

Investment Framework for Action Area 3-3 - Supporting the Improvement of the Region's Visitor Offer and Image

1. Introduction

Generic Purpose of the Investment Frameworks

- 1.1 The NWOP Programme Monitoring Committee has agreed to the development of a series of Investment Frameworks. The purposes of these are to:
- Develop further the context for each of the Action Areas within the NWOP and focus on specific investments which the ERDF Programme will support
 - Encourage all project sponsors to seek guidance from the relevant policy leads and/or the European Programme Team before embarking on the development of a project idea
 - Provide guidance for projects sponsors when developing their ideas and projects in relation to the NWOP
 - Set out what outputs and results are expected to be delivered.
- 1.2 All Investment Frameworks (IFs) have been developed with input from regional and local stakeholders across the region during late 2007. The IFs will be subject to a monitoring and evaluation process to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose and aligned with the NWOP and relevant regional and sub regional strategies. The NWOP Programme Executive will be able to provide further guidance in relation to the IFs.

Specific Purpose of this Investment Framework

- 1.3 This Investment Framework is designed to guide the use of the resources under the NWOP that have been indicatively allocated to this Action Area as part of Priority 3 "*Creating the Conditions for Sustainable Growth*" which focuses on providing the conditions which will support the region's aspirations for sustainable economic growth, as set out in the RES, by regionally significant investments. These investments will be in two areas: firstly to provide the infrastructure, including sites and premises for SMEs, necessary for economic growth in targeted locations, and; secondly to enhance the region's cultural and visitor offer in support of the development of sustainable tourism.
- 1.4 This Action Area is intended to support improvements in the region's cultural and visitor offer that can add value to the region's economy and support the development of sustainable tourism. The Investment Framework supports interventions in the region's visitor offer where there is a clear economic spin-off regionally, including increasing the quality of infrastructure and service, the enhancement of the built and natural environment, and the awareness and image of the region by potential visitors.
- 1.5 At present, the indicative resources covered by this Investment Framework amount to around €34m (or around £23.5m) over the life of the programme comprising around £13m to be spent on support activities in the Merseyside phasing-in area and £10.5m in the rest of North West.

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- 1.6 Interventions made under this Investment Framework will be in the following five eligible areas of activity:
- 1) Limited capital investment in new visitor or tourism facilities and attractions in the Merseyside phasing-in region (including new investments in existing facilities and attractions), in line with sub-regional strategic priorities;
 - 2) The protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage assets, in line with regional strategic priorities as set out in the region's Tourism Strategy;
 - 3) Specific support for Liverpool 2008 Capital of Culture, including spreading the benefits regionally, linked to the legacy activity post 2008, including the themed years (2009 environment and 2010 innovation);
 - 4) Promotion and marketing of natural and cultural heritage assets, to promote sustainable tourism;
 - 5) Green transport plans for accessing natural and cultural heritage sites to promote sustainable tourism, including limited investment in sustainable transport:
 - Green transport plans are travel plans which encourage occupiers and developers to introduce more sustainable access (public transport, cycling, and walking) to their developments/sites
 - There will be limited investment in site specific road access infrastructure.
- 1.7 There are three strands of activity supported under this Investment Framework:
- **Strand 1:** Development of cultural infrastructure
 - **Strand 2:** Protection and development of natural heritage
 - **Strand 3:** Other investment in firms
- 1.8 **This draft Investment Framework has been produced for consultation with Sub-Regional Partnerships and other partners, prior to being submitted to the new NWOP Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) in January 2008.**

2. Partner Engagement

- 2.1 This Investment Framework has been prepared by an advisory group created for this purpose under the chairmanship of the Head of Tourism Strategy at the NWDA. Membership of the group has been drawn from three of the region's Tourist Boards (Cumbria Tourism, The Mersey Partnership and Marketing Manchester), Blackpool Council, Culture Northwest, the Natural Economy Northwest project and from Manchester University (Jodrell Bank).
- 2.2 The advisory group has met on four occasions and has reviewed three drafts of this framework.
- 2.3 In addition, there has been dialogue with all Tourist Boards at meetings of the regional tourism management group, and dialogue with the two Sub-Regional Partnership organisations (Cumbria Vision and the Lancashire Economic Partnership) whose nominated lead individuals for this Action Area are not already directly involved in the advisory group.

