



# **Embedding Social Inclusion in the National Development Plan A Review of the Poverty Proofing Approach**

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## Summary

This Review has three main elements. The first, 'Key Issues and Lessons', provides the synthesis of the review. It highlights the key issues that have arisen from the experiences and practices of applying a poverty proofing approach to the 2000-2006 National Development Plan. It identifies a number of key lessons emerging from this experience which are relevant to:

- (1) enhancing the poverty proofing approach in general
- (2) embedding the poverty proofing approach in the new National Development Plan 2007-2013
- (3) noting the importance of the role of monitoring and evaluation in relation to poverty proofing
- (4) highlighting the extent and nature of resources that would be required to adequately apply a poverty proofing approach to the new National Development Plan.

The second part of the report (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) provides an overview of the National Development Plan 2000-2006 and its structures. It outlines the key anti-poverty and social inclusion policy documents. It explains what is meant by the term poverty proofing, and provides a justification as to why, and how, a poverty proofing approach came to be applied to the National Development Plan (2000-2006). It also examines some of the key challenges that exist in relation to the application of a poverty proofing approach within the National Development Plan (NDP).

The final part of the review (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) offers some examples of how a poverty proofing approach was applied in practice with the support of the Combat Poverty Agency and the Office for Social Inclusion. Examples are provided from across the various Operational Programmes, from measures that would clearly have a strong social inclusion focus and measures that would have a less obvious social inclusion focus. This section contains a review of the various structures established and charged with responsibility for overseeing the monitoring and evaluation in general, and social inclusion monitoring and evaluation in particular. It also analyses some of the key issues arising from the application of the poverty proofing approach in relation to

- (1) the achievement of key social inclusion policy objectives
- (2) the need for specific actions to promote social inclusion
- (3) the monitoring and assessment of progress.

## Glossary of Terms

**Community Initiative:** a special programme established by the European Union to fund common solutions to specific problems affecting the whole of the Union, e.g. LEADER or INTERREG.

**Community Support Framework:** a document agreed between the Government and the European Commission through which Structural Fund assistance is paid. It includes an outline of priorities for action, objectives and targets, anticipated financial resources as well as monitoring, evaluation and control systems.

**Horizontal Principle:** a cross-cutting theme or issue that needs to be considered within and across all the different sections/Programmes of the National Development Plan. The horizontal principles within the 2000-2006 National Development Plan are Poverty/Social Inclusion, Gender, Environment, and Rural Development.

**Managing Authority:** is responsible for a particular Operational Programme and is generally a designated section within a relevant government department. In the case of the Regional Operational Programmes, the Managing Authorities are the BMW Regional Assembly and the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly respectively.

**Measure Manager:** is responsible for implementing and reporting on the progress of a particular measure, and is usually a departmental official nominated for this purpose.

**Measure/Sub-measure:** a specific discrete programme/initiative within an Operational Programme.

**National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAP/inclusion):** a three-year plan, prepared as part of an EU initiative. Its purpose is to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion by 2010.

**National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1997-2007):** a 10-year plan which aims to substantially reduce the percentages of the population living in consistent poverty, through setting poverty reduction targets across a number of different areas and through the identification of a number of key at-risk groups.

**National Development Plan (NDP):** a six-year plan which outlines the key national priorities and details how funds (public, private and European) will be allocated to address these priorities. The current plan runs from 2000-2006.

**National Social Partnership:** the process by which the government and representatives of the trade unions, the employers, the farmers and the community and voluntary sector negotiate, implement and monitor a three-year national agreement.

**Operational Programme:** a detailed plan of how funds are to be invested within a specific sector/sectors or geographic region of the country.

**Operational Programme Monitoring Committee:** comprised of representatives of the Managing Authority, the Department of Finance, other relevant Government Departments, the European Commission, public bodies involved in implementing measures, representatives of the Social Partners and the Specialist Units. The Regional Monitoring

Committees also include elected members of the regional assemblies. The Managing Authorities report to the Monitoring Committees.

**Programme Complement:** a document which describes in detail the measures and sub-measures that have been described in brief in the Operational Programmes. Each measure/sub-measure has a measure specific sheet which provides a detailed breakdown of what work is to be undertaken by whom and for what purpose, together with the budget available to undertake the work and the targets and indicators that will be used to measure progress.

**Poverty:** the condition of people whose income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living that is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally.

**Poverty Proofing:** the process by which government departments, local authorities and state agencies are required to systematically examine all policies and programmes at their design and review stages to determine the impact/likely impact they will have, or have had, on poverty and on inequalities likely to lead to poverty.

**Social Exclusion:** the cumulative marginalisation from production (employment), from consumption (poverty), from social networks (community, family and neighbours), from decision making and from an adequate quality of life.

**Specialist Unit:** is generally responsible for the promotion and overseeing of the one of the cross-cutting/horizontal principles that underpin the Plan, i.e. gender equality, poverty, rural development, and environment.

## Key Issues and Lessons

This section presents the key issues and lessons arising from the application of a poverty proofing approach to the 2000-2006 National Development Plan (NDP).

Poverty proofing has been defined as follows:

Poverty Proofing is the process by which government departments, local authorities and state agencies are required to systematically examine all policies and programmes at their design and review stages to determine the impact/likely impact they will have/have had on poverty and on inequalities likely to lead to poverty.<sup>1</sup>

Poverty proofing is particularly important in the context of the NDP because:

- The National Development Plan is the main structure through which billions of euros from private, public and EU funds are invested into public policies, projects, and programmes in Ireland. As such it makes sense to use poverty proofing to ensure that the direct and indirect impact of the plan on poverty and exclusion is fully understood.
- As the largest source of funding for programmes in the areas of health, housing, and education, it is likely that the National Development Plan will be the main vehicle for the achievement of the national anti-poverty targets. Poverty proofing provides a valuable mechanism to make clear connections between the actions undertaken under a particular priority and/or measure and the achievement of NAP/inclusion objectives and targets.

