project submitted under the Programme must also demonstrate how they comply with Irish, Welsh and EU policies and strategies as outlined in Chapter 3 of the Operational Programme Document.

However, it should also be noted, in particular with regard to Priority 2 Theme 1 that the Programme will not support any of the activities as listed within Annex II of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) or “projects” as defined by Article 1 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive or those listed in Annex I and II of the EIA Directive (85/337/EC).

3.3.1 Priority 1: Knowledge, Innovation and Skills for Growth

Priority 1: Theme 1 - Innovation and Competitiveness

Priority 1 Theme 1 supports operations that, in accordance with the Lisbon agenda objectives, will develop the knowledge R&D/innovation and entrepreneurial base of the Cross Border Region’s economy with a view to boosting the Region’s growth and competitiveness. The Theme is underpinned by five objectives:

1. To develop joint approaches to foster research and encourage collaboration in technology development amongst businesses and in higher and further education institutions and to facilitate technology transfer to industry and to SMEs in the cross-border region
2. To develop a stronger entrepreneurial environment by supporting cross border clusters and centres of excellence in key sectors
3. To enhance cross border business viability, performance and expertise by supporting innovation in terms of product and process development and improving business systems.
4. To develop joint innovation programmes aimed at assisting SMEs to be productive and competitive
5. To facilitate the development of potential growth sectors and enterprises including social enterprises in the cross border region.

Areas of potential collaboration include:

- Developing the economic impact of links between academia and business through knowledge transfer and partnerships between the two sectors to create a stronger technology base with defined commercial potential.

There is potential for collaborative high technology projects in areas such as opto-electronics, vision systems in manufacturing and production and visualization technology.

Any application under this criterion must clearly demonstrate how it will be applied on a practical basis and how it aids competitiveness in SMEs in the programme area.

- Actions which promote a culture of innovation and which will assist SMEs to become more productive and competitive. For example there is potential to explore ways of interacting more effectively with the creative industries to encourage creativity and innovation, providing the commercial application of such a project can be demonstrated.
- There is also the potential for a project targeted at the disconnection between SMEs and HE/FE sectors and the capacity of smaller organisations to access programme funding. This could include collaboration between SMEs and business sectors that have not received support from mainstream funding in the past and which are considered relevant growth sectors in the Programme area.
- Actions to develop and enhance relevant growth sectors, including social enterprises and centres of excellence and which will also focus on the development of an entrepreneurial culture across those sectors.
- There is potential for collaboration on the development of niche tourism products such as agri-tourism, walking and cycling holidays, with the focus on developing the product rather than promotion.
- There is a need to improve the effectiveness of approaches to business incubation by learning the lessons from the approaches adopted on both sides of the border. Similarly there were lessons to be learned from efforts to develop an entrepreneurial culture within the education sector (both formal and informal).

Priority 1: Theme 2 - Skills for Competitiveness and Employment Integration

Priority 1 Theme 2 supports operations that, in accordance with the Lisbon agenda objectives, enhance the capacity of the cross-border region by providing targeted interventions to develop the skills and abilities of the

population and the workforce with a view to providing greater levels of employment and to foster competitiveness. The theme is underpinned by five objectives:

1. To address common skills issues for SMEs, in particular, to enhance management skills and to develop skills to meet the current and future needs of the changing economy.
2. To gain more economic value from the availability of higher level qualifications in most of the cross-border area.
3. To develop common approaches towards integrating immigrants and other particularly disadvantaged groups into employment.
4. To develop skills and address skills gaps that will facilitate economic growth in key business sectors in the cross border region, including tourism, maritime, agriculture, energy and petrochemicals and sectors with potential for growth such as R&D related businesses.
5. To collaborate on a cross border basis to improve the systems of learning and workforce development to better meet the needs of the cross border region focusing on all levels of the education system and on lifelong learning.

Areas of potential collaboration could include:

- Development and delivery of innovative management development programmes which are tailored for the needs of small businesses;
- Development of language learning programmes in the workplace to assist with migrant workforce integration;
- Collaboration between learning providers to tackle under-achievement and extend opportunities for engagement of young people;
- Development of enterprise learning with an emphasis on mainstreaming within the curriculum (to include teacher training initiatives). Collaboration on pilot projects to improve interest and engagement in science and maths in schools;
- Collaboration on more demand led approaches to skills training for employees. This could include flexible customised bespoke training that supports the needs of business and drives productivity;
- Collaboration between strategic sectors or centres of excellence to promote sector specific training – for example technicians in an opto-electronics project bringing technician training into the sector is an area that could be developed cross border.

