

WORKING GROUP – SOCIAL INCLUSION MEASURES REPORT

1. Background

1.1 This working group was set up by the Minister for the Environment and Local Government, on the basis of a decision of the Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems. Its Terms of Reference were:

1) to consider and report on the most appropriate institutional arrangements for co-ordination and delivery of social inclusion expenditure under the next NDP,

having regard to the need to:

- avoid duplication of effort
- avoid gaps in the delivery of social inclusion measures
- ensure a partnership approach at local level while keeping the meetings which partners have to service at a reasonable level, thus avoiding meeting fatigue and burn-out
- ensure maximum synergy and value for money
- ensure maximum clarity for the clients and target groups as to who does what
- ensure that there is also the possibility of a structured link to other programmes, such as the Rural development programmes and / or follow-up programmes to LEADER II, D/A,F & RD.

2) to consider and report on appropriate central support for the CDB process.

1.2 In carrying out its work, the group took the Task Force framework into account, as outlined in the Report of the Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems (August 1998) and in the Task Force document “Preparing the Ground for County / City Development Boards (CDBs)” (April 1999).

2. Scale of Co-ordination

2.1 The Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems, when preparing its Report, came to the view that it is at local level that the absence of co-ordination is most felt. The Task Force documents, i.e. the Report, and “Preparing the Ground,” set out a framework for co-ordinating all public and local development activities at local level. The centrepieces of this framework are the County / City Development Boards (CDBs), which are being established in the first quarter of 2000. On the CDBs, local government, local development, the social partners and the relevant State agencies active at local level will be able to work together to boost the area’s economic, social, and cultural development. By early 2002,

each CDB will have worked out an agreed County / City Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development, which will then set the framework for the activities and plans of all members. The CDB process is strongly supported by Government. The significant potential of the CDBs as a co-ordinating mechanism is given special emphasis in the National Development Plan, particularly in sections 10.36 to 10.40, and in the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*.

- 2.2 At its first meeting, the Working Group agreed that it would be useful – both for its own work and to guide subsequent and existing co-ordination efforts – if a comprehensive survey were conducted on social inclusion measures under the NDP. It was recognised however that there are definitional problems about what may be classed as social inclusion measures. The measures included under the social inclusion envelope in the Regional OPs of the NDP clearly fall into the social inclusion category. Taken together, expenditure on these measures will amount to £1.1bn over the plan period. Equally, much of the housing spend (£6bn) in the Economic and Social Infrastructure OP and much of the £10bn spend on the Employment and Human Resources Development OP can similarly be classed. Further, expenditures not included in the NDP – for example, many VEC programmes, the Health Boards’ Community Care Programme, local authority spend on estate management and related measures – would also fall into the social inclusion category. And if the definition were stretched further, programmes such as upkeep and restoration of minor rural roads could be classed as social inclusion expenditure. Notwithstanding these definitional difficulties, the Working Group conducted a survey, involving a questionnaire issued to each Government Department with social inclusion measures. The responses to the questionnaire have been incorporated into the tables in the Appendix. The Appendix also contains a list of the measures captured in the survey, and the agencies delivering these measures.
- 2.3 Thus, Tables I and II in the Appendix capture 40 Social Inclusion Measures which will be part of the five Operational Programmes under the next National Development Plan. Based on returns from the sponsoring Departments, the first table (“The Main Target Groups”) shows what the target groups of the individual measures are, and the second table (“The Principal Agencies”) indicates what local groups, organisations, bodies, etc. are involved in implementing the individual measures. It should be noted that these Tables only list those activities focused at ensuring Social Inclusion which are directly part of the Operational Programmes. The Health Boards, local authorities, Fás and a number of other agencies are involved in actions which contribute to combating social exclusion, outside the National Development Plan. Capturing all these would have been beyond the scope of this Report.
- 2.4 From looking at Table I in the Appendix, “Co-Ordinating Social Inclusion: The Main Target Groups,” the wide range of target groups becomes evident. The number of measures aimed at each individual target group, as shown in the summary of Table I at the end of the Appendix, is interesting. The ten most-named groups out of the total 38 target groups identified in the course of our research are all targeted by between 7 and 12 measures. The number of Departments involved is even more noteworthy. In four cases, 5 Departments

are involved, and in five other cases, 4 Government Departments are sponsoring the social inclusion measures targeted at each group. This has clear implications for the necessary co-ordination at central, and indeed at local, level.

