

# EAST MIDLANDS OBJECTIVE 2 PROGRAMME

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## Environmental Sustainability Guidance Note:

### PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

A key way of ensuring that environmental considerations are taken into account by applicants is by incorporating them in the project selection criteria. In the East Midlands the environmental component of the application has been considerably developed and extended, and there are essentially two sections of the application that relate to environmental sustainability. Both sections are compulsory, these are:

- **Section 15** on the ERDF application form, which requests information on whether the project will have an impact on any designated sites (list provided on the form) and on the general environmental impacts of the project. Applicants should note that answers should be justified in the comments box provided. Further information on sources of advice and guidance is available in the 'Useful Links' document.
- **The Environmental Checklist** – designed to make applicants consider the various potential impacts of their project and explain how they intend to minimise or mitigate these impacts. This checklist forms part of the overall scoring process for projects, and applicants can score a maximum of ten points on the checklist. The form also contains a gateway question which all applicants must complete if they wish their project to go through to the appraisal process. Applicants answering yes to this question will have their projects referred to the Environmental Sustainability Theme Manager for further development. Applicants should fully justify their answers, which should preferably be supported by information in the business plan and relevant environmental targets for the measure they are applying for funding under. Simply stating 'not applicable' or 'no effect' is not sufficient. Full guidance notes and the checklist are provided below.

In addition to the above sections, applicants should also consider how environmental improvements impact on value for money:

- **Value for money** – this section of the priority guidance criteria now enables applicants to score an additional point for justifying costs for environmental reasons. The aim of this section was to prevent applicants being deterred from including environmental improvements because they believe this will be disregarded by scorers and might prohibitively increase the cost. To score in this section applicants need to demonstrate additional costs to address aspects such as energy efficiency, use of renewable energy, sensitive landscaping, etc. It should, however, be noted that not all environmental improvements will create additional costs, particularly in the longer term.

## **How to complete the environmental checklist**

The checklist is divided into 5 objectives and a gateway question. You must provide information on each element.

**Note: The Question at the bottom of the checklist is a “core eligibility” question and must be answered by all applicants.**

For each of the objectives, first try to determine whether the project has a positive, negative or no effect on each of the five **objectives** in the checklist. (NB: You can consider additional examples not already listed under the objective). Once you have considered the environmental implications of your project and any possible effects under each objective, you must provide comments in the box provided.

Use the **Comments box** to explain briefly WHAT the environmental impact may be and state HOW the impact will be managed. Please state or point to evidence within your business plan that clearly says whether impacts are likely to be ‘**positive**’, ‘**negative**’ or there is ‘**no effect**’. Projects that result in a negative impact must describe any measures or proposals to compensate or mitigate for any impacts or adverse effects on the environment. Projects that can clearly demonstrate a positive environmental impact will attract a full point. Comments can include additional ways in which the project can assist the achievement of the objective. You should continue on a separate sheet from the Checklist if necessary or state where the information can be found in the business plan. If under any of the 5 objectives you feel there is no environmental impact or effect, simply state “No Impact/Effect” and briefly state how you have come to this conclusion.

### **Scores and points available**

***There is a maximum of 10 points available for this environmental appraisal.***

You will score 1 point for providing evidence in the comments box or in your business plan that environmental impacts have been fully considered. A further 1 point will be awarded if you can demonstrate that either positive environmental gains will be delivered by the project or projects with ‘no effect’ provide a full explanation on why there is deemed to be no effect. Projects with a negative impact will not be able to get a full additional point. However ½ a point may be awarded if you can show that all negative impacts can be mitigated or compensated for in some way.

Assessors will award up to 1 point under each criteria A and B depending on the level of evidence provided by the sponsor within the Checklist and cross-referenced information in the business plan.

At all times the comments provided in the checklist should be supported by quantitative information within the business plan. You may wish to simply state, “refer to sections x, y and z in the business pan”, rather than restate the information.

The appraisal of most projects or proposals against this checklist should be relatively quick and easy. The following points are important to remember:

- Use the comments box to make the appraisal as transparent and open as possible.
- Think not only about direct impacts, but also potential impacts and missed opportunities of the proposal.
- Not all of the criteria will be relevant to the proposal under consideration, but each should be considered briefly as part of the assessment.
- The whole lifespan of the project must be taken into account – some impacts may be more than local (i.e. global impact of pollution).
- This checklist forms part of the application form and therefore omissions or inaccuracies could result in reclaim of any grant paid.
- Redo the checklist at regular intervals through the life of the project or plan to show how it is being refined in order to take environmental sustainability into account.