3.3.2 Priority 2 - Climate Change and Sustainable Regeneration

Priority 2: Theme 1 - Climate Change And Sustainable Development

Priority 2 Theme 1, in accordance with the Gothenburg agenda objectives, supports operations that address the common challenges posed by climate change by managing our physical and natural resources in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The Theme is underpinned by six objectives:

1. To develop joint initiatives to raise awareness of climate change and influence people's behaviour in relation to the environment and energy use.
2. Community level engagement in developing small scale and pilot projects to reduce energy consumptions and carbon emissions and achieve a practical impact at a local level.
3. To harness the joint talents and capacity of the region's further and higher education and R&D base to combat the threat of climate change through the development of innovative technologies.
4. Further research into renewable energy sources and pilot projects to demonstrate their practical application and transferability to business and wider communities.
5. To seek a common way forward on the protection of the coastal and marine environment for future enjoyment whilst balancing environmental protection and economic benefit.
6. To collaborate further and build on successful work already carried out under the Ireland Wales INTERREG IIIA Programme to bring added value to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems in the cross border area.

Areas of potential collaboration could include:

- Collaboration on developing a climate change impact model which would research climate patterns and try to assess potential impacts in the programme area with the aim of helping local and regional area plans. This would impact on areas of common concern including fisheries and coastal flooding, there is a common link in respect of flooding (external from the Irish Sea and internal) and it is important to integrate individual projects and to provide a more strategic focus where this is possible;
- Collaboration on reviewing the existing research and approaches regarding Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and marine spatial planning with a view to proposing new practical approaches which will assist with the protection of the coastline in Ireland and Wales;

- Collaboration on wetland management and restoration;
- Collaboration on mapping and pooling Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data which could be used as a reference tool for authorities in the programme area;
- Collaboration on the development of bio energy products.

Priority 2: Theme 2 - Sustainable Regeneration of Communities

Priority 2 Theme 2, in accordance with the Gothenburg agenda objectives, supports operations that provide opportunities for the people of the cross-border region to renew and sustainably regenerate their communities.

The Theme is underpinned by two objectives:

1. To facilitate and promote joint activities to ensure living communities in both urban and rural areas of the region.
2. Developing and promoting joint opportunities for sustainable regeneration giving recognition to the natural environment, built assets and the culture and heritage of the cross border region.

Areas of potential collaboration could include:

- Collaboration between communities to develop the transition town model which involves adapting to the challenges of climate change and reducing carbon dioxide emissions in the town as a whole;
- Collaboration and the pooling of knowledge and expertise in the area of social economy development;
- Collaboration between community groups in relation to areas such as
 - Building skills and knowledge
 - Community networks and infrastructure
 - Improving community health
 - Integrating migrants into urban and rural areas with particular reference to improving language skills
 - Capacity building for tenants and residents associations
- Collaboration between communities and educational institutions to facilitate the exchange of young people on areas of common interest such as community development, environment and planning issues.
- Collaboration on the development of the strong cultural links between the two areas with exploitation of economic benefits to the cross border region from the project activities.

CHAPTER 4

Project Selection Process

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the details of how projects are selected for ERDF grant support.

This will be coordinated and managed by the Joint Technical Secretariat and it will be one of their key tasks as outlined in their work programme.

The project selection process will ensure that the proposed activity is eligible for ERDF support, that the applicants are eligible for support and that the global costs for the project are eligible for ERDF support. The process will operate as follows:

4.2 Appraisal Process

Following the closing date of the call for proposals the Joint Technical Secretariat will issue acknowledgement letters to the Lead Partners of each application.

The JTS will then carry out an **admissibility check**. This will cover a series of fundamental issues which each project has to comply with in order to move to the next stage of the project appraisal process.

This check will cover the following areas.

1. All organisations listed in the project partnership are eligible beneficiaries.
2. The project complies with at least 2 of the cooperation criteria.
3. The project complies with the Lead Partner Principle.
4. The project can provide evidence of formally registering their interest and a structured working relationship with the Development Officer team prior to submission of the application.
5. Each partner has provided a letter following the template(s) on the programme website which provides an assurance regarding the provision of cash and/or in kind match funding for the project.

6. The project complies with Priority and Theme level objectives as set out in the OP.
7. The project meets additionality requirements demonstrating a funding gap and a clear need for Structural Fund support and must not substitute for existing or planned expenditure.
8. The project includes quantifiable outputs and clear and attainable targets.
9. Where applicable, the project has all necessary statutory procedures complete.
10. Equal Opportunities – policy in place for each partner and included with the application.
11. Sustainable Development – policy in place for each partner and included with the application.

If a proposal passes this stage it will then be subject to a short technical assessment to ensure that the fundamentals of the project proposal and the partnership are sound. Project promoters will also be clearly advised as to their responsibilities in relation to the project and financial management of Ireland Wales funded projects.

Projects will then be sent to sector specific experts in Ireland and Wales for comment on their compliance with national and EU policy frameworks and to provide expert commentary to assist the JTS in their appraisal of the project.

Each proposal will then be assessed and a score will be awarded against a series of core and priority level selection criteria. These have been developed by the programme partnership and have been approved by the Programme Monitoring Committee. The aim of these criteria is to provide a transparent basis on which to allocate funding which ensures that all project applicants are fully aware of the basis on which their projects are being selected.

