

S&E Regional OP 2007 – 2013 Draft Implementation Plan 3.1/2.1

Operational Programme	S&E Regional Operational Programme 2007 - 2013
Priority	Sustainable Urban Dimension
Theme	Gateways & Hub Challenge Fund
Sub-Theme	ERDF Gateways Grant Scheme
Categorisation Code	61
ERDF Certifying Body	Department of Finance
Managing Authority	S & E Regional Assembly
Intermediate Body	S & E Regional Assembly
Public Beneficiary Body	Local Authorities in Gateways
Grant Rate	50%
EU Co-financing Rate	40%

Description

It is intended that support will be available for actions which will contribute to enhancing the attractiveness of the Gateways and how they can contribute to improving its development potential through enhancement of the economic, social and environmental conditions of the city.

Objectives

Under this theme, grant assistance will be available for the 4 NSS Gateways in the Southern & Eastern Region (Dublin, Cork, Limerick/Shannon and Waterford) for projects which will improve the Gateways economically, environmentally, socially, and/or culturally, and which fall within the scope of Article 8 of the ERDF Regulation 1080/2006. Potential types of projects include:

- Urban infrastructure
- Physical regeneration and renewal
- Sustainable transport
- Arts and Culture Facilities
- Development of cultural and built heritage

Responsibilities of Intermediate Body

The S&E Regional Assembly as Managing Authority and Intermediate Body will be responsible for carrying out all Managing Authority functions as set out in Regulation (EC) 1083/2006. These include:

- ensuring that operations are selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the Operational Programme and that they comply, for their whole implementation period, with applicable Community and national rules;

- verifying the delivery of the co-financed products and services and that the expenditure declared by the beneficiaries for operations has actually been incurred and complies with Community and national rules, as detailed in article 13(2) of the implementation regulation and in accordance with procedures provided for under article 74 (2) of the general regulation, relating to proportional control arrangements
- ensuring that there is a system for recording and storing in computerised form accounting records of each operation under the Operational Programme and that the data on implementation necessary for financial management, monitoring, verifications, audits and evaluation is collected;
- ensuring that beneficiaries and other bodies involved in the implementation of operations maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to the operation without prejudice to national accounting rules;
- ensuring that the evaluations of Operational Programmes referred to in Article 48(3) are carried out in accordance with Article 47;
- setting up procedures to ensure that all documents regarding expenditure and audits required to ensure an adequate audit trail are held in accordance with the requirements of article 90;
- ensuring that the certifying authority shall receive all necessary information on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure for the purpose of certification;
- in co-operation with the Information office, ensuring compliance with the information and publicity requirements laid down in Article 69;

In addition, the Regional Assembly will sign Grant Offer Letters with the Public Beneficiary Bodies which will set out in detail their responsibilities for financial management and control and the arrangements for making interim claims.

Responsibilities of Public Beneficiary Body

The Public Beneficiary Bodies (Local Authorities in Gateways) will be responsible for ensuring that all payment claims for Structural Fund expenditure submitted, are supported by receipted invoices and audit documents, and that a clear audit trail exists. They will also be responsible for ensuring in respect of co-financed Interventions/projects, that only eligible expenditure actually incurred is certified and submitted to the Intermediate Body. Public Beneficiary Bodies will be required to respect EU and national regulations in respect of public procurement, information and publicity and electronic transmission of data.

The Public Beneficiary Bodies will be responsible for commissioning and overseeing the implementation of the approved projects.

Contribution to Horizontal Themes

Projects will be required to demonstrate that they fit within the economic and development strategy for the Gateway, and have obtained community support and have the support of relevant elected councils, and that they contribute towards the promotion of environmental sustainability and social inclusion.

Project Selection

Local Authorities within the four designated Gateways in the Region (Dublin, Cork, Limerick/Shannon & Waterford) will apply for project funding for either one large-scale urban regeneration project, or a series of connected projects, on the basis of the assessment criteria. Projects will be submitted to the Intermediate Body by Public Beneficiary Bodies. The Intermediate Body will examine them to see if they meet the stated criteria and will report to the Steering Committee/Assessment Panel.

Selection Process

A Steering Committee/Assessment Panel will be formed to adjudicate on the merits of applications and to select projects for funding. This panel will be chaired by the Managing Authority and will also contain representatives from the Planning & Urban Policy and Spatial Policy Sections of the DoEHLG as well as representatives from the Structural Funds Policy Unit of the Department of Finance. This panel will examine applications before making allocations, taking account of the overall objectives of the Priority and the specified assessment criteria.

