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PEACE III Programme

Guidance Note on Principles for Implementation in PEACE III Projects G19/PIII

1.0 Introduction

The Peace III Programme offers an opportunity for the funding of projects that contribute towards a peaceful and stable society and that promote reconciliation. In particular the Peace III Programme places an emphasis on reconciling communities and contributing towards a shared society (Operational Programme: 4.1).

It is understood that many of the issues being addressed by the Peace III Programme are contentious and complex. There are many conflicting interpretations and perceptions of the issues that lead to and sustained the conflict over decades. The manner in which these issues are addressed can have a profound impact on relationships within society at an individual, community and regional level.

Following recent queries the Managing Authority wishes to clarify a number of principles which should underpin the implementation of projects in receipt of Peace III funding. These same principles will assist Steering Committees to assess the contribution that a project can make to the Programme's objectives.

2.0 Principles for Implementation

1. Projects must positively support the core aims and objectives of the PEACE III Programme as it seeks to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society through the promotion of reconciliation amongst all communities across Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. (Operational Programme: 4.1)
2. Projects must positively support actions to improve relationships between communities by addressing issues of trust, prejudice and intolerance. (Operational Programme 3.16)
3. Projects that undertake single identity work are reminded to take due account of the Operational Programme (3.60):
“In line with embedding reconciliation into the objectives, the Peace III Programme will place a strong emphasis on promoting cross-community relations and understanding. Therefore while single identity work will be eligible under the Programme to build confidence within communities, all projects (including those promoted on a cross-border basis) will be required to identify how they will address sectarian and/or racist behaviour to enable communities to work more effectively together and demonstrate outcomes in terms of good relations and understanding.”
4. Projects must ensure that events and activities are organised in a manner which fosters respect, tolerance and understanding between communities. (Operational Programme: 3.23)
5. Projects should give careful consideration to: the choice of venues; the design of publicity materials; the content of the event / activity. Projects will be expected to demonstrate that they have given due regard to the policy aims of the Peace III Programme when organising activities.
6. Office premises which are used by the project promoter and that are funded by the Programme should reflect the objectives of the Programme. It is important that the

design and décor of project premises (internal and external) which are funded by the Programme is consistent with the objectives of promoting good relations and understanding between communities.

7. All projects are required by their Letter of Offer to be strictly non party political. Projects must take care to ensure party political neutrality in the manner which they go about their business. Examples of activity which are considered party political are: paid advertisements in party political newspapers; use of project resources (staff and offices) for election campaigns (including independent candidates); attendance at party conferences (unless all conferences are included as part of agreed activities in the Letter of Offer); project offices that are closely associated with the offices of a political party. This list is not exhaustive.
8. Projects must not produce or circulate any communication material that would lead to the gratuitous offence of people of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation or physical impairment.
9. Projects must not by way of public statement, voice or appearance endorse a viewpoint that would incite hatred or discrimination on the grounds of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation or physical impairment.
10. Projects must not exhibit any behaviour which could be considered threatening or abusive to people of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation or physical impairment.
11. Projects must not intrude into the private life, cause grief or distress to any named individual regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation or physical impairment.
12. Projects must at all times protect the integrity of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) logo and ensure that it is not used in any context which would negatively impact upon the reputation of the European Union or the integrity of the objectives of the PEACE programme.

13. Projects must ensure that the expenditure presented in a claim relates only to costs incurred for implementing approved activities as detailed in the letter of offer. Any activity which has not been detailed in the letter of offer will not be considered as eligible project activity and must not be presented in a claim, nor should any reference to the Programme be included within any such activity.
14. If a project wishes to amend a letter of offer to include a new activity, this should be discussed and agreed (in writing) with the relevant staff member from the SEUPB Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) or the CRC/POBAL Consortium prior to the activity taking place.
15. The Programme does not desire to restrict legitimate freedom of expression, but it is expected that the views expressed and actions undertaken by projects are conducted in a manner which contributes to the overall objectives of the Peace III Programme, and in particular the promotion of good relations. Funded activity should not bring the Peace III Programme into disrepute. Where issues are contested, there is an onus on the project to demonstrate that the manner in which these issues are addressed contribute to Programme objectives and to demonstrate the pro-active steps it has taken in this regard.
16. The primary concern of the Peace III Programme is to ensure the integrity of the activity funded by the Programme. However, where a project applicant / partner organisation engages in activity not funded by the Peace III Programme, and where that activity directly impacts on the capacity or reputation of the partner to implement the principles of this guidance, the suitability of the organisation as a recipient of Peace III funds will be reviewed.

3.0 Implementation of Principles

All operations, projects and sub-projects in receipt of European Regional Development Funding under the PEACE III Programme must agree to uphold the principles delineated in this Guidance Note.

Any breach of either the letter of offer or spirit of the code will result in one or more of the following sanctions being imposed on the project:

- i. Requirement to take identified steps to redress any issue;
- ii. Part or full declaration of ineligible expenditure relating to specific activity;
- iii. Suspension of claims;
- iv. Financial penalties;
- v. The partial or full revocation of a Letter of Offer.

A determination has the authority to impose one or more sanctions on a project, sub-project or operation once a decision has been reached regarding a breach of the principles outlined in this guidance. The severity of these sanctions will be commensurate with the seriousness/number of principles that have been breached.

This Guidance Note was approved by the PEACE III Monitoring Committee at their meeting on 22 June 2011.

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