A streamlined set of Priority level criteria have also been developed to assess the suitability of projects for support under each Priority. As each priority has two related yet distinct themes projects will be assessed under the theme where it has been submitted.

The Core and Priority level selection criteria are available at Annex I

The Steering Committee will consider the ranking applied to each project following the scoring exercise carried out by the JTS, the comments received from government departments and state agencies and evaluate each project against Programme objectives and priorities. A mechanistic scoring process does not always highlight the best projects therefore the Steering Committee will undertake a qualitative analysis taking account of the information provided by the JTS in its project summary proforma which will form part of the papers sent to the Steering Committees. Based on all of this the Steering Committees will select which projects are to be approved for ERDF grant.

4.3 Steering Committee Selection Process

In considering the respective merits of projects the Steering Committees will take into account the ranking given to each project based on the JTS interpretation of the selection criteria and the information in the JTS pro-forma. They will also have due regard to wider issues, such as the views provided by departmental and regional interests. These may include the following: -

- Overall programme strategy and the development of the programme across both main priorities
- Overall quality of the project
- The degree of cross border cooperation
- The impact on the programme's Equal Opportunities cross cutting theme
- The impact on the programme's Sustainable Development cross cutting theme
- The impact on programme targets
- Value for money and sound management of financial resources
- Compliance with national, regional and EU policies, including Social Partnership
- The degree of durability and sustainability of the project

4.4 Decisions on projects

The Steering Committees are responsible for approving or rejecting project applications. The SCs will authorise the JTS to issue notification of the outcome of grant applications to project applicants, including the issue of grant offer letters to successful applicants. The Steering Committees' decision is final.

Annex I - Selection Criteria

Core Selection Criteria

1. What is the extent of cross border cooperation and what benefits does it bring to the programme area?

Strong - The joint project demonstrates strong cross border cooperation; it complies with all 4 cooperation criteria and brings added-value to the programme in terms of addressing common issues, providing tangible outcomes which have common benefits and the transfer of expertise across the programme area.

Medium - The project demonstrates a medium level of cross border cooperation as it complies with at least 3 of the four cooperation criteria and brings added value to the programme in terms of addressing common issues, providing tangible outcomes which have common benefits and the transfer of expertise across the programme area.

Weak - The project demonstrates weak cross border cooperation based on compliance with at least 2 of the four cooperation criteria but does not demonstrate the added value that it brings to the programme area,

2. To what extent does the joint project contribute to the objectives of the Ireland-Wales Programme and relevant Welsh Assembly Government and Irish Government policies, including the principles of social partnership?

Strong - The joint project clearly explains and demonstrates how it contributes to the objectives of the programme i.e. contributing to greater competitiveness, economic, social and environmental well-being in the programme area, and relevant Irish Government and Welsh Assembly Government Policies including the principles of social partnership, as outlined in the Programme document.

Medium - The joint project contributes to the Programme objectives and relevant Irish Government/Welsh Assembly Government policies but does not clearly demonstrate or provide evidence on how it proposes to achieve this.

Weak - The joint project provides minimal or no evidence and no real explanations on how it addresses the objectives of the Programme or relevant, Irish Government and Welsh Assembly Government policies.

3. How does the joint project contribute to helping the programme meet its targets?

Strong - The joint project will make a clear contribution to the Programme targets and gives a clear and precise explanation on how their outputs will be achieved.

Medium - The joint project will make a clear contribution to the Programme targets and gives a general explanation on how their outputs will be achieved.

Weak - The joint project gives minimal or no evidence of helping the programme to meet its targets.

4. How robust is the project's monitoring and evaluation system and project management plan?

Strong – The project has a strong monitoring and evaluation system in place to ensure it will meet its objectives and provides details on how it will work in practice. It also has a detailed project management plan showing the personnel structure of the partnership, the split in tasks between the lead and project partner and a GANNT chart.

Medium – The project has a monitoring and evaluation system in place but provides limited evidence as to how this will work in practice. Its project management plan is not clearly laid out or detailed.

Weak - The project shows minimal or no evidence of a monitoring and evaluation system being in place.

5. How significant is the project in delivering innovative action in the cross-border area?

Strong - The joint project addresses the challenge of innovation in an all encompassing manner looking at product, process or organisational innovation and seeing how this can bring something new and beneficial to the programme area.

Medium - The joint project demonstrates some elements of innovative action in the programme area such as designing new products or improving innovation processes and organizational procedures but more could be achieved.

Weak - The joint project demonstrates minimal or no levels of innovative action in the programme area.

6. How does the joint project integrate equal opportunities into its management and what benefits will this bring for disadvantaged groups?

Strong - The joint project clearly integrates equal opportunities for all into its project plan with activities costed accordingly and demonstrates a practical benefit to the lives of disadvantaged groups.

Medium - The joint project implements equal opportunities principles in its management but does not clearly go beyond minimum legal requirements.

Weak - The joint project provides minimal or no evidence as to how equal opportunities will be practically incorporated into the management of the project.