Selection Criteria

All projects will be subject to an appraisal process based on assessment criteria (*below*) which are designed to ensure that projects selected are those which best address the objectives of the Theme.

- ❖ **STRATEGIC FIT:** Demonstrates the level of need involved and the degree of fit with national, regional and local plans, strategies and other guidance documents including the NDP, NSS, Regional Planning Guidelines, City Land-Use & Transportation Plans.
- ❖ **INNOVATION:** Demonstrates the quality of the proposal in terms of urban design, use of environmentally friendly materials, contribution to ‘greening’ of the urban centre concerned, etc.
- ❖ **FUNDING PROPOSAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY:** Demonstrates the level of compliance with Department of Finance Capital Appraisal and VFM requirements, Government policy on environmental protection, procurement guidelines, EU legislation, and other national policies. It should be noted that match funding of 50% is a pre-requisite.
- ❖ **DEMONSTRATION OF ADDITIONALITY AND BENEFITS ACCRUING:** This details the benefits the proposal will bring to the community and to the urban centre concerned over-and-above what is there already.

- ❖ **COMMUNITY / COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT:** Demonstrates the consultative process undertaken in project preparation and details the level of support attained, in terms of council and community buy-in.
- ❖ **DELIVERY:** This outlines the project management arrangements including milestones, targets, deadlines and outcomes.
- ❖ **STRENGTH OF PROPOSAL:** This is the assessors overall appraisal of the proposal.

Performance Indicators

Class	Indicator	Baseline 2006	Mid-term Dec '09	Final 2013
Output	Number of projects	0	2	6
Result	Number of public buildings upgraded	0	1	3
Impact	Tbc – link to Gateway Development Index			

Financial Management

The ERDF Gateways Grants Scheme sub-theme will be administered by the S&E Regional Assembly. Payments will be made to beneficiaries on the basis of invoices and statements of account submitted by them. These claims will be subject to examination and approval by the Managing Authority (Administration) and passed to the Managing Authority (Finance Unit) for certification and payment from the sums advanced by the Office of the Minister for Finance from the ERDF Suspense Account.

The Managing Authority will ensure that compliance checks are carried out at both Public Beneficiary Body and Intermediary Body level in relation to procurement, information and publicity, tax clearance, eligibility rules (EU and national) to ensure all requirements are met.

Projects under this theme will generally be financed by a combination of Public Beneficiary Bodies own resources and ERDF grants paid to the bodies from funds provided from the ERDF Suspense Account held by the Department of Finance.

Grants in respect of projects approved under the selection procedures outlined above will be paid to the Public Beneficiary Bodies by the Regional Assembly in arrears, on the basis of certified returns of expenditure. Claims, once approved and certified, in respect of ERDF assistance will be submitted to the Certifying Authority for payment from the ERDF Suspense Account. Upon receipt of the ERDF funds, the Regional Assembly will pay over the ERDF grant to the Local Authorities.

The Public Beneficiary Body will be required to have in place separate accounting arrangements in respect of project expenditure under the sub-measure. In accordance with the Implementation Regulation (1828/06), the Public Beneficiary Body will be required to maintain proper reports of account and details of all costs including certified invoices, cheque statements, etc. in respect of any claim for payment.

Document Retention

In accordance with Article 90 of the General Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, the Intermediary Body and Public Beneficiary Bodies will ensure that all supporting documents regarding expenditure, verification checks, certification and audits on the interventions concerned are kept available for the EU Commission and Court of Auditors for a period of three years following the closure of the Operational Programme.

Monitoring and Reporting arrangements

Monitoring and progress reports will be submitted annually to the Monitoring Committee in a format specified by the Managing Authority.

Information and Publicity

A requirement to comply with articles 5 to 9 of Regulation (EC) 1828/2006 will be included in all grant offer letters. All Information and Publicity will be undertaken in accordance with the Communications Plan.

The contribution of the ERDF will be acknowledged in all brochures, promotional material, press releases, publicity activity, advertisements, signage, applications forms, annual reports, letters of offer, etc., by use of appropriate logo and text references, in accordance with the Communications Plan.

North/South Co-operation

N/A