2.5 The findings from Table I would imply that there could be good scope for co-operation between the relevant Departments / agencies at national level, and the local entities involved in these measures. For instance, in relation to education and training measures, the education sector and the statutory training agencies have a lead role. However, there are a variety of other providers also involved in the provision of services for disadvantaged youth. These include Area Partnerships, EU projects, youth services, Garda Youth diversion projects, community groups, Local Drugs Task Forces, probation, health and welfare services. The position is somewhat similar for other areas such as programmes for the unemployed, childcare and after-school programmes.

2.6 The Table II Summary breaks down the social inclusion measures by reference to the geographic level at which the measures will operate, the principal agencies involved; and the involvement of social partners. The 40 measures covered are distributed by area as follows:

- National (10)
- County/City (13)
- Sub-County (15)
- Other (17)

“Other” refers to regional, Health Boards, or two-county / cross-county. A number of measures are aimed at more than one level; thus, the sum of “geographic levels” is higher than 40. Sub-County areas usually do not coincide with each other, although the Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development had recommended, in its Report (August 1998), that Local Electoral Areas, or a combination of these, be used as a common area at sub-county level. – There is a sizeable number of entries under “Local Entities Involved”, indicating that there is a large number of agencies, bodies, groups, organisations etc. involved in these measures, be it as co-ordinators / implementing body or being consulted. Bodies or agencies particularly frequently involved include Fás (involved in 17 Social Inclusion measures), community groups (9), local authorities (8), the VECs (8), Area-Based Partnerships, (13), Schools (7), and Health Boards (5). The large number of agencies involved shows that special effort is needed to avoid overlap or gaps, as well as client confusion. As far as the Social Partners are concerned, 15 of the 40 social inclusion measures see some involvement by them. The challenge for the County / City Development Boards (CDBs) and the Directors of Community and Enterprise will be to ensure that all social inclusion measures are co-ordinated in such a way that their effectiveness is maximised.

2.7 The information set out in these tables needs to be urgently supplemented by detailed information on other social inclusion measures being provided locally. This should be done by way of a publicly accessible county / city council web site, by the local authority, under the guidance of the Director of

Community and Enterprise. The function of this website will be twofold: It will provide information to the public, and it will support agency co-ordination, thus answering the need for a comprehensive local services directory to support co-ordination at local level, and to provide baseline data for assessing existing provision of services. However, in advance of the establishment of the web site, local authorities will be expected to compile whatever information is available, and to make it accessible from the earliest possible moment. The Directors and the CDBs will, as part of their work on the CDB Strategy, undertake an audit of service provision in the county / city, which would feed into the website on local service provision.

3 Central Co-ordination

- 3.1 The Task Force Report (August 1998) was concerned primarily with ensuring more coherence in the delivery of local programmes across the full spectrum of public services. The approach was one of setting out broad principles, which have been endorsed by Government, and which would be implemented primarily at local level. However, unless State Agencies and Government Departments are committed to developing a more coherent approach to the delivery of programmes, achieving a less complex delivery landscape at local level, their local offices are unlikely to do so. It is important therefore that any local integration process be complemented by a framework developed centrally or at least that arrangements emerging locally should be supported centrally and any barriers to progress removed. The central process needs to be urgently mobilised so that the Operational Programmes now taking shape reflect the need for coherence. A more considered approach also needs to be taken over time to reduce the complexity of the mosaic of schemes and programmes especially in the area of social inclusion.
- 3.2 The first step must be to ensure that awareness of the introduction of County / City Development Boards, and of the CDB process in general is increased in Government Departments, central agencies and in the local agencies. The Task Force Secretariat at the Department of the Environment and Local Government is engaged in a process to assist this. Meetings have taken place with the chief executives of the State agencies, with VECs and Health Boards, and meetings with other local bodies are planned. The members of the Task Force have agreed to ensure that, within their own Departments, the Task Force approach is fully appreciated. In particular, it is of vital and urgent importance that those involved in drafting the Operational Programmes for the National Development Plan should be made specifically aware of the process, so as to ensure that any local structures emerging would be consistent with the Task Force Report and with the recommendations and the overall approach put forward in that Report. This may require arrangements for bilateral or trilateral co-operation, co-ordinated by the Department of Finance if necessary.

