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## CHAPTER 3 - AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

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### 3.0 AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

#### 3.1 The Challenges

The European Union's special support programme for peace and reconciliation is a generous response to the unique opportunities and additional needs which have sprung directly from the paramilitary ceasefires announced in the autumn of 1994. At a fundamental level, the cessation of violence presents a specific opportunity to tackle those deep rooted social and economic problems whose existence and effects have been acknowledged but which have proved largely irremediable in the face of 25 years of violence. Indeed, and as outlined in Chapter 2, there are forceful arguments that many of these social and economic problems have contributed to and sustained the violence. More generally, however, the key challenges that must be met are related to those needs and opportunities which have been uncovered by the cessation of violence.

#### **New Opportunities and Needs**

- 3.2 At a minimum, the cessation of violence has unleashed a new spirit of hope and optimism. Within Northern Ireland independent business surveys show that levels of business confidence have reached an all-time high, and that employment and investment intentions remain firmly positive. For example, one recent report<sup>3</sup> states that the ending of violence '... provides an economic scenario in Northern Ireland that has never been better in the past twenty five years'. The ending of violence has therefore already made its mark in ushering in a new and improved economic environment within which substantial progress can be made on the economic and social fronts. Moreover, these favourable developments at local level are taking place against an international economic backdrop where recovery from the recent recession is now solidly established. The most immediate and beneficial impact arising from the cessation of violence therefore is already being felt locally in terms of a shift in the social environment and an enhanced economic outlook. Admittedly these effects are rather intangible but they do provide an essential context for the success of any new policy initiative. In other words, it is a matter of not only having the correct policies that is important but also the right conditions under which they can be implemented - the climate is now right!

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<sup>3</sup> Northern Ireland Economic Council Autumn Economic Review: October 1994.

3.3 Additionally, the ending of violence has presented a range of specific opportunities which, if capitalised upon and taken together, should lead to an improvement in the economic performance and social situation in the eligible areas. Taken from one perspective, these opportunities or potential benefits can be seen as the mirror-image of the costs (both direct and indirect) inflicted by 25 years of violence. For example, it is generally recognised that the conflict has had a detrimental macroeconomic effect in terms of distorting the structure of the Northern Ireland economy with the result that a comparatively small private sector co-exists with a large public sector. The ending of the violence provides an opportunity for the necessary structural adjustment of the Northern Ireland economy to take place. Among other things this will require the achievement of a better balance between the private sector and the public sector. In part this may occur through adjustments in the security sector which may have temporary adverse effects. This Programme, however, is deliberately designed not only to exploit the opportunities offered by peace but to address and mitigate any adverse effects as well.

3.4 In the case of the border region, given its close proximity to and affinity with Northern Ireland as set out above, it is inevitable that the consequences of the violence and the resultant security situation, including the closure of many cross-border roads, terrorist attacks on towns such as Monaghan and the influx across the border of hundreds of people from Northern Ireland who have now settled in the border areas had a very negative effect on the socio-economic structure in the Border Region. The closure of the cross-border roads cut off small towns and villages from their economic hinterlands and disrupted a pattern of social and economic intercourse that had existed for generations. The lower than average tourism figures for the Region were a reflection of public perception, both at home and abroad, that the region was inextricably bound up with the Northern situation. Repair of the economic and other damage that these developments caused must proceed apace in line with progress in Northern Ireland.

### 3.5 **Employment**

As mentioned earlier, the chief economic problem in the eligible areas is persistently high unemployment and, in particular, long-term unemployment. The ending of violence presents an unrivalled opportunity to make serious inroads into this problem. In addition, the creation of properly targeted jobs would help to encourage the momentum towards peace and consolidate the progress made so far. While the opportunities mentioned above, if appropriately supported, would lead (over various timescales) to increased employment, there is a valid argument that

this Programme should go further and directly resource job-creating efforts for the most disadvantaged groups.