### **Point by point guidance**

**Gateway question: *Will the project cause irreparable damage to, or put at risk, the integrity of critical natural capital (e.g. sites, features or resources) of key environmental importance to the region?***

This question relates to core eligibility of the project. All projects awarded ERDF funding must comply with EC Environmental legislation, which seeks to ensure that projects do not have any adverse effects on the environment. Consider the impact of your project on the designated sites listed and describe how this impact will be managed. You should also consider the - overall environmental impact of your project, even if it does not impact on a designated site.

**Objective 1: How will the project protect, conserve and manage the rich diversity of the natural and built environmental assets of the region?**

Key points to think of are whether the project will have an impact on key assets in the region – both in terms of the natural and the built environment. For example, will it impact on wildlife sites or local built and cultural heritage? Think about both the potential positive impacts (e.g. habitat creation, sensitive landscaping schemes, restoration of historic buildings) as well as negative (e.g. impact on species and protected sites). The scale of the impact will obviously vary depending on the size and type of project. Think about the following points:

- If the project involves a new development, will the site impact on protected sites/species? If it will, what mitigation measures are in place?
- Have appropriate ecological/environmental surveys been carried out?
- Will the project incorporate landscaping to enhance existing species (using appropriate native species)?

- Have you consulted relevant conservation bodies (e.g. Wildlife Trust/English Nature)?
- Is the development using a listed building? How will this be preserved?
- For a tourism/marketing project, will increased visitor numbers impact on sensitive sites? If so, how will this be monitored and managed?
- Will the project involve interpretation to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of affected sites?
- Could revenue (e.g. from tourism) be reinvested in the maintenance, management and enhancement of sites?
- For a grant scheme, could grants be provided to restore/manage/enhance environmental assets?
- For a community-based project, does the project incorporate any planting schemes? If so, will these use appropriate species?
- For a business support project, could advice include an element of awareness raising to enhance understanding of environmental assets?

**Objective 2: How will the project enhance and improve the environmental quality of the region ?**

You should consider the impact of both the design and the location of the site. Whilst this impact is perhaps most obvious for new developments, you should also consider the location of projects providing revenue support. Key points to consider are:

- Will the project reuse elements of the built environment? Does it enhance the distinctiveness of the area?
- Will the project reuse an appropriate Brownfield site or vacant building, rather than building on a Greenfield site?
- If developing on a Brownfield site, has that site regenerated to the extent that it has acquired ecological value?
- Does the project assist in programmes to restore derelict land and to decontaminate land and regenerate areas?
- Does the project use high standards of design (e.g. use sustainable construction methods)
- Does the project minimise noise or light pollution?
- For new developments, does the project adhere to Sustainable Urban Drainage principles?

**Objective 3: How will the project manage the natural resources of the region ?**

You should show consideration of both the direct and indirect impacts of their project in terms of use of natural resources (e.g. energy, water, air, minerals). For example:

- Increased resource use of a new building or refurbished building (e.g. energy, water, transport to building, waste generation);
- Increased transport use for the delivery of projects (e.g. travelling to companies to deliver business support);
- Increased use of paper resources (e.g. promotional/marketing materials);

You would then need to show how these impacts would be managed, for example:

- Energy efficiency in design of new/refurbished building (BREEAM 'excellent' rating would be best practice);
- Water efficiency in design of new/refurbished building (e.g. recycling of grey water, low flush WCs, waterless urinals, compost toilets, sensor taps)
- Use of renewable energy in buildings (either through on site installation or green power providers);
- Use of sustainable construction materials (e.g. recycled materials, timber from a sustainable source);
- Development and promotion of recycling facilities and use of recycled products (e.g. paper, computers);
- Promotion/awareness-raising of resource efficiency (e.g. through leaflets, notices, as an element of a business support package, etc.);
- Development of green travel plan & promotion of public transport use.

**Objective 4: How will the project ensure that decisions about the distribution and location of activity are consistent with sustainable development principles ?**

You should consider how the location of the activity will impact on and help to promote sustainable communities. Key points to consider are:

- The location of the facility (whether a community facility, training centre, business support provider) in relation to the community it serves – is it easily accessible (e.g. can it be accessed on foot)?
- Is the project accessible by public transport?
- Does the project allow remote access (e.g. IT based support accessed from home)?
- Will the project protect and enhance open spaces for the community?
- Does the project enhance the vitality and viability of the community/town/village?

**Objective 5: How will the project enhance the region's infrastructure by maximising transport choice?**

You should consider how the project will make best of use of, and potentially enhance, the existing infrastructure of the region. Key points to consider are:

- Will the project use a Green Transport Plan, or develop one as part of the project?
- Will the project encourage the use of public transport and discourage the use of private cars?
- Will the project improve conditions and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists (e.g. workspace providing shower facilities/cycle sheds)?