3.3 In drafting the social inclusion sub-programmes of the Regional Operational Programmes of the NDP, Departments will be consulting closely in relation to the implementation and delivery of OP Measures. In particular, Departments would be expected:

- before creating a new service at local level, to examine closely what agencies and bodies are already in existence, and whether these could take on the task envisaged for the new service, e.g. through an expansion in their remit
- to seek to ensure that measures are clearly focussed on key target groups
- to co-ordinate project selection procedures as and where appropriate, and
- to ensure that there is local co-ordination of delivery so as to eliminate duplication and overlap in terms of target groups, selection procedures and implementing bodies.

Relevant departments will also have to consult and liaise with the Regional Assemblies who are the managing authority for the Regional OPs, and who will have to sign off on these Regional Operational Programmes before they are submitted to the EU. The Department of Finance will facilitate the departments in this process.

3.4 The second step is to institute a more considered approach of bringing more coherence into the matrix of social inclusion programmes. This has been raised from time to time at the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Social Inclusion and some attempt was made to reduce the complexity at central level. The Working Group believes that the Cabinet Sub Committee and its supporting Senior Officials Group has a role to play in creating the climate and framework for co-ordinating social inclusion measures.

3.5 The Senior Officials Group might be asked to agree a broad framework and principles for a more cohesive central-level approach to locally delivered social inclusion programmes / measures. The starting point, as outlined above, must be close co-operation between Departments in drafting the relevant Operational Programmes. Ultimately, the group could establish broad cross Departmental framework agreements, setting down clear principles for inter Departmental co-operation. The Mid-Term Review of the NDP Operational Programmes, in 2003, will provide a practical opportunity to put forward any concrete alternative arrangements for delivery. The objective would be to ensure that central Departments co-operate at national level, thereby increasing cohesion of the Social Inclusion Measures and at the same time sending the clearest signal that their respective agencies would be expected to equally co-operate at local level. The results of the survey referred to in section 2 should be of assistance to the Cabinet Sub-Committee in this process.

3.6 Without wishing to pre-empt the discussions of the Senior Officials' Group, the working group saw considerable merit in defining policy areas or baskets, such as Literacy, Early School Leavers, Lifelong Learning, or Youth at Risk, and agreeing on a specific Department which would take on the role of lead co-ordinator for inter-departmental co-operation for each of these baskets.

The lead co-ordinating Department would convene meetings between all relevant Departments and agencies, in order to facilitate co-operation and agreement on national policies and programmes in the respective area. This process has already begun for Childcare, where the Department of Justice, Equality, and Law Reform is playing this role. This “lead-role process” could operate under the general oversight of the Cabinet Sub-Committee.

4. Co-ordination Arrangements at Local Level

- 4.1 The centrepieces of the CDB framework, as outlined in 2.1, are the County / City Development Boards (CDB) and their CDB Strategies for Economic, Social and Cultural Development. But the Task Force also set out some important principles to guide the allocation of responsibilities at local level – for example, the principle that, within the context of local government/local development activities, a single agency should carry particular programmes (to avoid duplication) and that, as far as possible, existing administrative/political areas be used for the delivery of programmes (so as to facilitate cross-agency co-operation).
- 4.2 Within the broad parameters of the Task Force Report, this Working Group’s task was to look at the arrangements for social inclusion expenditure – a task made urgent by the NDP and the immediate need to draft the Operational Programmes. In the ideal situation, the CDBs would be the co-ordinating mechanism at local level. However, pending the CDBs becoming fully operational, it will, of necessity, take some time to build the inter-agency relationships to their full effectiveness and their capacity to carry out their mandate. The Working Group therefore considered options for achieving co-ordination of the proposed NDP spend on social inclusion measures pending the CDBs becoming fully operational in this respect.
- 4.3 The Working Group is heartened by the example of the Integrated Services Project, which showed, at a micro level, i.e. below that of county / city, what can be achieved when State agencies, local authorities, and other relevant players co-operate. The overwhelming view coming from the public service providers involved in the Integrated Services Project is that its progress to date is partly due to the fact that it allowed for structured personal meetings between counterparts in different agencies, often for the first time. By working together, there is potential to achieve considerably more than by working separately, and the client groups are better served as a result. The role of facilitating co-ordination and co-operation will, at county / city level, be filled by the CDBs and their Directors of Community and Enterprise. It is important that any lessons learned from the Integrated Services Project be also incorporated early into the social inclusion spend under the NDP, i.e. that co-operation and co-ordination with each other, and with the CDB, underpin all relevant measures.
- 4.4 The Working Group has considered a proposal tabled by the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation that a Social Inclusion body should be established in each city and county, configured on the same partnership lines as the CDBs, and with a mandate to co-ordinate all social inclusion spending. The existing Area Partnerships would be subsumed in these new arrangements. The Working Group saw merit in the D/TSR proposal – not least in that it could make a contribution to co-ordination in the rather