3. Linkages to Other Strategies

- 3.1 Tourism and the visitor economy are an important component of the UK economy, creating employment for 1.4 million people and generating £85bn of expenditure annually by overseas and domestic tourists. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has recently published 'Winning, A Tourism Strategy for 2012 and Beyond'. This provides the wider strategic context for tourism, and in particular is focused on maximising the potential benefits offered to UK tourism by the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games and on generating a significant legacy for the years beyond that.
- 3.2 Regional Development Agencies have a statutory role in leading tourism in their regions. The NWDA published the first Regional Tourism Strategy in 2003 and has recently reviewed and updated this, publishing the revised Strategy in March 2007. This revised strategy is intended to strengthen the region's focus on offering some of the best visitor destinations in the UK, to connect with the growing importance being attached to the role of local authorities in place-shaping, to ensure that work is aligned with both the new national thinking on tourism, and with the Regional Economic Strategy, and to give greater prominence to the principles of sustainable development.
- 3.3 Tourism and the visitor economy are recognised as priorities in the RES, both as a sector with large and widespread employment and as a key component of quality of life. The visitor economy is a vital part of the wider economy of the region, with strengths in both rural and urban areas. The Northwest is well placed to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the changing nature of the tourism market. The region offers visitors a distinctive and diverse range of experiences. These contribute to the quality of life for everyone and also present further opportunities for development. The RES emphasises the significant opportunities that exist to build on key events, such as Liverpool Capital of Culture 2008 and highlights the contribution made by the Northwest's natural and built heritage assets to the quality of life in the region. The specific relevant RES linked actions are:
- 10 Develop growth and innovation in the tourism sector through the continued implementation of the Regional Tourism Strategy
 - 101 Improve the product associated with the region's tourism 'attack brands' and 'signature Projects'
 - 113 Develop the economic benefit of the region's natural environment through better alignment of environmental activities and economic gain

4. Key Principles to Support Project Prioritisation and Design

4.1 There are a number of important principles which will inform project selection and how the resources allocated under this Investment Framework will be used:

- Activity under this Investment Framework is to be organised and procured through a mix of regionally / sub regionally defined and organised projects to maximise efficiencies and overall impact.
- A limited number of programmes is sought.
- Programmes seeking support from this action area must:
 - Be of sufficient scale to be transformational in impact;
 - Improve the region's appeal to international and staying visitors and provide evidence to show how this will be achieved and that it will be effective;
 - Be identified as priorities within the sub-regional Destination Management Plan;
 - Address a clearly identified market or other failure;
 - Help implement the key priorities of national, regional and sub-regional tourism strategies;
 - Clearly identify the mechanisms by which GVA growth will be assisted (and include monitoring and evaluation processes relating to these);
 - Embed quality throughout their execution;
 - Address issues of environmental sustainability and of equality and diversity;
 - Include clear and effective monitoring and evaluation plans;
 - Wherever possible, be accessible by public transport
 - Give due consideration to green travel plans (and where appropriate include the development of such plans)
- The support under this Action Area will be focused geographically on the specific areas identified in section 6 below for each of the five areas of eligible activity listed in paragraph 1.6 above.

5. Targets

5.1 The main objective of this Action Area of the NWOP is to invest in the region’s visitor offer where there is a clear economic spin-off regionally, including increasing the quality of infrastructure and service, the enhancement of the built and natural environment, and the awareness and image of the region for visitors. The focus of what the Investment Framework is trying to achieve can be summarised as:

- Raising the quality of the region’s visitor and tourism offer;
- Enhancing the built and natural environment where it supports this offer, and;
- Improving the image and raising awareness of the region and its distinctive offer

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5.2 Given the breadth of this agenda and the limited resources available within the Action Area, there is a need for this investment to be used in a strategic manner, concentrated on distinct themes and specific locations.