### 3.6 **Urban and Rural Regeneration**

Northern Ireland faces a period of reconstruction. The physical fabric of many of the villages, towns and cities has been torn asunder, often repeatedly. Government, however, has ensured that much of this physical damage has been repaired. Notwithstanding these efforts, many urban areas continue to suffer from environmental decay, as well as more generalised problems of unemployment, poverty and weak community infrastructures: the same is the case in the border counties. Since these problems are typically found in those areas most adversely affected by the violence, this Programme should use the opportunity to ensure that it has immediate, visible and productive impacts by targeting these problem areas. These beneficial impacts will, in turn, contribute directly both to meeting local needs and to achieving the purpose of the Programme.

### 3.7 **Cross Border Development**

The conflict has served to inhibit cross border cooperation, often in areas where mutual benefits would occur naturally. Recognising this, the public and private sectors in both parts of the island have embarked on a series of initiatives to enhance cross border cooperation. Although these efforts are gathering pace, there is a consensus of opinion that the potential for cross border co-operation is far from being fully realised. The new situation offers a range of opportunities to repair and reinforce these links where these are economically and socially desirable. Moreover, the changed situation presents an opportunity to facilitate a speedier "rapprochement" between the communities on both sides of the border.

#### **Social Exclusion**

3.8 The preceding paragraphs have tended to emphasise the economic opportunities and needs arising from the ending of violence. Each of these has, of course, social aspects which also need to be addressed, not necessarily separately. For example, the provision of additional jobs not only meets economic needs but can also go a long way towards curing many social ills. The gravity of many of these social needs, however, requires that some interventions should focus separately on them.

3.9 Although social needs are less tangible and measurable than their economic counterparts, their severity and influence are no less important. Annex 1 has drawn attention to the scale of the problem of social deprivation, expressed in a standard fashion by using commonly accepted indicators of deprivation. There are, however, a number of features of Northern Ireland's social fabric which are difficult

to capture in this conventional manner. The conflict has resulted in greater community polarisation not only in a physical (and measurable) sense through a retreat into single identity enclaves, but also in that it has polarised opinions and adversely affected attitudes between the two main communities in Northern Ireland and indeed beyond. At the intra-community level the conflict has also had the effect of alienating and detaching substantial sections of both communities from the economic and social mainstream. Unfortunately, and as a direct result of this alienation, these marginalised groups have tended to be by-passed by traditional policy measures aimed at tackling conventionally defined social deprivation. The degree to which these groups can be encouraged to participate actively in productive social processes and relationships, will play a key role in the thrust of this Programme and in the movement towards peaceful conditions.

### **3.10 Inward Investment**

Northern Ireland is now well placed to win a larger share of internationally mobile investment. Comparisons with the Republic of Ireland suggest that an extra 1,400 jobs annually might come from this source<sup>4</sup> It is not expected that this Programme, by adding to the financial incentives on offer, might directly influence the flow of inward investment projects. But there is an opportunity for it to do so indirectly. Surveys of existing inward investors in Northern Ireland reveal that an adequate supply of well-qualified labour plays a key role in the investment decision to locate in the region. There is a sound argument, therefore, that this Programme might take advantage of the opportunities on the inward investment front by targeting some resources towards enhancing the skills base of the region. It would not be expected that the pay-off from an investment of this sort would materialise in the short-term, if only because of the long lead-in times of inward investment projects. Augmentation of the region's stock of human capital, however, would yield dividends not only in terms of increased employment but also by generating spin-offs from the attraction of leading edge technologies and the newest management techniques, which are closely associated with inward investment projects.

### **3.11 Local Private Sector**

As far as indigenous firms are concerned, the transformation of the local economic environment within which they operate now means that sounder and hence more profitable investment decisions can be undertaken. While the new environment is a necessary condition for increased investment and employment, by itself it is not sufficient. Increased opportunities now exist to support innovative practices, and

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<sup>4</sup> First Trust Business Outlook and Economic Review, Vol. 101, Chapter 2.3, (PK Gorecki, Northern Economic Council) March 1995.