The application of a poverty proofing approach to the NDP can be seen to provide a tool through which to assess whether and to what extent NDP funding has had an impact on social inclusion.

The key issues and lessons arising from the review of poverty proofing within the National Development Plan are presented here under two headings. Section 1 relates to poverty proofing in general. Section 2 relates to the application of poverty proofing to the new National Development Plan 2007-2013. This second section assumes that there will be a new National Development Plan and that it will focus mainly on the provision of funding support for infrastructure.

### Section I: Enhancing the Poverty Proofing Approach

- **The Need to Strengthen the Application of Poverty Proofing**

The strength and purpose of poverty proofing is that it introduces social inclusion considerations to sectors not traditionally associated with social inclusion. The introduction of prioritisation within the NDP was a pragmatic response to the complexities and difficulties of reporting on four or more horizontal principles. However, it can also be seen to have enabled some of those sectors to opt out of poverty proofing.

*If the principle of poverty proofing is to be applied effectively, certain universal minimum implementation and reporting requirements need to be development and introduced.*

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<sup>1</sup> NAPS Unit, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (1998), *Poverty-Proofing in the Context of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy*.

- **Making Social Inclusion a Core Objective of National Plans and Policies**

Making social inclusion a core objective of national plans and policies is welcome in terms of increasing the visibility of social inclusion. However, it is ineffectual unless mechanisms are put in place to ensure ongoing monitoring and implementation of real and practical initiatives to support inclusion. In some instances, specialist support may be required to assist those drafting and implementing the plans and policies. Such support would help to: (1) identify positive social inclusion initiatives/actions (relating to both outputs and processes) and (2) establish systems to monitor the implementation of these initiatives/actions. Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion are well placed to provide this support but would need to be resourced to do so.

*If the social inclusion agenda is to be meaningfully progressed with a national plan and policies, clear initiatives/actions need to be identified, implemented and monitored on an ongoing basis. Specialist assistance may be required at the stage of Plan development to ensure that this happens.*

- **Data Collection a Key Element of Poverty Proofing**

The meaningful application of a poverty proofing approach necessitates the collection of a certain amount of (1) baseline data and (2) ongoing data. Most data collected to date have been of a financial and/or a physical nature. There is also need to measure qualitative change and strategic progress as part of systematic evaluation. Additionally, the manipulation and aggregation of data also requires the development of IT systems and programmes capable of dealing with these types and volumes of data.

*The variety of data required to apply a poverty proofing approach within a particular plan/policy needs to be identified and agreed at drafting stage so that the necessary systems can be set up to generate the appropriate quantitative and qualitative data.*

- **Setting Appropriate Indicators**

The development and application of social inclusion indicators within Programme Complements is an important tool in the application of a poverty proofing approach within the National Development Plan. There are a number of different types of indicators (e.g. location, target group, participation, outcome), and more recently indicators linked to the achievement of NAPS targets have begun to be developed. Some indicator types are easier to apply than others and the methods by which they have been applied have been simplified.

*Progress has been achieved in relation to the development of some social inclusion indicators. However, outcome type indicators remain difficult to measure. In some instances, the only way outcome indicators can be measured will be through longitudinal studies and systematic evaluations, the costs of which will need to be built into the management and operation of particular measures.*

- **Strengthening the Linkages between Poverty Proofing and the NAPS and NAP/inclusion**

The objectives and targets of the NAPS and NAP/inclusion are very general. The targets in particular are not action focused. As such it is often difficult to make clear connections between the actions undertaken within a particular Plan/Programme/Policy and the NAPS and NAP/inclusion.

*Consideration should be given to supplementing the existing NAP/inclusion targets with more action-orientated targets. For example, a series of what could be called 'relevant actions' might be added.*

- **Streamlining Reporting Systems**

In many cases Departments and others find themselves reporting to a variety of structures in a variety of formats in relation to their work on social inclusion and their progress in relation to the NAP/inclusion. This reporting takes time and resources and often requires the manipulation of broadly similar data in a variety of formats.

*Social inclusion reporting requirements need to be streamlined. The annual reporting templates used in the current NDP (were they fully completed) could offer the basis for a standard reporting template.*

## **Section 2: Embedding the Poverty Proofing Approach in the new National Development Plan 2007-2013**

This section is divided into four sub-sections. The first explores the role of social inclusion in the new Plan. The second examines the issues and learning related to making the poverty proofing approach work in the new Plan. The third examines the role of monitoring and evaluation, while the final sub-section deals with the resourcing of the poverty proofing approach in the new Plan.

### **(a) The Role of Social Inclusion in the New Plan**

The strategic approach adopted to tackle poverty as set out in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, the various National Action Plans and the Social Partnership agreements requires a co-ordinated multi-response approach from the whole of Irish society. It is expected that the new National Development Plan will have a very strong focus on the provision of support for infrastructure and that the provision of new and enhanced infrastructure will contribute to an increase in the competitiveness of the Irish economy. The new Plan also needs to take into account the need for ongoing and practical initiatives to support the process of social inclusion and at a very minimum seek to avoid supporting actions that will (either directly or indirectly) contribute to the creation or sustaining of ongoing inequalities within society.

Making social inclusion a core objective of the new Plan ensures that the Plan is seen as an integral part of the strategic framework that promotes social inclusion. It also provides the practical mechanism through which government can deliver its commitment to poverty proof the National Development Plan.

*By making social inclusion a core objective of the new National Development Plan the government can fulfil its commitment to poverty proof the NDP and also offer a mechanism to ensure that spend on infrastructure will not contribute to exclusion.*

### **(b) Making the Poverty Proofing Approach Work in the New National Development Plan**

- **The Retention and Re-enforcement of the Programme Complements**

The retention and re-enforcement of Programme Complements or equivalents is essential for both public transparency and accountability reasons. The Programme Complements also provide the main vehicles by which social inclusion actions can be clearly embedded in terms of identification and monitoring.