5.3 The indicators that will be used to measure progress are as follows¹:

- **Outputs:** Private sector investment levered (£m); Brownfield Land reclaimed and/or redeveloped (ha).
- **Results:** Number of gross jobs created; Number of gross jobs safeguarded; Reduction in annual CO² emissions from Programme interventions (tonnes pa), and; New or upgraded floor-space built/upgraded to BREEAM excellent or very good at current standards (sq m).
- **Impacts:** Net additional GVA overall in region (£m); Net additional employment overall in region; Net change in overall CO² emissions (tonnes pa).

Note these impact indicators are programme-wide impact indicators, the contribution of all Investment Frameworks to these overall targets will need to be measured].

6. Investment Framework Approach

6.1 As stated above three strands of activity are proposed under this Investment Framework:

- **Strand 1:** Development of cultural infrastructure
- **Strand 2:** Protection and development of natural heritage
- **Strand 3:** Other investment in firms

6.2 These strands operate across the five areas of eligible activities under this Investment Framework that are described in more detail below.

6.3 All projects seeking investment from this Action Area shall be consistent with the strategic priorities set out in the Regional Tourism Strategy and within appropriate sub-regional Tourism Strategies, be concentrated in the specific locations identified below, and focus on the distinct themes listed below.

Locations

6.4 Eligible locations are:

- The regional attack brands: Manchester, Liverpool, Chester, the Lake District and Blackpool
- The historic cities of Carlisle and Lancaster, which have been identified as strategic priorities for heritage based tourism infrastructure and product development
- The locations of regional signature projects
- For projects focused on the natural environment: National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and regional parks

6.5 Projects seeking support under eligible area activity 1 are limited to the specific Merseyside areas identified below.

Themes

6.6 Eligible themes are:

¹ Unless otherwise stated the indicators all are consistent with the national set of indicators and definitions produced by CLG and the RDAs

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- The distinctive culture of the region, including its popular, artistic, literary and political, sporting and scientific culture
- The distinctive heritage of the region, including its Roman heritage, and that of the industrial revolution
- The natural environment: National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and regional parks, together with the parks and gardens in eligible locations

Eligible Activity Area 1 – Limited capital investment in new visitor or tourism facilities and attractions in the Merseyside phasing-in region

- 6.7 Description of activity supported. The activity area will support investments in new visitor or tourism facilities and attractions (including new investments in existing facilities and attractions) that are designed to: 1) raise the quality of the region’s visitor and tourism offer; 2) enhance the built and natural environment where it supports this offer, and; 3) improve the image and raise awareness of the region.
- 6.8 Design principles. There are a number of important design principles; it is intended that projects:
- Are located within or in close proximity to the regional attack brand of Liverpool, the sub-regional destination brand of Southport Classic Resort or the Mersey Waterfront signature project²;
 - Are of sufficient stature to add to the Liverpool City Region's appeal to international staying visitors;
 - Complement recently completed, or planned developments in the sub-region;
 - Lead to demonstrable improvements in the customer experience;
 - Generate additional outputs and results attributable to the sector, and;
 - Where appropriate, conform to the Merseyside Heritage Investment Framework.
- 6.9 Examples of eligible projects are:
- Investments in those areas of the public realm that are focused principally on serving or attracting visitors (such as areas of the Mersey Waterfront) through the provision of facilities that will enhance the appeal of these areas to visitors, that reach a standard appropriate to Liverpool's aspirations to be a European City, and that strengthen understanding of its distinctive cultural and heritage.
 - Investments in the museums or other visitor focused facilities or attractions within the Liverpool World Heritage Site that will raise the quality of the experience provided; including investments in displays, in accessibility, in interpretation, in facilities that service the needs of visitors, or in new exhibits or facilities that celebrate the City's heritage.
 - Investments that improve the quality of experience available to visitors from the natural environment within, or in close proximity to either the centre of Liverpool or Southport. Any such investments must support or increase biodiversity in the area affected.
- 6.10 Intended outputs and outcomes. The outputs to be achieved for this activity area are private sector investment levered and brownfield land reclaimed and/or redeveloped. The results to be achieved are jobs created and safeguarded and square metres of new or upgraded floor-space. The outcome to be

² The Mersey Partnership, as Tourist Board will have an expert role in the determination of matters relating to the area of the attack brand of Liverpool, the potential appeal of proposed investments to international visitors, the degree of expected improvement in the quality of customer experience, and other matters.