RTD, especially among small and medium-sized enterprises, which typify the industrial structure of the economies of the eligible areas. The Member States take the view that this particular opportunity should be grasped as it represents a very promising route towards achieving an outward-looking, self-sufficient and dynamic base of indigenous firms. A further attraction of this approach is that it minimises any leakage of benefits and thus captures the maximum impact to the benefit of the eligible areas.

### 3.12 **Tourism**

It is hoped that the Northern Ireland economy will be able to recapture that slice of the tourism market lost as a result of the conflict. Estimates of the potential economic benefits from re-gaining this market share vary but it would not be implausible to assume that tourism's proportionate contribution to Northern Ireland's Gross Domestic Product would eventually grow to match that in the Republic of Ireland. Increasing the supply of capital has featured in the local Tourist Board's strategy for many years predating the ceasefires, and considerable financial support has been received under the Community Support Framework (1989-1993) with a view to implementing this strategic aspect. Moreover, additional support will be forthcoming under the Northern Ireland Single Programming Document (1994-1999) to reinforce these efforts. There is, however, the potential to undertake innovative projects and programmes, particularly in rural and border areas, which are not covered by the more conventional Structural Funds but will, nonetheless, have a direct and beneficial impact on the economic potential and regeneration of the areas concerned, with particular emphasis on capital and promotional activities which will generate employment and enhance the tourism product. There is also scope to cater for small local tourism schemes or tourism training.

3.13 In the Border Region there is a clearly perceived need to build on the support available under the Community Support Framework and the INTERREG Programme to fully redress the negative perceptions that the Region has had to face up to now. There are specific tourism measures under Urban and Rural Regeneration which set out to give the necessary boost to ongoing efforts in this area. While there will be some scope for the statutory tourism agencies in this the major emphasis is on bottom-up development arising from community-based actions. Otherwise priorities across the measures largely match (bearing in mind the lower proportion of funding available to the Border Region) those pertaining to Northern Ireland. With the restoration of economic and other normality in Northern Ireland the specific and unique problems faced by the Border Region vis-à-vis the rest of Ireland should disappear.

### 3.14 The Strategic Framework

The extent to which the challenges of peace can be met, and new opportunities grasped, depends crucially on extracting the maximum return from the resources available from this Initiative. To do this effectively requires a strategic framework to assist in:

- providing a focus for concerted action
- determining the most efficient distribution of resources
- allowing resource allocation decisions to be made explicit
- establishing the degree of coherence between this Initiative and other forms of intervention at local level - from sources such as the EU and the Government.

3.15 The Strategic Framework for this Initiative also provides the context within which the various components of the Initiative can be harmonised in order to maximise potential synergies between them and also between the other forms of expenditure in the region. To assist this, the aim and objectives of the strategic framework have been deliberately chosen to preserve the special character of this Initiative, and to ensure that, where possible, it has a unique and distinct thrust.

In addition to the purpose of the Framework, its construction and content essentially reflect the rationale for this Initiative but also the local response to it, such as the outcomes of the various conferences held. The Strategic Framework is shown overleaf and described in the rest of this Chapter.