*Programme Complements or similar equivalents are required within the new Plan. These should be publicly available. The existing Programme Complement template would need to be amended to ensure that the potential of a measure to impact on social inclusion is clearly articulated and subsequently monitored.*

- **Amending the Programme Complements**

The current Programme Complement template provided a useful structure through which interested measure managers reported on the potential impact their measure would have on social inclusion. This structure could be enhanced with the introduction of a universal requirement across all Programmes and Measures to undertake the following:

- The inclusion of a statement which describes what the relevance of the measure is to NAP/inclusion in general and, where possible, to specific NAP/inclusion targets
- The use of social inclusion as a positive selection criteria (where relevant)
- The identification and development of a number of different types of measure-specific social inclusion indicators. These should be included with the general performance indicators
- A commitment to the use of measure-level evaluations and longitudinal studies to assess the more qualitative impact of a particular measure on social inclusion.

*The current Programme Complement should be revised in order to embed the social inclusion principle more fully within it.*

- **Encouraging Compliance with the Poverty Proofing Approach**

The quality of reporting on social inclusion has been very variable. It did, however, improve in relation to the prioritised measures subsequent to their prioritisation by the NDP/CSF evaluation unit. It may also have improved as a consequence of reports on compliance with the social inclusion horizontal principles continuing to be submitted to the various Monitoring Committees. However, there were no incentives to encourage or indeed reward those who embraced the reporting requirement. Also, some measures may have very little impact on social inclusion. Where this is the case it is suggested that the measures only be required to comply with a minimal level of reporting.

*There is a need to introduce both minimum reporting requirements and incentives to encourage compliance with social inclusion as a horizontal principle. Where necessary, sanctions for those who do not comply with the agreed minimum reporting requirements should be put in place.*

- **Developing Appropriate Social Inclusion Indicators**

The fact that the new National Development Plan will have a strong focus on the provision of support for infrastructure and will primarily involve capital investment poses a number of challenges in relation to the development of appropriate and relevant social inclusion indicators. Target group and participation type indicators, for example, will no longer be relevant in the context of an infrastructure-orientated Plan. However, indicators such as those developed in relation to the current Health Measures which link capital expenditure on acute hospitals directly to the achievement of NAP/inclusion targets might provide a useful approach for the future.

There may also be an opportunity to encourage measure managers to develop checklists to encourage and assist capital type projects address social inclusion issues with their projects.

For example, as part of the Pilot Project on Social Inclusion Indicators, a checklist was developed for one of the Tourism measures. This provided some practical examples of how a project promoter could actively promote social inclusion within a project.

*There is a need to develop social inclusion type indicators relevant to capital expenditure and infrastructure type development.*

### **(c) The Role of Monitoring and Evaluation**

- **Monitoring the Impact on Social Inclusion at a Measure Level**

Properly completed Annual Social Inclusion Reports provide a useful tool to track progress in relation to social inclusion. They also provide measure managers with the opportunity to raise issues with the Managing Authority (to date, few used them to do this).

*The use of the Annual Social Inclusion Report should be continued. Measure managers may need some support to assist them identify and clarify the relevant information to be included in the Report. This support could be provided by the social inclusion specialist unit.*

- **The Role of the Various Committees**

The Monitoring Committees clearly have a role to play in monitoring the impact on social inclusion. To date while some Monitoring Committees took a keen interest in social inclusion, others had a more limited involvement. The role of the Monitoring Committees in relation to social inclusion clearly needs to be enhanced. The Role of the Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee also needs to be revised.

*Social inclusion needs to be a regular agenda item for all Monitoring Committees. Assuming that the successors to these Committees continue to meet twice a year, one of these meetings should include a more in-depth assessment of the impact of social inclusion on the Programmes. These discussions could be facilitated by the social inclusion specialist unit who should be a member of all of the Monitoring Committees.*

*The purpose of the Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee also needs to be sharpened. The purpose of this Committee should be to identify both the issues and the solutions that exist in relation to social inclusion across Programmes. The Committee should then make practical recommendations for change to the different Managing Authorities who in turn should be obliged to respond in detail to the recommendations.*

### **(d) Resourcing the Poverty Proofing Approach in the New National Development Plan**

- **The Need for Specialist Support for Measure Managers**

The experience of the current Plan suggests that the implementation of social inclusion as a horizontal principle needs to be resourced in relation to the provision of specialist support and advice for measure managers at drafting stage. This support will be needed at a number of different stages: (1) at the stage of drafting the Programme Complements and (2) at the stage of drafting of the Annual Social Inclusion Reports. Much of this support should probably be front loaded into the first year of operation of the new National Development Plan.

*Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion should be appointed as the joint specialist social inclusion unit and be provided with sufficient resources to support measure managers to (1) embed social inclusion within their Programme Complements and (2) report on the impact of their measure on social inclusion, within the context of the Annual Social Inclusion*

*Report. This support may need to be front loaded to assist measure managers in drafting their relevant Programme Complements.*

- **The Need for Ongoing Monitoring by the Specialist Unit**

Experience has shown that there will be a need for ongoing monitoring of (1) progress in relation to the impact on the plan on social inclusion, and (2) compliance of the various measures with both the social inclusion commitments they made in their Programme Complements and the reporting requirements for social inclusion.

*The specialist social inclusion unit should be charged with the task of providing regular summaries of (1) progress in relation to social inclusion and (2) compliance in relation to the reporting requirements.*

- **The Challenge of Developing Social Inclusion Indicators**

Poverty proofing is not without challenges, particularly in relation to the development of social inclusion indicators for measures that focus on the provision of funding for capital expenditure. It is significantly easier to develop indicators for more action-orientated activities, e.g. training. Further work needs to be undertaken to support the development of participation and outcome-oriented social inclusion indicators.

*Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion need to undertake work to identify a range of different social inclusion indicators, particularly for measures that focus on capital expenditure and in relation to participation and outcome type indicators.*

# Embedding Social Inclusion in the National Development Plan: A Review of the Poverty Proofing Approach

## Chapter 1 The National Development Plan

### 1.1 Introduction

The National Development Plan (NDP) is a six-year plan which outlines the key national priorities and details how funds (public, private and European) will be allocated to address these priorities. The concept of an NDP originates from the European Union. The current Plan (2000-2006) details how a total of €57 billion of private, public and EU funds will be invested into public policies, projects and programmes in Ireland.

### 1.2 Objectives of the National Development Plan

The NDP has four strategic objectives:

- to continue sustainable national economic and employment growth
- to strengthen and improve Ireland's international competitiveness
- to foster balanced regional development
- to promote social inclusion.

### 1.3 The Operational Programmes and Community Initiatives

The objectives of the NDP are progressed through a number of Operational Programmes. These are detailed plans of how funds are to be invested within a specific sector/sectors or geographic regions of the country. The NDP is made up of three National Operational Programmes, two Regional Operational Programmes, and a sixth Programme that supports investment in the Border Region, known as the Peace Operational Programme.

The Plan also contains details of four Community Initiative Programmes (LEADER+, EQUAL, INTERREG and URBAN) that operate across the European Union. The Community Initiatives are special programmes established by the European Union to find common solutions to specific problems affecting the whole of the Union. They are co-financed by the EU Structural Funds but are outside the Community Support Framework Structure. There are four Community Initiatives operating in Ireland over the 2000-2006 period: INTERREG III, LEADER+, EQUAL and URBAN. The Community Initiatives are based on guidelines drawn up by the European Commission, with Managing Authorities appointed to draw up the four Community Initiatives Programmes and oversee the implementation of each initiative. The Community Initiatives are not included in this review.

See Table 1 for an overview of the Operational Programmes.

**Table 1: An Overview of the Operational Programmes**

<b>Operational Programme</b>	<b>Type</b>
Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme (ESIOP)	National
Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme (EHRDOP)	National
Productive Sector Operational Programme	National

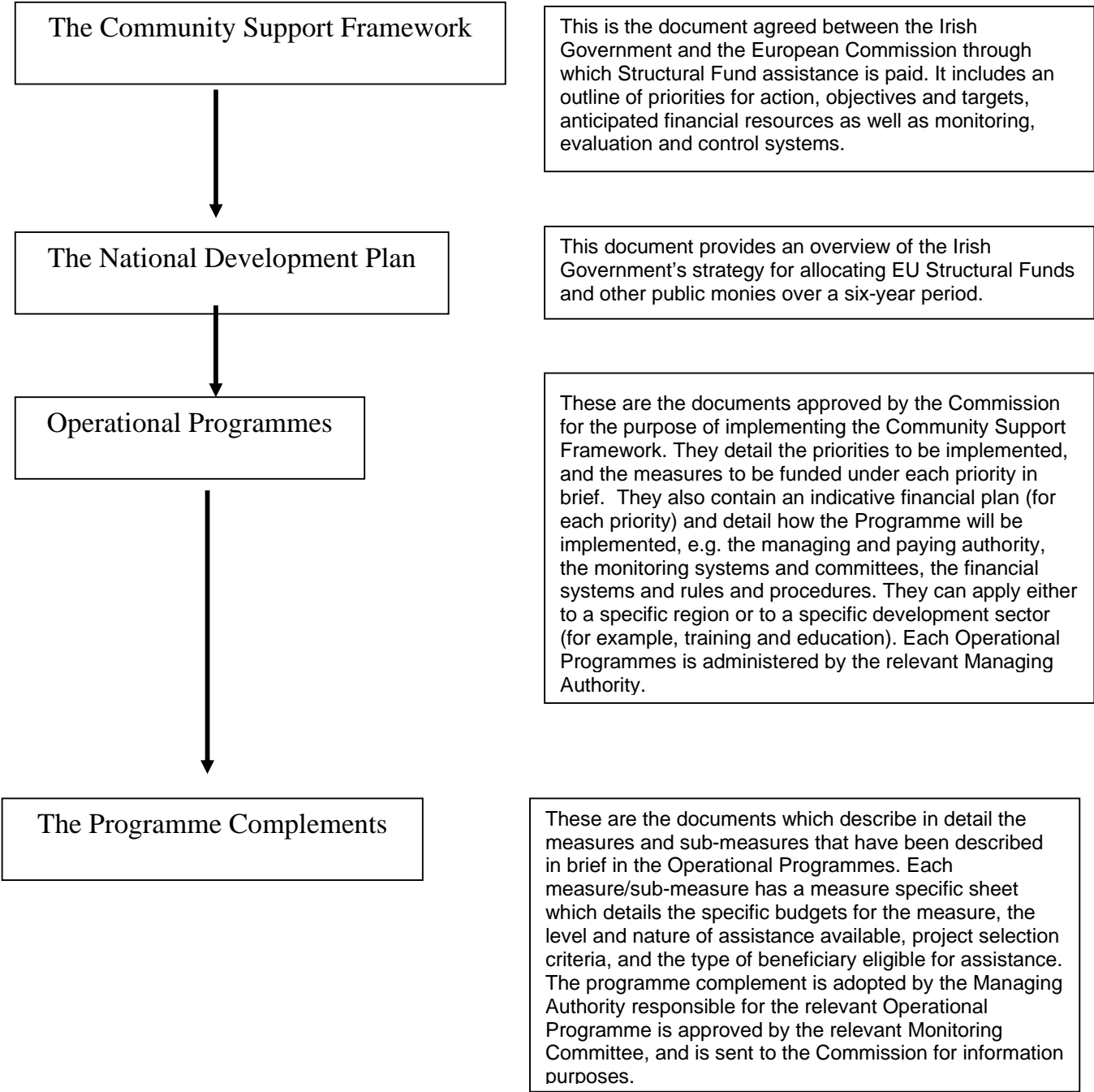
Border, Midlands and West Operational Programme	Regional
Southern and Eastern Operational Programme	Regional
Peace II Operational Programme	Special (border region focus)

Each Operational Programme is accompanied by a Programme Complement.