fragmented area of social inclusion measures. However, there was a concern that, since there would be much common membership of the proposed Social Inclusion body and the CDB, attendance and real engagement in one or both would suffer – most probably the CDB. There was also a view that the Social Inclusion body would be duplicating part of the CDB's remit. Moreover, the CDB is to harmonise all relevant Government policies, with all the balancing and trade offs this implies. The emergence of a strong entity concerned with just one policy area (social inclusion in this instance) might be inimical to overall co-ordination. The same argument would apply if, for example, there was a proposal to set up a body closely paralleling the CDB and focusing on economic, or cultural, development, for instance. On balance, therefore, the Working Group sought other ways of achieving co-ordination of the Social Inclusion policy measures.

- 4.5 The consensus within the Working Group was that the CDB structures should be used to co-ordinate social inclusion at county / city level. These structures will be fully developed by early 2002, when all CDBs will have drawn up their agreed Strategies on Economic, Social and Cultural Development. It is to be expected that these Strategies will take on board the Task Force recommendations re boundaries / common areas. In the meantime, Area-Based Partnership Companies, ADM-supported community groups, as well as CEBs and LEADER groups, will work with the Director of Community and Enterprise, and indeed with the other members of the CDBs. The Directors will take the relevant steps to ensure co-operation in the lead-up to the Strategy. The Minister of State with responsibility for Local Development has already indicated that Partnerships will remain in place until the mid-term review of the National Development Plan.
- 4.6 Where there is overlap, or potential for overlap, at county / city level, interim steps will be necessary to ensure early co-ordination of existing services and also to put in place systems which should examine proposed new services. These steps should be taken immediately under the leadership of the Director of Community and Enterprise. In general, the Working Group did not wish to be overly prescriptive about how the Director would fulfil this role, other than to say that the arrangements should be structured and effective. At a minimum, for existing programmes and services, the executives of the various public sector providers should agree local protocols for delivery of their programmes to avoid overlaps in programmes or geographic areas, and to identify gaps in service provision. This may require a formal standing working group of the officers concerned, convened by the Director, or it may be possible in appropriate cases for the Director to use the Area Partnership structure for this purpose. It may equally be possible for the Director to use other structured procedures to achieve the desired result.
- 4.7 Where there is potential for duplication in proposed new programmes or services, the onus should be on the funding body to implement a consultative process at local level through which relevant providers are contacted. For example, introducing a new service for Early School Leavers, could involve consultations with FÁS, VECs, Area Partnerships, Probation and Welfare, Garda and Juvenile Liaison Service, youth and community groups, Health Board etc. The consultations would need to focus on:

- establishing the level of existing services of the nature proposed in the area across all providers
- identifying the role of different actors at local level in responding to needs
- taking into account the views of the other providers as to how the service proposed meets the needs of the local area as part of an integrated area-based approach, including any perceived impact on existing services.

The Director should facilitate this process at local level. Alongside these procedures, the CDB should review all new services as part of their brief and report to the Task Force Secretariat on cases where there has been a lack for consultation or where there is duplication etc arising from the introduction of a new service. The Task Force Secretariat will then take the matter up with the relevant Department(s) and / or the Senior Officials Group, as appropriate.

4.8 The Director will have to approach the matter (both for new programmes / services and for existing ones) on the basis of the following types of activity, in which she or he will play the lead role:

- identifying social inclusion measures / resources / delivery agencies in county / city
- consulting locally to secure agreement on scope for, and method(s) of, co-ordination
- identifying areas of local co-operation and joint action in meeting social inclusion needs
- promoting local agreement on how the delivery of services should best be co-ordinated, taking account of the lead role of particular Departments and agencies in the delivery of specific services
- reporting to the Task Force Secretariat on policy gaps and co-ordination issues which need to be addressed at national level. The Task Force Secretariat will deal with arising issues as appropriate.