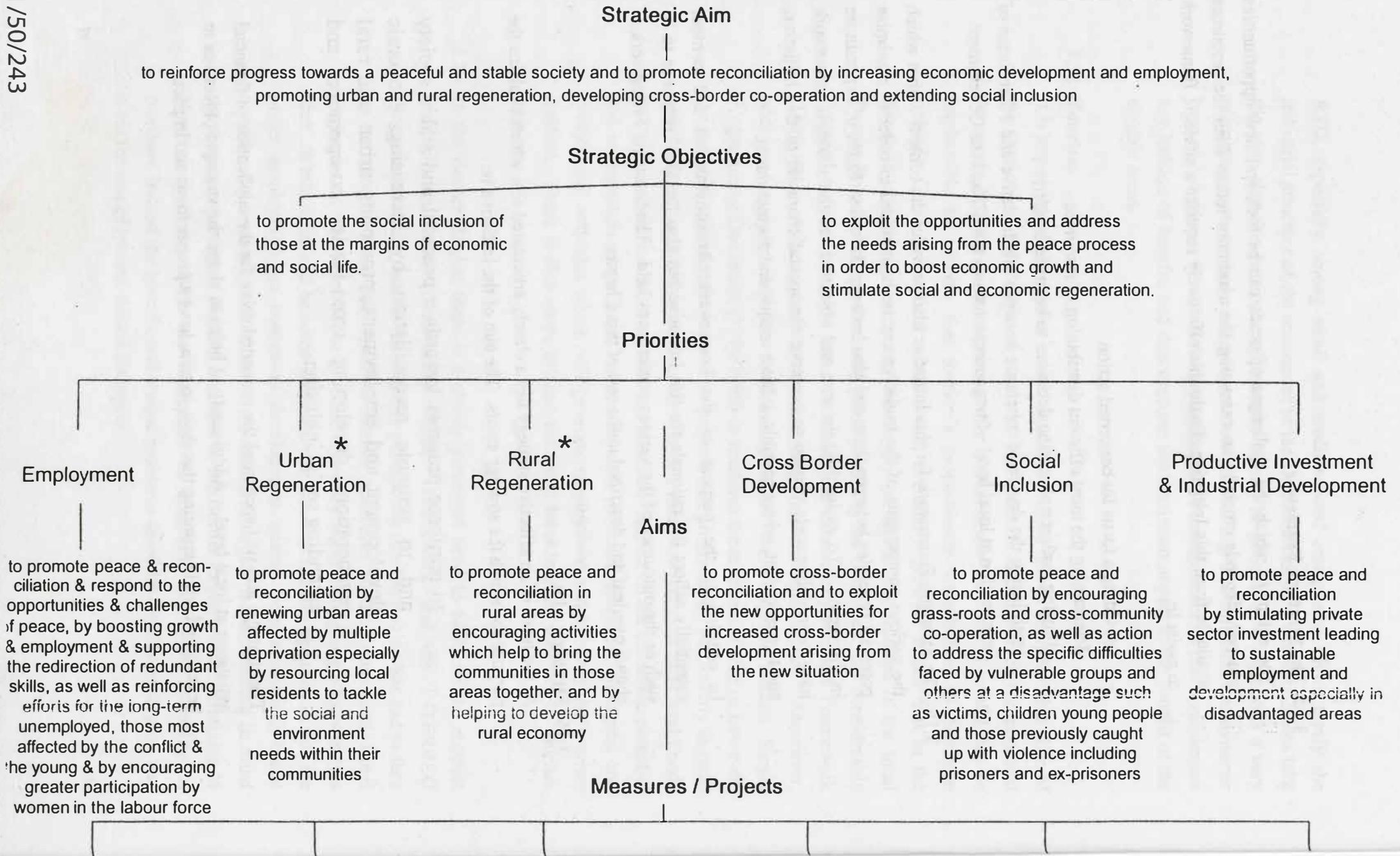
### 3.16 Strategic Aim

At the heart of an effective strategy lies a clearly articulated aim which explains the purpose for which the strategy exists. The aim of the Initiative is:

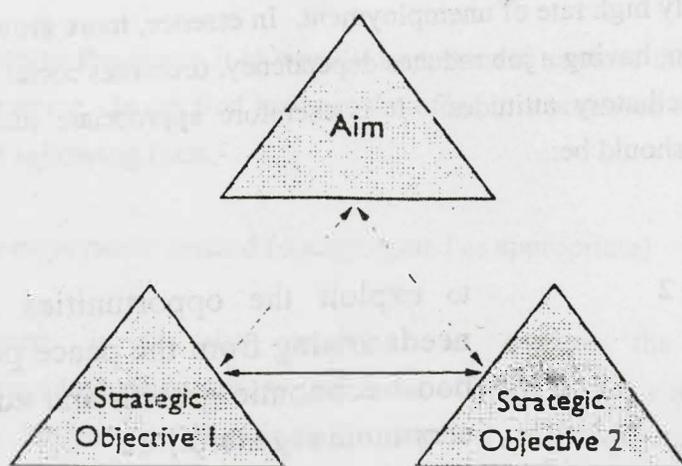
to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation by increasing economic development and employment, promoting urban and rural regeneration, developing cross-border co-operation and extending social inclusion.