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achieved is an increase in the number of national and international visitors staying overnight in areas of the Liverpool attack brand area and the Southport Classic Resort destination, leading to net gains in GVA and employment.

6.11 Match Funding. There are various sources of possible match funding, including the private sector.

Eligible Activity Area 2 – Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage assets

6.12 Description of activity supported. The activity supported will involve the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage assets, in line with regional strategic priorities as set out in the region's Tourism Strategy and associated strategies relating specifically to natural and cultural heritage assets.

6.13 Design Principles. There are a number of important design principles; it is intended that projects:

- Must both protect and enhance the asset in which investment is sought;
- Must be of sufficient stature as to increase the ability of the asset to attract international staying visitors;
- Lead to demonstrable improvements in the customer experience, and;
- Generate additional outputs and results attributable to the sector.

6.14 Examples of eligible projects are:

- Investments in flagship 'asset' projects so that they can function sustainably as international beacons of the distinctive tourism offer of the North West, creating primary 'reasons to visit' the region.
- Investments in asset business clusters in order to raise their collective appeal to a standard that is high enough to generate international staying visits; for example the Oxford Road Corridor is host to a large number of small but diverse cultural establishments (Whitworth Art Gallery, The Cornerhouse, Contact Theatre, Manchester Museum, etc).

6.15 Intended outputs and outcomes. The outputs to be achieved this activity area are private sector investment levered and brownfield land reclaimed and/or redeveloped. The results to be achieved are jobs created and safeguarded. The outcome to be achieved is an increase in the number of national and international visitors to the areas invested in, leading to net gains in GVA and employment.

6.16 Match Funding. There are various sources of possible match funding, including the private sector.

Eligible Activity Area 3 – Specific support for Liverpool 2008 Capital of Culture, including spreading the benefits regionally; this will be linked to legacy activity post 2008

6.17 Description of activity supported. The region is well placed to take advantage of a variety of opportunities, including attracting on-going investment and tourism into the wider region that will be a legacy of Liverpool Capital of Culture 2008. The NWOP makes clear the following points in relation to this area of activity: *'...much investment has already taken place within Objective 1. ERDF funding for Capital of Culture in the NWOP will be for post March 2009 - when Objective 1 funding has all been spent. Activity to be funded will focus on interventions which have proved successful - such as support to cultural partners and major events and new activity in line with the Cultural Strategy to ensure the legacy of 2008 is maximised. The roll out of the benefits and lessons learned through Capital of Culture to the NW region will be an important part of the new Strategy - contributing to an*

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increased profile for the region as a whole. The Programme Executive will work with the GONW, Capital of Culture Company, Liverpool City Council and relevant partners to ensure that there is no double funding of activities undertaken in the Objective 1 Programme.'

- 6.18 Design Principles. There are a number of important design principles; it is intended that projects:
- Enhance and support the marketing and event programme for legacy activity associated with Liverpool 2008 within Merseyside; any activity must be post March 2009
 - Support the marketing of sub-regional activity programmes designed to spread the benefits of 2008 throughout the rest of region (i.e. in areas outside Merseyside); any activity must be post March 2009
 - Relating to marketing activity are either led, or fully supported, by the relevant Tourist Board.
- 6.19 Examples of eligible projects are:
- Investments in region-wide events associated with Liverpool 08 and in particular those that are sufficiently unique to generate associate overnight stays from international visitors.
 - Investments in themed marketing campaigns that tie into Capital of Culture and the legacy campaigns that will follow.
- 6.20 Intended outputs and outcomes. There are no specific outputs associated with this area of activity. The outcome to be achieved is an increase in the number of national and international visitors, leading to net gains in GVA and employment.
- 6.21 Match Funding. This would come primarily from the NWDA's Single Programme funding, but other sources, including the private sector, should be considered.