#### **1.4 Programme Complements**

The Programme Complement contains a detailed breakdown of what work is to be undertaken, by whom, and for what purpose, together with the budget available to undertake the work and the targets and indicators that will be used to measure progress. Each distinct area of work is defined and named as a particular measure or sub-measure. Each measure/sub-measure has a measure sheet which describes the measure and its objectives. The measure sheet also details, where relevant, the selection criteria, performance indicators, financial management and financial allocations.

**Figure 1.1: The Documents that comprise the National Development Plan**



## 1.5 Implementation Structures and Organisations

The National Development Plan is implemented by a range of different structures and organisations as follows:

- Measure managers are responsible for implementing and reporting on the progress of a particular measure. A measure manager is usually a departmental official nominated for this purpose. Measure managers report to Managing Authorities.
- Managing Authorities are responsible for the Operational Programme and in turn, report to Monitoring Committees. These are generally designated sections in relevant government departments. In the case of the Regional Operational Programmes, the Managing Authorities are the BMW Regional Assembly and the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly respectively.
- Monitoring Committees are made up of representatives of the Managing Authority, the Department of Finance, other relevant Government Departments, the European Commission, public bodies involved in implementing measures, representatives of the Social Partners and the Specialist Units. The Regional Monitoring Committees also include elected members of the regional assemblies.
- The Specialist Units are responsible for the promotion and overseeing of the cross-cutting and horizontal principles that underpin the whole Plan, i.e. gender equality, poverty, rural development, and environment.
- The NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit is involved in evaluation of the NDP and Community Support Framework (CSF) for Ireland. The Unit is an independent unit under the aegis of the Department of Finance. It undertakes or commissions evaluations of the Operational Programmes and provides advice and assistance on programme monitoring and evaluation issues to those involved in the NDP.<sup>2</sup>
- The NDP/CSF Monitoring Committee oversees the implementation of the overall National Development Plan
- The NDP/CSF Coordinating Committees are comprised of the following: The Environment Coordinating Committee, The Employment and HR Coordinating Committee, the Rural Development Coordinating Committee and the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Coordinating Committee. These Committees are made up of representatives of all the managing authorities of the programme, the main implementing bodies, the European Commission, the relevant Specialist Units (in the case of the Social Inclusion Coordinating Committee, this is Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion), the NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit and the social partners. These committees provide a mechanism at national level through which environment, employment, rural development, social inclusion and equality issues, arising from particular measures or Programmes, can be raised and discussed.

Figure 1.2 provides details of the bodies involved in the National Development Plan and the relationships between the various bodies. Figure 1.3 provides an outline of the National Development Plan.

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<sup>2</sup> See [http://www.csfinfo.com/htm/evaluation\\_process/evaluation\\_unit.htm](http://www.csfinfo.com/htm/evaluation_process/evaluation_unit.htm) for full details.