The strategic aim will spearhead the concerted drive for the application of financial assistance at local level. Additionally, it helps to shape the strategic objectives to be achieved while ensuring that they, in turn, have a proper focus and impact.

# Structure of the Operational Programme



### 3.17 Strategic Objectives



3.18 Community conflict has damaged the development of normal social and economic relationships within the island of Ireland. The legacy of decades of inter-community tension and violence are manifest now in a society exhibiting deep divisions. Within both main communities in Northern Ireland differential social and economic experiences have sustained feelings of discrimination and alienation. In particular, the years of violence have resulted in people being pushed to and left at the margins of society. The changed situation, however, now provides an excellent opportunity to integrate those excluded from the mainstream of every-day social and economic life, so that they can reach their full potential and play a productive role in helping to shape the future of their society. It is appropriate therefore that a strategic objective should be:-

#### **Strategic**

#### **Objective 1.**

to promote the social inclusion of those who are at the margins of social and economic life

3.19 It is widely recognised that the advent of peace presents an opportunity, absent for over 25 years, to tackle Northern Ireland's serious economic problems within a new environment where any policy action or intervention is bound to have added beneficial force. There is a commanding argument therefore that some resources

should be directed in a focused manner to capitalise on the new environment in order to boost the region's rate of economic growth. Raising Northern Ireland's economic growth rate provides the most effective means of delivering the employment needed to alleviate the region's chief economic problem - a persistently high rate of unemployment. In essence, more growth means more jobs. In addition, having a job reduces dependency, promotes social inclusion and fosters more conciliatory attitudes. It is therefore appropriate that a further strategic objective should be:

**Strategic**

**Objective 2**

to exploit the opportunities and address the needs arising from the peace process in order to boost economic growth and advance social and economic regeneration.

3.20 It is essential that a strategic framework, together with its aims and objectives, should be developed with the various target groups in mind. Accordingly the aims and objectives will largely be focused, at an operational level, on those areas and sections of the population most adversely affected by the violence and suffering most acute deprivation. Emphasis will also be placed on encouraging those individuals, most disadvantaged in terms of detachment or alienation from the social or economic mainstream, to reach their full potential. Priority will be given to wide-ranging, locally based, community development initiatives across a broad spectrum of innovative social and economic activities, including those which involve a cross community and/or cross border dimension.

**3.21 Indicators for the Programme**

The overall indicators for the Programme not only reflect the objective degree of progress towards the achievement of Sub-programme and Measure indicators (outlined in Chapter 5), but also the perception of that progress.

The suggested overall indicators for the Programme will be derived from the following:-

- additional questions in the Social Attitude Survey to measure changes in inter-community perceptions and tensions and recognition of the origin, purpose, role and degree of success of the Programme in the population as a whole and disaggregated as appropriate.

- a cohort study of participants in assisted projects to measure the impact of their participation in the Programme on their lives, attitudes and prospects, and
- a survey of community leaders/decision influencers to explore the same issues.

In addition to the above it is equally important to capture the economic impact of the Programme. In the first instance therefore it is proposed to include an indicator along the following lines:-

- Net employment created (disaggregated as appropriate)

Furthermore, it is also important to capture the extent to which disadvantaged/deprived groups and those affected by the conflict have benefitted from the Programme. It is initially proposed to include an indicator along the following lines:-

- Percentage of participants from disadvantaged/deprived groups or groups/individuals affected directly by the conflict.

Further work on indicators for the programme and sub-programmes will be undertaken, as necessary, along the lines of the report from the prior appraisers (see Annex 2).