7. To what extent does the joint project implement and integrate the principles of sustainable development into its operation?

Strong – The joint project provides strong evidence that it integrates sustainable development principles into its operation, actively promoting the sustainable use of resources and protection of the environment.

Medium - The joint project provides some general evidence as to how it integrates sustainable development principles into its operation but the promotion of sustainable development and environmental protection is quite weak.

Weak - The joint project provides minimal or no evidence as to how the project will integrate sustainable development principles into its operation.

8. To what extent does the joint project positively create synergies and complement other EU funded initiatives?

Strong - The joint project clearly demonstrates how it positively complements other cross border and trans-national (INTERREG) projects and other EU funded initiatives supported by the ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and the EFF by demonstrating joint approaches that will add value on areas of common interest.

Medium - The joint project demonstrates complementarity with other cross border/transnational or other EU funded initiatives but the level of information provided is more general and not as comprehensive.

Weak - The joint project doesn't contribute to create synergies and doesn't give any information on how it complements other cross border and transnational (INTERREG) projects and with other EU funded initiatives.

Priority Selection Criteria

- ***Priority 1 Theme 1***

1. **How will the project develop joint research, and encourage collaboration in technology development between HE/FE sectors and SMEs to aid competitiveness?**

Strong – The joint project clearly demonstrates how it will facilitate cross border collaboration into research and technological development in the HE/FE sector. It will then work with SMEs in order to implement and commercialise the results of the research. The project clearly demonstrates how it aids competitiveness in SMEs.

Medium – The joint project will involve some elements of collaboration in the HE/FE sector regarding research and technological development and transfer and implement the outcomes of this research to SMEs. The project will have some limited benefit towards aiding competitiveness in SMEs.

Weak – The joint project will involve minimal levels of collaboration in research and technology transfer. It does not demonstrate how it benefits the competitiveness of SMEs.

2. To what extent does the joint project promote the development of business clusters and centres of excellence?

Strong – The joint project clearly demonstrates how it will assist the development or support of relevant clusters and/or centres of excellence with clear evidence of demand and follow on benefit to the business sector.

Medium – The joint project provides some development or support to relevant clusters and/or centres of excellence with some evidence of demand and benefit to the business sector.

Weak – The joint project provides little or no development or support to relevant clusters and/or centres of excellence with no demand or benefit to the business sector evident.

3. What evidence is there that the joint project will help SMEs to develop innovative products and business practices that will aid competitiveness?

Strong – There is detailed and well explained evidence to show that the joint project will assist SMEs to develop innovative products and business practices as a result of cross-border collaboration.

Medium – There is more general evidence that the joint project will involve assisting SMEs to develop innovative products and business practices but limited evidence of the benefit that will accrue as a result of cross-border collaboration.

Weak – There is minimal evidence to show that the joint project will assist SMEs to develop innovative products and business practices and no real benefit will accrue as a result of cross-border collaboration.

4. How will the joint project facilitate the development of potential growth sectors and enterprises (including niche markets and social enterprises)?

Strong – The joint project’s central focus is on collaboration and joint working towards the development of potential growth sectors or the creation of new businesses with potential export capability.

Medium – The joint project’s work plan contains some elements that relate to the development of potential growth sectors or assisting with the creation of new businesses.

Weak - The joint project contains minimal references to the development of potential growth sectors or assisting with the creation of new businesses.

• **Priority 1 Theme 2**

1. How will the joint project address common skills issues for SMEs such as enhancing management skills and/or developing skills to meet the current and future needs of the changing economy

Strong - The joint project will deliver cross-border training and exchange programmes that will allow companies to up-skill staff leading to the gaining of relevant recognised qualifications. There is also a clear demonstration of demand for these skills in order to meet the needs of the changing economy.

Medium - The joint project will deliver cross-border training and exchange programmes that will allow companies to up-skill staff but will not lead to the gaining of recognised qualifications. There is also some evidence of demand for these skills to meet the needs of the changing economy.

Weak - The joint project will have a minimal or no element of cross border training and exchange and no clear demonstration of demand.

2. How will the project deliver more economic value from the availability of higher level qualifications in the cross-border area?

Strong - The joint project will be centrally focused around cross border collaboration and working together to develop systems and processes to increase the productive utilisation of higher level and graduate skills for the benefit of businesses in the programme area and will deliver more economic value to the area.

Medium - The joint project will have some element of its workplan that will be based on working together to increase the productive utilisation of higher level and graduate skills for the benefit of businesses in the Programme area. However the demonstration of the economic value to the cross border programme area is unclear.

Weak - The project has little or no evidence of the productive utilisation of higher level and graduate skills for the benefit of businesses in the Programme area.

3. To what extent will the project develop skills and address skills gaps that will facilitate economic growth in key business sectors

Strong - The joint project clearly demonstrates that it will involve collaboration and joint working to address and counteract skills gaps in key sectors, clearly demonstrating evidence of need and a contribution to economic growth.

