

Competitiveness and Employment Programmes Evaluation Working Group

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction.

1.1 Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/06, Article 63 states that the Member State (Department of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland) should set up a Monitoring Committee for the Competitiveness and Employment Programmes. The Monitoring Committee's main task is to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes. As with the 2000-2006 programmes, a number of working groups will be established to assist the Monitoring Committee to discharge its responsibilities. This paper sets out the arrangements and Terms of Reference for the establishment of an Evaluation Working Group and the basic principles under which it will operate.

1.2 The Evaluation Working Group will assist Managing Authorities in the implementation of the ongoing evaluation strategy over the whole programming period and report to the Monitoring Committee.

2. Membership.

2.1 Membership of the Working Group will include Monitoring Committee Members and other individuals with relevant expertise or experience. Where appropriate there should be a balance between men and women, community background and urban and rural interests. Membership should, if possible, be drawn from a broad geographical base.

3. Chair.

3.1 The Working Group will be chaired by a Member of the Working Group who is also a member of the Monitoring Committee. The Chair shall be appointed at the first meeting of the Working Group. In the absence of the appointed chairperson at any meeting those present shall elect a temporary chairperson. The Working Group will revisit the position of chair on an annual basis.

4. Remit.

4.1 The Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group will be a source of specialist advice to the Monitoring Committee and the Programme Authorities in planning, procuring and reporting programme evaluations.

4.2 The Working Group will contribute to the overall monitoring and planning of actions arising from reviews, and will be an important contributor to the co-ordination of the Operational Programmes. The group will provide scope for networking among its members and advisors.

4.3 It is important to note that the Working Group should not duplicate the work of the Monitoring Committee and will have no decision making role.

4.4 The Working Group shall:

- Review and agree plans produced by the Programme Managing Authorities for the evaluation of each Programme for approval of the Monitoring Committee and review this plan, as required, but not less than annually.

- Where appropriate, commission external evaluators to complete evaluations, research and sample surveys, managing any work commissioned and provide opinions on the reports to the Monitoring Committee;
- Undertake ongoing detailed quantitative and qualitative monitoring and evaluation building up from the project level; and
- Provide regular verbal and/or written reports to the Monitoring Committee.

5. Working Arrangements.

- 5.1 Department of Finance and Personnel will provide secretariat support to the Evaluation Working Group which will meet as often as necessary provided a quorum is present. A quorum is defined as 5 members of the Working Group, 2 of who must be members of a Monitoring Committee.
- 5.2 The secretariat will draw up the agenda for each meeting and issue to members following authorisation from the Chair. A draft agenda will be circulated 15 days prior to the meeting Members will have 5 days to propose changes before a final agenda is circulated 10 days prior to the meeting.
- 5.3 AOB items can be tabled at the discretion of the Chair.
- 5.4 Draft minutes and summary action points of each meeting will be produced and sent to members and relevant advisors within 15 working days of each meeting. The minutes will be placed on the Member State website.

The Working Group may form sub-committees to take forward particular issues.