Eligible Activity Area 4 – Promotion and Marketing of Natural and Cultural Heritage Assets, to promote sustainable tourism

- 6.22 Description of activity supported. The activity supported will be complementary to investments made under activity area 2: the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage assets.
- 6.23 Design Principles. There are a number of important design principles; it is intended that projects:
- Significantly improve the perceptions held by international visitors of the region's natural and cultural heritage assets
 - Embed the promotion and marketing of the region's natural and cultural heritage assets in sub-regional marketing activity led by the Tourist Boards
 - Encourage the use of sustainable transport
 - Are either led, or fully supported, by the relevant Tourist Board.
- 6.24 Examples of eligible projects are:
- Investments in promoting 'Low Carbon' business clusters that market Natural and Cultural assets as a 'Green' tourism destinations, this could include, for example, links with high profile initiatives such as the Big Green Challenge.
 - A regional cultural short break marketing campaign that would be managed by each of the five sub-regional tourist boards, each promoting its own unique cultural offer led by the attack brands of Manchester, Liverpool, Chester, the Lake District and Blackpool.

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- 6.25 Intended outputs and outcomes. There are no specific outputs associated with this area of activity. The outcome to be achieved is an increase in the number of national and international visitors, leading to net gains in GVA and employment.
- 6.26 Match Funding. This would come primarily from the NWDA’s Single Programme funding, but other sources, including the private sector, should be considered.

Eligible Activity Area 5 – Green transport plans for accessing natural and cultural heritage sites to promote sustainable tourism, including limited investment in sustainable transport

- 6.27 Description of activity supported. The activity supported is intended to help develop transport plans relating to natural heritage, cultural and tourism attractions not currently well served by public transport. Green transport plans are travel plans which encourage the introduction of more sustainable access to these key tourism locations. This could include enhanced public transport, more cycling and walking facilities, through ticketing across different transport modes, better in-time information and timetabling coordination as well as support for sustainable public transport such as low emission buses. There will be limited investment in site specific road access infrastructure.
- 6.28 Design Principles. There are a number of important design principles; it is intended that projects:
- Relate to the natural and cultural heritage sites of the region
 - Generate deliverable integrated green transport plans, where there is a demonstrable commitment from the implementation partners to the sustainable long-term operation of the plan
 - Deliver significant benefits to both visitors and the environment
 - Provide limited investment in sustainable transport in order to demonstrate best practice, where this is scalable and replicable, and that serves the region’s natural, cultural or heritage assets.
- 6.29 Examples of eligible projects are:
- The development of green transport plans relating to the Lake District National Park.
 - The development of plans associated with bids to the Transport Innovation Fund.
- 6.30 Intended outputs and outcomes. There are no specific outputs associated with this area of activity. The outcome to be achieved is an increase in the number of national and international visitors, leading to net gains in GVA and employment.
- 6.31 Match Funding. This would come from the NWDA’s Single Programme funding and other sources.

7. Procurement Method for the Investment Framework

- 7.1 A limited bidding approach will be used for activity under this Investment Framework:
- All bids must be submitted via or be endorsed by either the relevant Tourist Board or Sub-Regional Partnership organisation, and for regional projects, the NWDA.
 - All bids should be identified as priorities within the relevant sub-regional Destination Management Plan, or the Regional Tourism Strategy

8. Spatial Level of Delivery

8.1 As indicated above, eligible locations are:

- The regional attack brands: Manchester, Liverpool, Chester, the Lake District and Blackpool
- The historic cities of Carlisle and Lancaster, which have been identified as strategic priorities for heritage based tourism infrastructure and product development
- The locations of regional signature projects
- For projects focused on the natural environment: National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and regional parks
- The locations of regional signature projects
- Projects seeking support under eligible area activity 1 are limited to the following specific Merseyside areas: within or in close proximity to the regional attack brand of Liverpool, the sub-regional destination brand of Southport Classic Resort or the Mersey Waterfront signature project³

Merseyside

8.2 It will be necessary to ensure that the relevant outputs, activity and spend linked to the ring-fenced Merseyside allocation is delivered.

8.3 Given that there has been a considerable amount of activity relevant to this Investment Framework funded via the 2000-2007 Objective 1 Programme (where funding is largely due to come to an end in 2008), it will be important to ensure that future activity in Merseyside takes account of this existing body of activity and experience and does not duplicate projects funded by the Objective 1 Programme.