Medium - The joint project provides some evidence that it will address and counteract skills gaps in key sectors. Project demonstrates evidence of need although any contribution to economic growth is not clearly demonstrated.

Weak - The joint project has little or no evidence that it will address and develop skills gaps in key sectors.

4. How will the project collaborate to improve systems of learning and workforce development at all levels of education and lifelong learning to better meet the needs of the cross-border region

Strong - The joint project clearly demonstrates how systems of learning and workforce development will be developed or improved as a result of cross border partnership and collaboration. There is also clear evidence of demand and a demonstration of how the project will meet the needs of the programme area.

Medium - The joint project provides some evidence of how systems of learning and workforce development will be improved or developed with some demonstration of how the project will meet the needs of the cross border region.

Weak - The joint project provides little or no evidence of how systems of learning and workforce development will be improved or developed

- **Priority 2 Theme 1**

1. **How will the joint project facilitate the development of new strategies to raise awareness of climate change and influence people's behaviour in relation to the environment and energy use**

Strong – The joint project will be driven by close collaboration and exchange of expertise and clearly focused on developing joint strategies to address the challenges posed by climate change. The project will also be clearly able to demonstrate the benefits and perceived behavioural change as a result of the joint project.

Medium – The joint project involves less extensive collaboration and its work plan will have some elements relating to the development of joint strategies to address the challenges posed by climate change. There will be a more limited demonstration of the benefits resulting from the project.

Weak – The joint project provides little or no evidence of the development of joint strategies to address the challenges posed by climate change.

2. **How will the joint project facilitate cross border community engagement in climate change and sustainable development issues?**

Strong – The clear focus of the joint project will involve the engagement of local communities in the development of pilot projects to allow them to address issues of common concern in relation to sustainable development and the common challenges faced in relation to the possible effects of global warming. The project clearly demonstrates its impact at local level.

Medium – The joint project will have some elements that will facilitate the engagement of local communities to address issues of common concern in relation to sustainable development and the common challenges faced in relation to the possible effects of global warming. There is some evidence of impact at local level.

Weak – The joint project provides little or no evidence of engagement with local communities in the development of projects to allow them to address issues of common concern in relation to sustainable development and the common challenges faced in relation to the possible effects of global warming.

3. To what extent will the joint project facilitate cross border collaboration on the research and development of innovative technologies to assist with the development of renewable energy and demonstrate their application through pilot projects?

Strong– The joint project provides clear evidence that the project’s central focus will be on cross border collaboration in the development and usage of renewable energy. The project also provides clear evidence of the benefit for businesses and wider communities in the programme area.

Medium – The joint project provides more limited evidence that the project will have some focus on the development and usage of renewable energy.

Weak – The joint project provides little or no evidence that the project will have some focus on the development and usage of renewable energy.

4. To what extent will the joint project facilitate collaboration in the protection of biodiversity, ecosystems and/or the coastal and marine environment whilst reconciling the needs of economic development with environmental sustainability?

Strong – The joint project clearly demonstrates that collaboration and exchange of expertise relating to the protection of biodiversity, ecosystems and/or the coastal and marine environment will be the central focus of the joint project.. The project also clearly demonstrates how it reconciles the needs of economic development with sustainable environmental protection.

Medium – The joint project provides some evidence of collaboration and the exchange of expertise relating to the protection of biodiversity, ecosystems and/or the coastal and marine environment. The project provides some evidence to demonstrate how it reconciles the needs of economic development with benefits to the environment.

Weak – The joint project provides little or no evidence of collaboration and exchange of expertise in relation to the protection of biodiversity, ecosystems and/or the coastal and marine environment.

- ***Priority 2 Theme 2***

1. To what extent will the joint project assist the health and well being or environmental regeneration of communities in the programme area?

Strong – The joint project's central focus will enable partners to collaborate and/or exchange best practice in the area of health and well being or

environmental regeneration. The project provides clear evidence of benefits to the communities concerned.

Medium - The project's work plan does contain some measures that will enable partners to collaborate and exchange best practice in the area of health and well being or environmental regeneration. The project provides some evidence of benefit to the communities concerned.

Weak - The project provides little or no evidence of collaboration or exchange of best practice in the area of health and well being or environmental regeneration.

2. How will the joint project enable the promotion and development of cultural heritage initiatives with emphasis on supporting the development of communities in the cross border area?

Strong - The joint project's central focus will be based on promoting and developing cultural heritage initiatives with an emphasis on supporting the development of communities in the cross-border area. There is a clear rationale for the development of the project and evidence of direct benefits to the communities concerned.

Medium – The joint project will have some aspects which will promote and develop cultural heritage initiatives with an emphasis on supporting the development of communities in the cross-border area. There is some added value for the communities concerned.

Weak – The joint project provides little or no evidence to show that it will promote and develop cultural heritage initiatives with emphasis on supporting the development of communities in the cross-border area.

3. How will the project enable the engagement of local communities to develop joint initiatives which promote and facilitate social inclusion on a cross border basis?