### 3.22 **Sub-programmes**

The establishment of a strategic aim together with the strategic objectives has assisted the choice of the Sub-programmes within the strategic framework. The strategic aim and objectives also cascade down to the Sub-programme level and have influenced, in turn, the aims and objectives of the various Sub-programmes. These linkages help to ensure that the Sub-programmes will benefit from a focused effort and, taken together, will ensure that the aim and objectives of the strategic framework as a whole can be met. In addition, the close links between the aim (s) and objectives at both the strategic and Sub-programme levels cascade down even further to a more detailed operational level to facilitate the choice of appropriate measures and, within these, to the selection of appropriate projects. As a working illustration of this cascading effect in operation, the strategic aim will be reflected in the selection criteria at the level of individual projects.

The nexus between Sub-Programmes, measures, projects and selection criteria is also important in that it demonstrates and justifies not only the distinctiveness of this Initiative but also its complementarity with other forms of intervention.



3.23 At the Sub-programme level of the strategic framework, the EU Task Force findings and subsequent EU Commission Guidelines identified 5 priority areas, as indispensable elements of the support package. These priorities and the Sub-programmes of the Strategic Framework, are almost identical, as shown below:

**PRIORITIES**

- Employment
- Urban and Rural Regeneration
- Cross-border Development
- Social Inclusion
- Productive Investment and Industrial Development

**SUB-PROGRAMMES**

- Employment
- Urban and Rural Regeneration
- Cross-border Development
- Social Inclusion
- Productive Investment and Industrial Development
- Partnerships
- Technical Assistance

The Member States considered that the priorities identified were comprehensive enough to achieve the aim of the initiative. Although the activities of the Partnerships to be established in Northern Ireland are presented in a separate sub-programme they relate to 4 of the 5 priorities of the Commission Guidelines, namely: Employment; Urban and Rural Regeneration; Social Inclusion; and Productive Investment and Industrial Development.

The Technical Assistance sub-programme covers assistance to strengthen and enhance the management of the Programme, to ensure the provision of information and publicity and to help the development of proposals within the aims of the Programme.

Overall the breakdown of the total EU funding on the 5 priorities reflects the importance given to Social Inclusion during the consultative process. The following table shows that 30% is expected to be devoted to this priority and that it constitutes a particularly high share of the measures to be implemented via Intermediary Bodies and Partnerships.

**% EU Funding of the Priorities - by Implementation Mechanism**

	<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Central Government</b>	<b>Intermediary Bodies</b>	<b>Partnerships(1)</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1	Employment	8.8%	5.1%	2.7%	16.6%
2	Urban and Rural Regeneration	13.5%	3.1%	2.8%	19.4%
3	Cross-Border Development	7.6%	7.4%	-	15.0%
4	Social Inclusion	7.0%	16.5%	6.5%	30.0%
5	Productive Investment and Industrial Development	3.4%	11.2	2.7%	17.4%
6	Technical Assistance	1.6%	-	-	1.6%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41.8%</b>	<b>43.5%</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(1) These figures relate only to district partnerships in Northern Ireland as described in Chapter 5, subparagraph 6.

The table also shows that more than half of the programme will be implemented via intermediary bodies and partnerships.

3.24 The Northern Ireland authorities take the view, however, that a strong case exists for separating urban from rural regeneration since the problems associated with urban and rural areas are sufficiently different to merit separate treatment. This separation does not involve any significant departure from the findings of the EU Task force or the EU Commission Guidelines, nor does it conflict with the views expressed during consultation. In the border counties, where no town exceeds 26,000 people and where only four boast populations in excess of 10,000, it is not appropriate to separate the Urban and Rural Regeneration strand.

**3.25 Allocations to Priorities: Northern Ireland**

Decisions about the balance of funding across the Sub-Programmes have been governed, among other things, by the rationale of the Programme, the consultation

process and the various parameters set by the European Commission. As a result of the Task Force findings, the outcome of the consultation arrangements and the weighting given to disadvantaged groups within the Commission's Guidelines for the Initiative, it was considered appropriate that the funding for the social inclusion Sub-programme should be weighted in its favour. This is reflected in the allocation to this priority. In addition, a minimum proportion to be allocated to Cross-border actions was stipulated in the Guidelines and this has been provided for in the initial allocations.