9. Financial Context

9.1 The NWOP has a total allocation of approximately €755m or around £521m. This is split between Merseyside as a 'phasing in' area (approximately €308m or £210m) and the rest of the NW region (€448m or £308m). The NWOP also fixes an allocation for each priority, including Technical Assistance, which cannot be changed. The NWOP is subject to a fixed financial profile and strict spend targets which must be met.

9.2 The NWOP overall and priority level intervention rate is set at 50%, but this is likely to vary according to individual projects. Match funding is expected to come from a variety of sources, both public and private, depending on the action area.

Sources of Match Funding

9.3 In summary, potentially these are:

- The NWDA Single Programme
- LEGI

³ The Mersey Partnership, as Tourist Board will have an expert role in the determination of matters relating to the area of the attack brand of Liverpool, the potential appeal of proposed investments to international visitors, the degree of expected improvement in the quality of customer experience, and other matters.

- LABGI
- The new Working Neighbourhoods Fund
- Other public sector sources

10. Guidance Documentation, Including Cross Cutting Themes

10.1 The NWOP has two agreed cross cutting themes: environmental sustainability and equality & diversity. The intention is to mainstream the delivery of the themes, building on best practice. The cross cutting themes should not be seen as an add-on, and be used in the design and the delivery of each project. All projects funded by ERDF will be expected to deliver against Cross-Cutting Theme (CCT) related outputs and results, some of which have been embedded into the NWOP.

Environmental Sustainability Cross Cutting Theme

10.2 The NWOP aims to grow the economy of the region providing for more value added activities and securing current and additional jobs. The inclusion of the Environmental Sustainability CCT in the programme is central to ensuring that negative environmental impacts are minimised, or mitigated, and that positive impacts are maximised.

Key messages of the CCT are to improve:

- Energy efficiency and related carbon mitigation measures;
- Air and water quality;
- Protection of the local environment (green spaces, biodiversity, quality of life);
- Resource efficiency to minimise waste and encourage recycling;
- Sustainable transport; and
- Sustainable construction.

All potential projects will be evaluated via the appraisal process to determine the perceived benefit to the region against both the Action Area objectives and consistency with the messages of the CCT. Projects will be supported that can demonstrate they have taken all practicable measures to reduce or eliminate negative environmental impacts arising as a result of the project and measures to enhance positive environmental impacts. Projects, which can demonstrate a positive contribution to environmental sustainability under the themes above, are more likely to be successful on application for funding.

To ensure delivery of the Environmental Sustainability CCT, all project applicants will be contractually required to:

- Complete an environmental assessment at the Development and Appraisal stage. This will include evidence of the existence of a Green Transport Policy and a Sustainable Procurement Policy/Plan/Strategy as well as evidence of implementation of both within the applicant organisation
- All business assist projects will be contractually required to refer companies that they have assisted (that meet the requirements of agreed criteria) to Enworks and collect evidence that the business assisted has contacted Enworks.

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- All appropriate infrastructure projects will be required to comply with the NWDA Sustainable Buildings Policy.

As well as the initial assessment of project benefits as highlighted, a specific global target to support a 25% reduction in additional CO2 emissions generated by the NWOP has been defined. Therefore, the Carbon emissions of all projects will be monitored and aggregated up so that the impact of the programme as a whole can be measured.

The following set of six generic indicators has also been established to track delivery of the cross Cutting Theme throughout the life of each project:

- Energy (tonnes CO2)
- New Green Infrastructure Created / Ha
- % of projects with Green Travel Plans and evidence of implementation and practice change
- % of Projects with Sustainable Procurement Policies / Plans / Strategy evidence of implementation and practice change
- Number of new environmental products supported
- Number of Environmental Business supported

Not all of indicators may be applicable to each project and at the evaluation stage the relevant indicators will be chosen for the project. However for this Investment Framework this may include incorporating the following into the project design:

- Green Travel Plans
- Waste Minimisation
- BREEAM Assessment of buildings
- Protection of natural heritage
- Use of low carbon technologies