**Figure 1.2: The Bodies Involved in the Implementation and Monitoring of the NDP**

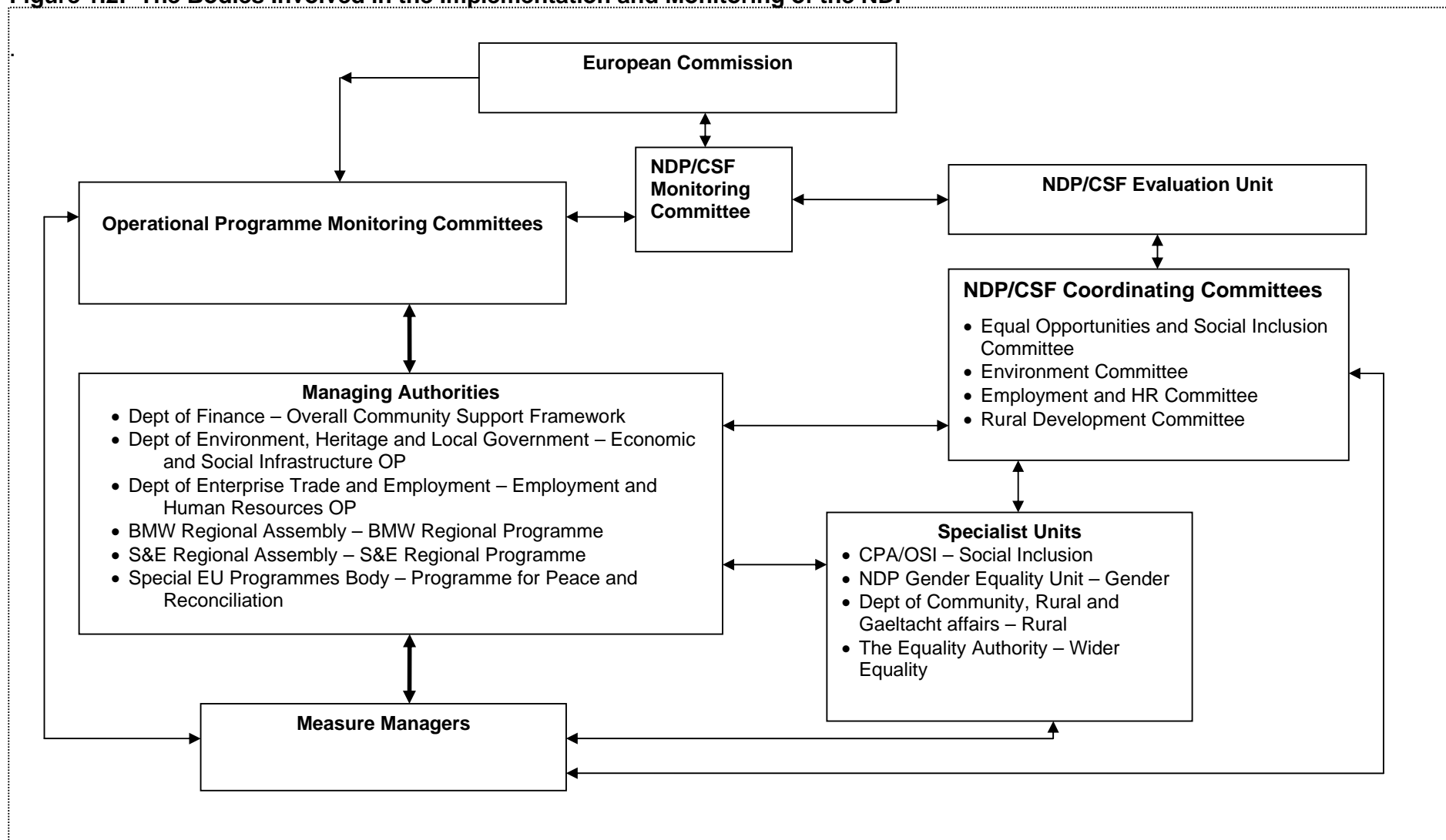
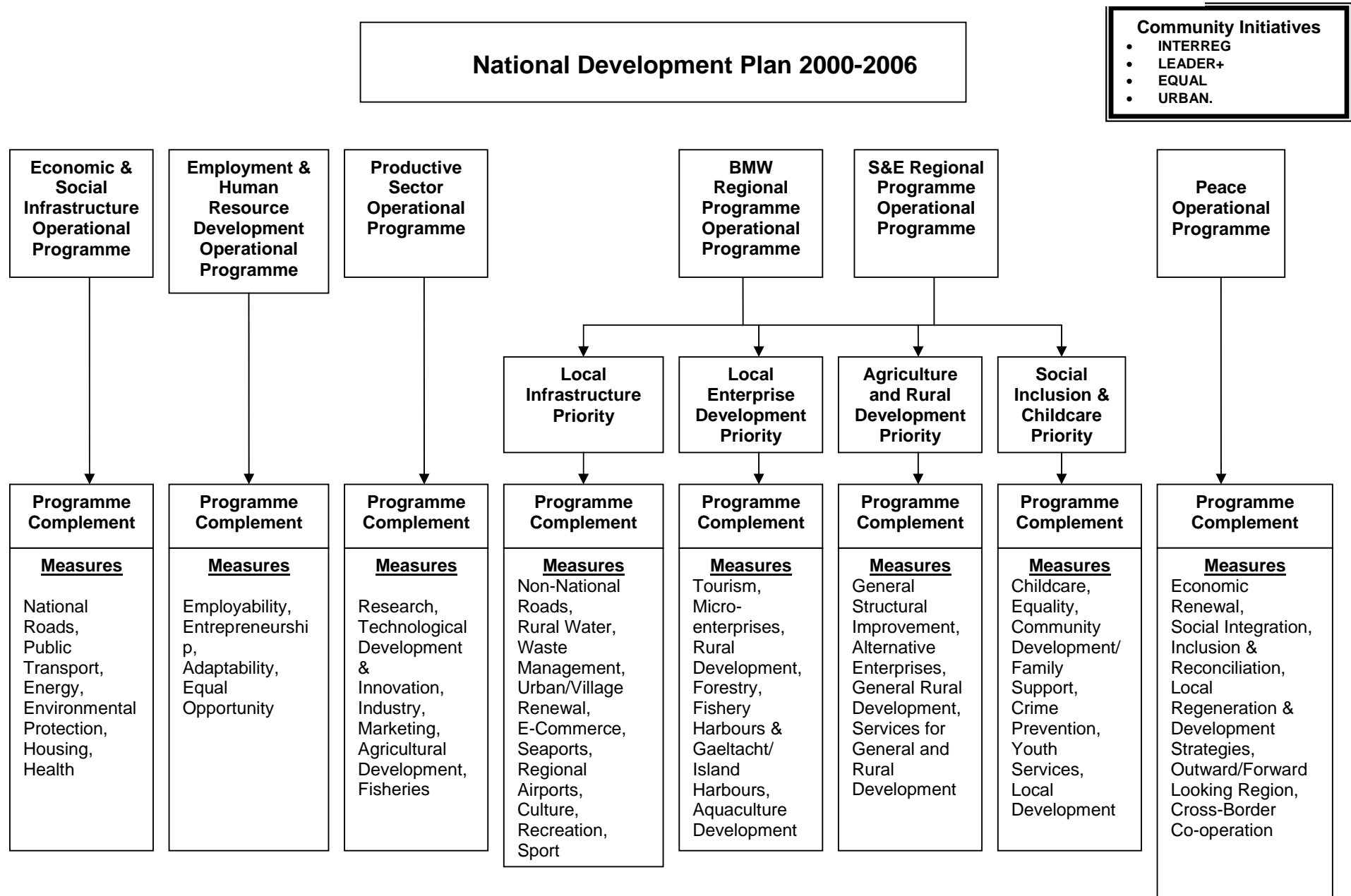


Figure 1.3: An Outline of the Operational Plan Structures within the National Development Plan



## Chapter 2 Social Inclusion in the National Development Plan

### 2.1 The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) and NAP/inclusion 2003-2005

Building an inclusive society and tackling poverty and social exclusion have long been recognised as one of the major challenges facing Irish society. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy, *Sharing in Progress*, launched in 1997, provided the policy focus and framework for action, setting a 10-year target for poverty reduction in Ireland and identifying five key areas as needing particular attention. The Strategy was reviewed in 2002 and the targets were updated. This review also saw the addition of two new themes, health and housing, and a focus on a number of named vulnerable groups.