Strong – The central focus of the joint project will be the development of formal links between community groups and organisations which will allow them to cooperate and work together on developing joint approaches to promote and facilitate social inclusion. The project shows clear evidence of need and perceived benefits.

Medium - The joint project's work plan will have some parts that will involve networking between community groups and organisations to promote and facilitate social inclusion. The joint project demonstrates some evidence of need and perceived benefits.

Weak – The joint project shows little or no evidence that the project will focus on social inclusion.

4. How will the joint project assist in developing economic regeneration including social enterprises?

Strong – The joint project clearly demonstrates how it will address economic regeneration issues through cross border networking and exchanges of best practice between community groups or organisations in the programme area. It clearly demonstrates the direct economic benefits to the communities concerned.

Medium – The joint project has some parts which will focus on economic regeneration through cross border networking and exchange of best practice between community groups and organisations. There is some evidence that the project will deliver economic benefits to the communities concerned.

Weak – The joint project provides minimal or no evidence that the project will address capacity building in communities and community groups.

Annex II – Partnership Agreement Guidance

This document is an example only and is meant to serve as guidance towards the drafting of a partnership agreement. It must be negotiated between all project partners and tailored to the project partnership’s individual needs.

It aims to define the roles and responsibilities of all partners. It contains a number of standard and recommended clauses but does not have to be followed verbatim.

The completed Partnership Agreement can either be submitted to the JTS when submitting the application form or, in the event that the project is approved, prior to the issuing of a formal grant offer letter.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

For the implementation of the “*PROJECT NAME*” project within the framework of the INTERREG 4A Ireland Wales 2007 – 2013 Programme.

Between:

Insert the names of the Lead Partner and all other Project Partners

SUGGESTED CLAUSES AND GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CONTENT:

Article 1: Project aims and objectives (Required)

It is important that all partners work towards achieving common outcomes. The project aims and objectives must be documented here.

Please note that project partners will have documented the aims and objectives in the answer to question 6(a), Section B of the project application form

Article 2: Subject of the Partnership Agreement (Required)

The Partnership Agreement shall define the rules of procedure for the work to be carried out during the life of the project and the relations that shall govern the partners. Please provide detailed descriptions of those rules of procedure here.

Article 3: Duration of the Agreement (Required)

The Partnership Agreement shall take effect on the date on which it is signed by all partners. It shall remain in force until the Lead Partner has discharged in full their obligations to the Managing Authority and all accounts with the partners have been settled.

Article 4: Lead Partner (Required)

The role of the Lead Partner as a key partner should be clearly defined, both in relation to the Managing Authority and other partners.

The definition of the role of the Lead Partner should, as a minimum, cover:

- (i) overall management of the project*
- (ii) financial management and control including the distribution of the ERDF funds*
- (iii) preparation and implementation of the project work plan*
- (iv) a brief definition of other partner's roles and responsibilities;*
- (v) reporting requirements and procedures.*

For instance,

"The lead Partner is responsible for:

- 4.1 Overall co-ordination, management and implementation of the project.*
- 4.2 Correspondence with the Managing Authority*
- 4.3 Ensuring timely commencement and implementation of the project and compliance with all obligations to the Managing Authority*
- 4.4 Receiving payment and management of ERDF funds*
 - Timely transfer of funds to the project partners*
 - Reviews of spending*
 - Accounting records of the partners*
 - Preparation of all required documents and records for the final audit*
- 4.5 Work planning and task planning*
 - Definition of the Role of other partners in implementation of the project*

4.6 *Preparation and submission of progress/Interim/Final reports, budget documentation, financial declarations, requests for payment, financial report, any application for budget or contract clause alterations*

4.7 *Any other tasks agreed with the project partners.*

Article 5: Project Partners (Required)

The role of project partners should be defined in a way that is consistent with the application form as agreed. If a large number of partners are involved, the Partnership Agreement should be limited to a general description of their roles. Reference can be made to the application form and/or a work plan for a more detailed description of tasks.

For instance the responsibilities of the other partners might be:

5.1 *Shared responsibility in carrying out specific projects activities in the manner and scope indicated in the application form and the work plan.*

5.2 *Specific responsibility of project partners to:*

1. *Expediently carry out the specific activities set out in the project work plan or otherwise agreed;*
2. *Provide all information and data to the Lead Partner that are required by the latter to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the project and for reporting purposes;*
3. *Submit confirmations by independent accountants (or equivalent) on the eligibility of their expenditure;*
4. *Notify the Lead Partner of any factors that may adversely affect implementation of the project.*

5.3 *Take all other necessary steps to enable the Lead Partner to comply with all obligations and responsibilities as set out in the Grant Offer Letter.*

Article 6: Specific activities (Required)

The roles of the Lead Partner and other partners for specific tasks should be defined in a separate project work plan appended to the Partnership Agreement. One possibility is to formally detail here, the requirement that partners adhere to the timetable, actions and outputs detailed in the original application form. If the tasks are relatively straightforward, it may be appropriate to summarise them here. Example:

6.1 *Main tasks of the Lead Partner*

6.2 *Main tasks of the project Partners*

6.3 *A detailed work plan describing key tasks, targets, timescales and budgets for the actions to be undertaken – this may be appended to the Partnership Agreement*

Article 7: Organisational Structure of the Partnership (Required)

As a minimum, it is recommended that there be an “Oversight Committee” set up, with the following items defined:

- Its role: e.g., monitoring the implementation of the project, chaired by the Lead Partner, report to the Managing Authority.*
- Its Membership*
- Meeting frequency (recommended as “at least one meeting a year for the life of the project”).*

The key benefit of establishing an Oversight Committee is to provide a structure for monitoring implementation of the project.