3.26 The balance of the remaining funds has been distributed almost equally across the other priorities. This results in a spread of allocations as follows:-

<b>Sub-Programme</b>	<b>Allocations (MECU) Northern Ireland</b>	<b>%</b>
Employment	37.39	15
Urban Regeneration	18.95	8
Rural Regeneration	18.95	8
Cross-border Development	22.50	9
Social Inclusion	57.33	24
Productive Investment and Industrial Development	36.89	16
Partnerships	44.21	18
Technical Assistance	3.79	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>240.00</b>	<b>100</b>

It should be noted that the above allocations are indicative and may be subject to change over the life of the Programme. It is essential to preserve flexibility with respect to the allocations so that the Initiative can be transparently responsive to developments unforeseen at this stage.

### 3.27 Allocation to Priorities: Border Counties

Given the range of socio-economic inter-relationships between the border counties and Northern Ireland it is not surprising that the cross-border development strand came in for the most support. The social inclusion strand was also rated a high priority firstly in its own right and secondly as a horizontal theme carried across the other sub-programmes. The allocations shown below reflect these priorities as the measures envisaged under the other sub-programmes give a significant emphasis to the social inclusion aspect.

<b>Sub-Programme</b>	<b>Allocations (MECU) Ireland</b>	<b>%</b>
Employment	4.38	7
Urban Regeneration ) Rural Regeneration )	12.0	20
Cross-border Development	22.50	37
Social Inclusion	13.13	22
Productive Investment and Industrial Development	7.06	12
Technical Assistance	0.93	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60.00</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3.28 Complementarity

Under the Single Programming Document for Northern Ireland and the Community Support Framework for Ireland and the Community Initiatives, Northern Ireland and Ireland already have in place an extensive range of community support programmes. In terms of actions being funded and objectives, the programmes most similar to the Peace Programme are the Physical and Social Environment Sub-programme of the SPD and INTERREG. The former encourages cross-community reconciliation, urban regeneration, targeting social need and infrastructure, while the latter promotes cross-border co-operation and border development.

Although the Peace Programme in many instances provides additional funding for these vital areas, it is different in many respects:-

- a. the primary focus of both the SPD and the CSF is on achieving economic and social cohesion and this must be the prime criterion - the areas above are supported because they can assist the process of economic development. Under the Peace Initiative, however, the prime focus is on embedding the peace process and promoting reconciliation. The actions can and must have economic benefits but these may be indirect and longer term. As the external appraisers have pointed out, "the distinctive indicators and evaluation criteria proposed provide a clear basis of complementarity of the Programme with other Programmes and Initiatives. Put simply, even if the same activity is eligible under both this Programme and other Programme it is being done under this Programme for a different and distinctive reason";

- b. the Peace Initiative provides immediate support to exploit the opportunities arising from the new situation. This is a window of opportunity which must be seized especially for the vulnerable sections of the population;
- c. unlike other Initiatives, the funding is targeted mainly at those who have been most affected by the conflict;
- d. the Initiative covers a wide and diverse range of actions; and lastly
- e. in Northern Ireland this Programme is unique not just in its objective but also in its means of delivery. Through the delivery mechanisms (intermediary funding bodies and partnerships) capacities for local decision taking which might have been weakened through 25 years of conflict will be boosted. In this Initiative, the means may be considered as important as the end.

Further information on complementarity is given in each measure sheet.

It has been agreed with the Member States to consider the need and scope for refocussing Structural Funds programmes (the Northern Ireland Single Programming Document and the Community Support Framework for Ireland) in order to accommodate the new demands and challenges which have arisen from the cessation of violence and thereby optimise support for the sustained social and economic development of the two regions.

### 3.29 **Additionality**

The expenditure under the programme will be fully additional to expenditure which is due to take place in the eligible areas under the SPD for Northern Ireland, the CSF for Ireland and the Community initiative programmes.

In respect of Northern Ireland this will be demonstrated by using the table showing expenditure in UK Objective 1 areas (Table 4a) and the table for Northern Ireland (4b) as a baseline. The figures will then be augmented by the appropriate amount.