At a European level, poverty and the targeting of social exclusion have also been recognised as critical issues that need to be addressed, particularly within the context of the Lisbon Agenda (2000). The Lisbon Agenda/Strategy, agreed by the European Council, aims to turn the European Union (EU) into the most successful economy in the world by 2010. It seeks to bring about tangible improvement in the quality of lives of EU citizens and in the overall competitiveness of industries and services, while safeguarding resources for future generations.

As part of this process, the European Council prioritised the need to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion by 2010. In response to this, member states were asked to develop National Action Plans against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAP/inclusion). The first of these was submitted in 2001 and the second in 2003. The current Irish NAP/inclusion 2003-2005 incorporates commitments made in both the NAPS and the social partnership agreement *Sustaining Progress*. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy and NAP/inclusion are broadly similar in that both provide a strategic approach to the reduction of poverty.

Among the main features of both the NAPS and NAP/inclusion are: an agreed definition of poverty, a global target for poverty reduction and the identification of a number of key thematic areas, including educational disadvantage, unemployment, income adequacy, disadvantaged urban areas health, housing, and rural poverty. They also include targets and key vulnerable target groups: children and young people, women, older people, people with disabilities, travellers, migrants and members of ethnic minority groups. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy defines poverty in the following way: 'people are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having an adequate standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally.'

### 2.2 What is Poverty Proofing?

Poverty proofing is the process by which government departments, local authorities and state agencies are required to systematically examine all policies and programmes at their design and review stages to determine the impact/likely impact they will have/have had on poverty and on inequalities likely to lead to poverty.<sup>3</sup> Where the implementation of a particular policy or programme is found, or is potentially found, to have an adverse effect on the poor and/or aspects of equality, it is expected that action would be taken to avoid or ameliorate this adverse impact. The overall purpose of the process is to enhance the poverty-reduction impact of government policy.

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<sup>3</sup> NAPS Unit, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (1998), *Poverty-Proofing in the Context of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy*.

The concept of poverty proofing was introduced in a framework document in early 1998 by the Interdepartmental Committee responsible for the implementation of NAPS and more recently NAPS/inclusion. Poverty proofing guidelines were subsequently issued to assist government departments and other agencies in this process. These guidelines consist of a series of questions that policy makers are required to answer in order to assess the particular impact of a policy or programme on poverty and social exclusion.

Poverty proofing is not without difficulties or critics. The National Economic and Social Council's review<sup>4</sup> of the process in 2001 found that while there was a high level of formal compliance with the requirement for poverty proofing, there was a clear need for further clarification of the objectives and indeed the operation of the process. The Council made a series of recommendations in relation to how the process could be enhanced. The poverty-proofing process is currently under review again by the Office for Social Inclusion.

### **2.3 Why Poverty Proofing Matters**

The cross-cutting nature of poverty, and the complexities of inequalities which lead to poverty, mean that their alleviation requires a range of responses, from direct payments/services provision, to targeted geographical responses, to particular policies (including the current national agreement and NAP/inclusion) to other less direct actions, including the development of policies that at the very least do not contribute to the creation of inequalities. Poverty proofing is the mechanism for ensuring poverty reduction is part of mainstream policy and programme development. Poverty proofing cannot, however, address imbalances or omissions. For example, the imbalances that exist within the current NDP between spending on roads and public transport is not something that poverty proofing can be used to address.

Poverty proofing is important for a variety of reasons as follows:

- It provides a structured mechanism by which all major policies and programmes, including those which at first glance show little connection with exclusion and disadvantage, are reviewed and examined from a poverty and inequality perspective. Poverty proofing does not require policies to be fundamentally transformed so that they explicitly target the disadvantaged, but it does ensure that the issue of inequality and disadvantage is considered by policy makers.
- It ensures that those involved in policy and programme development and review are kept aware of the possible implications of policies on those most in need.
- It reminds policy makers of the existence of NAPS, and more recently NAP/inclusion, and encourages them to consider the connections between a variety of policy areas and NAP/inclusion.
- It facilitates the identification of the secondary/potential secondary effects on poverty and social exclusion of some proposals that traditionally have been less focused on social inclusion.

Poverty proofing is particularly important in the context of the National Development Plan, for the following reasons:

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<sup>4</sup> NESO (2001) *Review of the Poverty Proofing Process*, NESO, Dublin

- The NDP is the main structure through which billions of euros of private, public and EU funds are invested into public policies, projects, and programmes in Ireland. It makes sense to use poverty proofing to ensure that the impact of work and initiatives undertaken under the Plan, on poverty and social exclusion, are fully understood.
- As the largest source of funding for programmes in the areas of health, housing, education, it is likely that the NDP will be the main vehicle for the achievement of the national anti-poverty targets. Poverty proofing provides a valuable mechanism to make clear connections between the actions undertaken under a particular priority and/or measure and the achievement of NAP/inclusion objectives and targets.

#### **2.4 Applying a Poverty-Proofing Approach in the National Development Plan**

The promotion of social inclusion is one of the four key national objectives of the NDP. For the purposes of the NDP, the promotion of social inclusion is seen to require the alleviation of social exclusion. Social exclusion is defined as ‘cumulative marginalisation from production (employment), from consumption (poverty), and from social networks (community, family and neighbours), from decision making and from an adequate quality of life’. It was estimated that a total of €19,077.7 billion<sup>5</sup> (36 per cent of the total NDP budget) would be spent on direct social inclusion measures over the period 2000-2006. Additionally, there were numerous other measures and actions within the NDP that could and would have an indirect impact on poverty and social inclusion.