4.9 It is important that whatever arrangements the Director puts in place to ensure co-ordination pending full mobilisation of the CDB process should be respected by the various public service providers. It would be helpful therefore if the relevant project selection procedures for Social Inclusion Measures under the NDP Operational Programmes would build in a requirement to consult with the CDB (or the group / committee set up for the interim period – see para. 4.6) when developing programmes or funding projects where there is potential for overlap.

4.10 The Director will report periodically to the CDB, and also to the Task Force Secretariat, on the extent to which this co-ordination is taking place. Any necessary actions can be taken by the CDB and its members, by the Task Force and / or the Senior Officials Group as appropriate.

5. *Mid-Term Arrangements*

5.1 The arrangements set out at 4 above would generally obtain in the context of the preparatory process leading up to the production of the CDB Strategies

on Economic, Social and Cultural Development (to be prepared by the CDBs in a series of steps over the next 2 years, to be finalised by early 2002).

5.2 There may be more structured arrangements at local level arising from the process leading to the Strategy, and from the experiences gained in the short-term arrangements. These Strategies should also set the context for the mid-term review of the relevant Operational Programmes under the next NDP.

6. *Management of the CDB Process*

6.1 It is accepted that there should be arrangements in place to manage and support the CDB process. At present, this role is fulfilled by the Task Force Secretariat housed in the Department of the Environment and Local Government. In addition, consultancy support has been obtained for a number of aspects in the CDB process, including the delivery of training and development services to the newly recruited Directors of Community and Enterprise.

6.2 In future, the process will require more detailed ongoing management in order to ensure that it yields an effective outcome. A number of supports are needed at central level, in terms of managing, monitoring and supporting the CDB process across the 34 local authorities. The functions to be undertaken include:

- manage the CDB process to ensure targets / objectives are met and a desired degree of commonality of approach and comparability is ensured.
- monitor developments in national policy areas relevant to the CDBs and communicate these to Directors / CDBs. Monitor developments at EU level also, as appropriate.
- act as a link / conduit between CDBs and the Directors of Community of Enterprise, and the Task Force
- provide mentoring and advice / support to Directors and CDBs, attending / arranging meetings and seminars etc.
- act as a channel of communication for the CDBs in relation to central Government Departments, to State Agencies at national level, to the Social Partners at national level, to local government organisations and to local development agency organisations.
- deal with any problems / bottlenecks at central level.
- provide guidance in matters of general and / or particular interest to the Directors of Community and Enterprise and CDBs.
- service and work with the “D/ELG, Directors’ and County / City Managers’ working group on the CDB process” and other such groups
- oversee any future consultancy projects.
- monitor the agency which manages the CDB website on behalf of the Task Force Secretariat.
- foster continued buy-in by State and other agencies, bodies, and organisations.

- 6.3 Unlike the former County / City Strategy Groups, the CDBs have specific administrative / executive resources and budgets through the Directors of Community and Enterprise and their support staff. In addition, they will have access to the administrative / technical resources of local government (e.g. planners, Arts Officers, etc.) re particular aspects of preparing the Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development. They should also be able to tap into the resources of other CDB member organisations and agencies.
- 6.4 The availability of such in-house and other backup to the CDBs effectively means that there is not a need for a Liaison Team on the lines used by the former County / City Strategy Groups. That said, however, there is a good case for strengthening the central support which is currently available. With that in mind the following is proposed:

Task Force Secretariat

The early assignment of one A.P., one EO and one CO, in addition to the present P.O. (part-time), AO and EO.

Liaison Officers

The nomination in each relevant State Agency and Government Department of a liaison officer to deal directly with the Directors on CDB matters of relevance to the agency / Department.

Managers / Directors

Working Group of City / County Managers, Directors and D/ELG to ensure smooth operation of CDBs.

- 6.5 ADM has considerable experience in supporting the local development work of the Area Partnerships and ADM Community Groups. It would be beneficial if the CDBs could call upon the expertise of ADM in formulating facilitative processes. ADM may have to be resourced to carry out this role.
- 6.6 The work of these support arrangements would be monitored and evaluated by the Task Force. In any event, the nature of the support, its effectiveness and need for continuation would be evaluated on an ongoing basis. The first full review should take place six months before the end of the initial three years.

[ends]