It is advisable that provision be made for sub-committees or working groups established as appropriate for key tasks

Article 8: Co-operation with Third Parties (Recommended)

If the project involves the sub-contracting of some tasks to third parties (e.g. consultants), working arrangements between partners and third parties should be formalised. This may relate to dealings with consultants or work with other external organisations that are providing services to the partnership. It should also be formally documented at this point that ultimate responsibility for the project remains with the partnership.

Article 9: Project Budget and Eligible Expenditure (Required)

The Partnership Agreement should be limited to providing a basic description of total eligible project expenditure which is based on the content of Commission Regulations and national guidelines. If a more detailed description is considered desirable, the Partnership Agreement should be supported by a detailed project budget appended to the document along with the work plan.

It should also make clear that the ERDF financial contributions shall be paid into the account of the Lead Partner who shall be responsible for the administrative and financial management of the funds and for distributing the funds between the project partners in accordance with their certified expenditure incurred for project actions effectively carried out.

Article 10: Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting (Required)

It is required that every Partnership Agreement contains this clause. It should go beyond simply saying that the Lead Partner is responsible for submitting various documents to the Managing Authority, defining as well the reporting obligations of both the Lead Partner and other partners. Otherwise it could be difficult for the Lead Partner to fulfil its obligations to the Managing Authority. For instance:

- 10.1 The Lead Partner has overall responsibility for monitoring the actions undertaken by the project partners on an on-going basis. (Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements should be appropriate given the nature and scale of the project and shall be decided by the Lead Partner in consultation with the Project Partners.)*
- 10.2 The Lead Partner is responsible for submitting progress reports to the Managing Authority in conjunction with each payment claim. These reports should provide details of the activities undertaken as part of the project, the progress/outcomes achieved against targets, expenditures incurred, an explanation for any variances against the work plan's targets for physical outputs and budget, and proposed corrective actions, and any other information deemed relevant.*
- 10.3 Each project partner is obliged to supply the Lead Partner with all information that the latter deems necessary for the preparation of reports, documents, payment requests or other information for the Oversight Committee, Steering Committee or Managing Authority.*

Article 11: Financial Control and Audits (Required)

This should detail the obligations of the Lead Partner and the project partners for audit purposes: the length of time and format that project documents have to be preserved for and in, and all other practical arrangements necessary to ensure that any audit, notified by the duly authorised regional, national and Community authorities can be carried out (information about the project and access to accounting books and supporting documentation).

Article 12: Communication and Publicity (Required)

Project partners must ensure that the publicity is organised in a consistent manner. We require that partners outline here how they intend to comply with the detail in their application and with Commission regulations on information and publicity measures. While all partners should be involved in information and publicity the role of the Lead Partner in co-ordinating public relations should also be made clear.

Article 13: Dissemination of Project Outcomes (Required)

In this clause the Lead Partner and the other project partners would take note of the fact that the results of the project can be made available to the public and agree that the results of the project shall be available for all interested parties.

Article 14: Intellectual Property Rights (Required)

In this clause the project partners will ensure that all products developed within the framework of the projects are, subject to the provisions of national laws regarding intellectual property, kept free of all rights,

Article 15: Confidentiality Requirements (Recommended)

In this clause project partners would agree that any information obtained during the execution of this Partnership Agreement and any information exchanged with the Steering Committee is confidential, provided that one partner or the Steering Committee explicitly requests as such, and that the same applies without the express request of one of the project partners, to all documentation classified as “confidential”.

Article 16: Use of the Euro (Required)

The Programme will pay all claims in Euro and all expenditure will be monitored in Euro. The Lead Partner is strongly advised to do the same. The issue of currency and exchange rates between partners must be decided upon before the start of the project. Whichever procedure is chosen by the partnership, it must be implemented consistently throughout the duration of the partnership agreement.

Article 17: Modifications, withdrawals and disputes (Required)

Any modifications to the agreement should be done by means of a rider to this contract and then submitted for the approval of the project partners.

Here the project partners may want to note that they shall endeavour to cover the contribution of any withdrawing project partner, either by assuming their tasks or by asking one or more new partners to join the partnership.