Equality & Diversity Cross Cutting Theme

- 10.3 The diversity of the Northwest’s people and communities is an economic as well as cultural and social asset. In spite of the great strides made some equality groups are still subject to discrimination and experience exclusion from the benefits of economic growth. This is reflected in low levels of skills, educational attainment, employment and entrepreneurship among certain communities in the Northwest. This is an economic as well as social concern as poverty and lack of opportunity inhibits the region’s potential growth and threatens community and social cohesion.
- 10.4 Promoting Equality and Diversity plays a fundamental role across the programme’s priority and action areas. The guiding principle is that all policies, programmes and projects should be designed, developed and monitored with the diversity of the region in mind, and should proactively tackle barriers to economic participation and success.
- 10.5 The programme will also actively promote Equality and Diversity amongst all the agencies it works with in order to encourage wider engagement with the principles of equality and diversity beyond the programme itself.

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- 10.6 The key messages of the Equality and Diversity CCT are to ensure that all potential projects:
- are designed and delivered in a way that promotes equality and diversity with specific indicators and measurable targets set.
 - recognise the business case for promoting equality and diversity not only in terms of social and economic impact, but also how it can help to increase the number of businesses.
 - reflect current and likely future changes in legislation.
 - make equality and diversity integral to the project throughout its life cycle.
 - take responsibility for having access to expertise and resources designed to further the programme’s equality objectives.
 - have robust monitoring and evaluation processes that include assessing the Programme’s key Equality and Diversity objectives.
- 10.7 Using the current evidence base and taking into account relevant legislative requirements, the following Equality and Diversity strands have been identified as constituting priorities with regard to the NWOP and to which all potential projects will be expected to have established key performance targets against⁴:
- Gender
 - Race and ethnicity
 - Age
 - Disability
- 10.8 Not all of the above equality strands may be relevant or applicable to each project and at the appraisal/evaluation stage the relevant indicators will be chosen for the project. However for this Investment Framework this may include incorporating the following principles into the project design:
- Demonstration of how equality and diversity are integral to the design of the project.
 - Demonstrate how the project will, where relevant, meet the needs of women, black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, disabled people and people aged 50 and over.
 - A clear understanding of the needs of the targeted group(s), the barriers that they face and how the project links into established best practice with regard to promoting equality and diversity.
 - Ensuring that the management body for the project are sensitive to the needs of the targeted group(s) and that it ensures the accessibility of the project to disabled people, older people, women and the ethnic communities that they are targeting.
 - How the project will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated to ensure that it promotes equality and diversity.
 - Demonstrate that the applicant has in place steps to address any negative impact identified as a consequence of conducting an Equality Impact Assessment.

⁴ Although not identified as part of the priority groups for which we will be collating monitoring information on, we would encourage projects and programmes where appropriate and applicable to take into consideration the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people as well as faith and religious communities. However currently the priority within the programme in relation to the collection of monitoring data will be Race, Age, Gender and Disability. We will not therefore be expecting monitoring data for the other two strands.

11. Compliance

- 11.1 All projects being taken forward within this Investment Framework will be required to comply with EU and national rules such as state aids, public procurement and publicity underpinning any ERDF application. The implementing provisions of the NWOP set out a number of such compliance issues. ERDF offer letters will specify the detail. Additional advice and guidance will be available from relevant experts within the NWDA; please contact the European Programme Team in the Agency for more information in the first instance.

12. Evaluation and Monitoring for Investment Frameworks

- 12.1 All the Investment Frameworks will be evaluated during 2009-10 to ensure that learning and best practice can be identified. This will allow the PMC to change, amend and update all or any of the Investment Framework to fit with delivery of the NWOP, EU and government policy at the mid term. If there are significant policy changes in an area covered by the Investment Framework which requires an earlier review and evaluation, this will be carried out by the European Programme Team and then brought forward for approval by the PMC.
- 12.2 The NWDA Policy Lead for the Investment Framework is Phil Reddy. Further information is available from the NWDA ERDF Programme Executive 01925 400 121 or www.erdfnw.co.uk

28 February 2008