In respect of the border counties, the Department of Finance is compiling details of projected expenditure in the area under the CSF and other Community initiative programmes. This information will be updated on a periodic basis, taking account of outturn, together with expenditure outturns under this programme, in order to demonstrate the additionality of expenditure under this programme over the period. The EU Operational Committee of the Border Regional Authority will be supplied

with the baseline data and the periodic reports in order that it can assure itself of the additionality of the expenditure under this Programme.

### **3.30 Matching Funding**

In Northern Ireland and the border counties funding to match the EU contribution will come from a variety of sources. However as indicated in the overall financial table the bulk of the matching funds will come from the two central governments. The remainder will come from a variety of sources including local authorities, the private sector and community/voluntary groups.

Due to the nature of this Programme, many projects will be submitted from disadvantaged groups or individuals who may have extreme difficulty in making a direct contribution to the financing of their proposals and this will be taken into account in deciding the level of funding from the programme. Account may also be taken of resources in kind (e.g. premises, human resources). It is expected that the International Fund for Ireland will also cofinance some of the projects under this programme.

All matching funds provided by central government will be fully additional.

### **3.31 Equality and Equity**

With regard to equal opportunities, the Northern Ireland authorities acknowledge the importance of employment equality. Legal protection against discrimination on grounds of religion, political opinion and gender is provided by the Fair Employment (NI) Acts 1976 and 1989 and the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976. The Government is fully committed to opposing all forms of unlawful discrimination and all projects receiving funding must conform with this legislation.

3.32 In Northern Ireland, this Programme has also been reviewed in the context of Government's Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT) initiative. This initiative which applies to all Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office, is designed to ensure that considerations of equality, equity, and non-discrimination in relation to selected groups are from the outset built into the preparation of policy proposals, including legislation, other initiatives and strategic plans for the implementation of policy and delivery of services. Groups covered by the PAFT guidelines include people of different sex, age, ethnic group, religious belief or political opinion; married and unmarried people; disabled and non-disabled people; people with or without dependants and people of differing sexual orientation.

3.33 In the implementation of this Programme, the central aim will incorporate the principle that funding should be distributed equitably. This obligation will be built into any contracts with intermediary funding bodies/partnerships and will underpin allocations from Central Government. There will be an opportunity for all sectors of the community, irrespective of religion and gender, to play a role in decision-making bodies.

3.34 The Irish Government also attaches great importance to the issue of equal opportunities. The Government has given firm commitments in the National Plan and the Programme for Competitiveness and Work in relation to the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women. These commitments bear repeating in the context of the Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. The Programme will promote equal opportunities between men and women and all measures will be monitored to ensure that there is no direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender. The programme will also support specific actions, in particular in the area of human resources, that will have as their objective the promotion of equal opportunities. This will be achieved through the provision of support for childcare or positive action programmes that will promote the participation of women in the labour market in areas of employment where they are currently under-represented.

### 3.35 **Information and Publicity**

Commission Decision No 94/342/EC of 31 May 1994<sup>5</sup> concerning information and publicity measures to be carried out by the Member States concerning assistance from the Structural Funds and the FIFG shall apply. These arrangements will be agreed with the Monitoring Committee. However, it is envisaged that the following actions will be included:-

- appropriate press releases at the time of agreement of the programme
- spokesperson(s) will be available to speak to interested groups
- a synopsis of Programme will be available as an information pack (full details of the Programme will be available if required)
- Notes for Guidance and application forms will be available after formal approval of the Programme
- the Consultative Forum will perform an important information/publicity role

<sup>5</sup> OJ No. L 152, 18.06.1994, p. 39.

## CHAPTER 4 - IMPLEMENTATION

- a logo will be designed to facilitate identification with the Programme
- where feasible, plaques will publicise the fact that a project has been assisted from the Peace Initiative
- an annual report on the operation of the Programme will be published
- contact points for information and guidance will be established
- a comprehensive database of all projects assisted under this initiative will be established and made available to the public.