In case of any disputes among themselves, the project partners are obliged to work towards an amicable settlement. If efforts to achieve an amicable settlement should fail, the project partners are obliged to seek an out-of-court arbitration procedure that may be specified here. Project partners should also note that if disputes cannot be settled by themselves, the dispute should be settled through recourse to the jurisdiction of the country where the lead

Partner is domiciled. It is not considered appropriate to suggest that the Managing Authority should arbitrate..

Article 18: Non-execution of obligation and reimbursement (Required)

Each signatory to the Partnership Agreement should undertake to reimburse the Lead Partner any funds that have been unduly received, within the month following notification.

Article 19: Legislation and force majeure (Required)

It is required that Partners outline the Laws governing this agreement, i.e., the Law of the country of the Lead Partner.

It should also be noted that no party shall be held liable for not complying with obligations ensuing from this Partnership Agreement should the non-compliance be caused by force majeure.

Article 20: Deadlines (Recommended)

In order to facilitate the orderly operation of the project it is suggested that the partnership put in place a system to ensure that deadlines for the delivery of work and financial information to the Lead Partner are set and respected.

Article 21: Concluding Provisions – Standard Clause

This should detail how changes to the Partnership Agreement will be dealt with, for, example by means of a written amendment that is signed by all project partners. Modifications to the project (work plan, budget, etc) that are approved by the Steering Committee will be considered as alterations of the Partnership Agreement.

Signatures and dates from each Project partner and Legal Advisors (where necessary)

Annex III - Expression of Interest Form



Ireland Wales Programme 2007- 2013 (INTERREG 4)

Expression of Interest Form

Introduction

The aim of this form is to provide an opportunity to potential project sponsors to register project ideas with the Programme Secretariat.

These ideas will be circulated to the Programme Development Officers who can assist you in developing these ideas and also in searching for a project partner if you do not already have one.

Application forms and selection criteria are currently being developed and will be published at a later date.

Please also note that the Programme, as published on www.seregassembly.ie and www.wefo.wales.gov.uk, has been approved by the European Commission and the first call for proposals is likely to be in November 2007.

Contact details for the Secretariat, Programme Liaison Office and the Development Officer Team are listed at the end of the document.

1. Project Sponsor Details (if you have not secured a partner please contact the Programme Development Officers who will be able to assist you, contact details are at the end of the form)

Irish Partner	Welsh Partner
Name of Organisation:	Name of Organisation:
Contact Person:	Contact Person:
Address:	Address:
Phone:	Phone:
E Mail:	E Mail:
Lead Partner:	

When submitting an application partners will need to decide who will take on the Lead Partner Role. Under the terms of Art 20 of EC Regulation 1080/2006 this is mandatory for all cross border programmes.

In practice this means the following:

- The Lead Partner will be responsible for
 - drafting a partnership agreement that will govern relations between the different project partners.
 - ensuring the implementation of the entire project
 - ensuring that all project spend is directly related to the project
 - ensuring that all expenditure has been checked by controllers/auditors
 - paying out ERDF grant to each project partner

Further practical guidance on this matter will be available from the JTS and the Development Officer team in the near future.

2. Project Title

3. Brief Description of Project Aims and Objectives

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4. Priority and Theme

Please indicate under which Priority/Theme the project will be submitted

Priority 1 - Knowledge, Innovation and Skills for Growth	Theme 1 - Innovation and Competitiveness	
	Theme 2 - Skills for Competitiveness and Employment Integration	

Priority 2 - Climate Change & Sustainable Regeneration	Theme 1 - Climate Change and Sustainable Development	
	Theme 2 - Sustainable Regeneration of Communities	

5. Budget

Estimated Cost IRL: €	Estimated Cost Wales: €
Estimated Grant IRL: €	Estimated Grant Wales: €

6. Benefits to the cross border area (Please provide a general overview of the expected benefits to the cross border area)

Please send completed forms to:

Joint Technical Secretariat, Waterford (address below)

Fax: +353 (0)51 879887

E Mail: Ireland_Wales@seregassembly.ie

Key Contacts

IRELAND	WALES
Joint Technical Secretariat Ireland Wales Programme (INTERREG 4) Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly 3 rd Floor, Old Port of Waterford Building 2 George's Street Waterford, Ireland Email Ireland_Wales@SERegAssembly.ie Phone: +353 (0) 51 318100	Contact Office Ireland Wales Programme (INTERREG 4) Welsh European Funding Office Rhydycar Business Park Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ Wales Email INTERREG-Enquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk Phone: +44 (0) 1685 729425

Development Officer Team

IRELAND	WALES
Antoinette Jordan Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) Ireland Wales Programme (INTERREG 4) Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly 3 rd Floor, Old Port of Waterford Building 2 George's Street Waterford Ireland E Mail AJordan@SERegAssembly.ie Phone: +353 (0) 51 318105	Richard Hooper Ireland Wales Programme (INTERREG 4) Territorial Co-Operation Unit Planning and Strategy Division Welsh European Funding Office Rhydycar Business Park Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ Wales E Mail Richard.Hooper@wales.gsi.gov.uk Phone: +44 (0) 1685 729425