The NDP plays a major role in achieving the various targets set out in NAP/inclusion, given that it contains a range of measures and actions specifically designed to promote social inclusion and address poverty. These measures include: substantial investment in the provision of affordable housing; capital investment in the public health services; investments targeting educational disadvantage, life-long learning and work experience; childcare; community and local development. The promotion of social inclusion is a direct objective of the NDP, and is also one of its horizontal principles. (Other horizontal principles are equality, environment, rural development and gender equality). Thus, by making social inclusion a horizontal issue, all programmes and measures within the NDP were required to consider what the impact of their actions or programmes would be on poverty, i.e. poverty proofing all programmes and actions. This included the following:

- Mandatory consideration of poverty/social inclusion among the project selection criteria for all measures
- Where appropriate and feasible, the development of specific indicators (at programme and measure level) to assess impact on poverty and social inclusion
- Mandatory consideration of poverty and social inclusion in all evaluations undertaken under the Plan
- Mandatory reporting on social inclusion at the Monitoring Committee Meetings
- The inclusion of representatives of the community and voluntary sector in Monitoring Committees
- The designation of the Office for Social Inclusion and Combat Poverty as the ‘Specialist Unit’ responsible for monitoring and advising on the implementation of the social inclusion horizontal principle, and attending Monitoring Committee meetings in this capacity
- The establishment of an Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee, representing all the Managing Authorities for the Programmes, the main

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<sup>5</sup> At 1999 prices.

implementing bodies and the appropriate specialist units. The role of this is to review progress on the equality and social inclusion horizontal principles.

In operational terms, the requirements that involved the establishment of broadly based Monitoring Committees and the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Coordinating Committees were quickly addressed. However, the embedding of the commitments in the Operational Programmes and more particularly the Measure Level Programme Complements was much less successful. The Programme Complements, when they were published in 2001, included little consideration of social inclusion and few social inclusion type indicators.

#### **2.4 The Role of Combat Poverty in this Process**

As part of its role as a specialist unit for social inclusion, Combat Poverty undertook a sample review of measures included in the Regional Operational Programmes to assess whether and to what extent the measures contributed to social inclusion. It found social inclusion indicators in only three (5 per cent) of the measures it sampled. The absence of social inclusion indicators raised the difficulty of assessing progress towards social inclusion objectives and, consequently, of learning about (1) the role of the funds and (2) their effectiveness in relation to the promotion of social inclusion.

In response to this concern, Combat Poverty commissioned an analysis of indicators. This analysis proposed that various types of indicators be adopted to test whether and to what extent the Regional Operational Programmes contribute to social inclusion. The findings of this analysis and the proposals arising were presented at a seminar in September 2001, to which managing authorities, implementing bodies, government departments (e.g. Department of Finance) and structural funds experts were invited. Combat Poverty's initiative, analysis and approach were welcomed by those attending the seminar. Combat Poverty then decided to progress the matter with two managing authorities, the BMW Authority and the Southern and Eastern Authority, on whose Monitoring Committees they were represented, with a view to establishing a pilot project to develop enhanced social inclusion indicators within the two regional Operational Programmes.

#### **2.5 Pilot Initiative on Social Inclusion Indicators**

A sample of 30 measures/sub-measures from the Regional Operational Programmes were included in the Pilot Initiative. Bilateral meetings were convened with the measure managers and others responsible for either implementing or reporting on measure progress. These meetings were extensive and took place over a two-year period. The work was endorsed by the Minister for Social and Family Affairs and formally designated 'The Pilot Project to strengthen social inclusion indicators in the regional operational programmes'.

The pilot project was overseen by a group comprising representatives of Combat Poverty, the regional managing authorities and the Government's Office for Social Inclusion. At the conclusion of the pilot project, a number of amendments in relation to eight measures were agreed by the Implementing Bodies and were forwarded to the Regional Assemblies for acceptance. The approval of these changes was, however, superseded by work undertaken by the NDP/Community Support Framework (CSF) Evaluation Unit.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit is an independent body established in 1996 under the Department of Finance. The role of the Unit is to assist Departments with Performance Indicators. The Unit also has responsibility for the interim evaluation of the NDP and an advisory role in relation to wider evaluation issues.

## **2.6 NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit Review of the Relevance of the Horizontal Principles**

The 2003 mid-term evaluations of the various Operational Programmes and overall evaluation of the NDP highlighted considerable problems around the integration of the horizontal principles within the operational programmes. Amongst the main difficulties were:

- a general lack of understanding of the overall goals of the principles and how they could be integrated into programme implementation
- poor quality and unclear analysis of the relevance of the principles to measures in the programme complement documents
- an absence of indicators and other data to capture progress
- poor quality, formulaic reporting, often amounting to little more than a repetition of programme complement statements
- a lack of guidance or support to implementing bodies.

As a way of addressing some of these problems, a number of the mid-term evaluation reports recommended the prioritisation of a smaller number of relevant measures under each horizontal principle. As a consequence, the NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit was asked to undertake a review of the relevance of measures under the various horizontal principles. Their assessment was based on five criteria:

- Is social inclusion referred to in the measure/sub-measure objectives?
- Are resources directed towards social inclusion within the measure?
- Are there distinct variables through which progress can be measured in relation to the principle (e.g. people, groups, place)?
- Can anticipated outcomes be clearly articulated and directly linked to the principle?
- Is there an official government or EU policy statement linking 'social inclusion' to the measure?

Where a measure met four/five of these criteria, it was prioritised under the social inclusion principle. A total of 46 measures/sub-measures were prioritised, 9 within the Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme, 19 within the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme, and 18 within the Regional Operational Programmes.

Where a measure was prioritised as part of the NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit Review under the social inclusion principle, the relevant measure manager was contacted by Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion. Support was offered to the measure managers in their efforts to demonstrate or record the impact of their measure on social inclusion and subsequently make the appropriate amendments to the relevant Programme Complement.

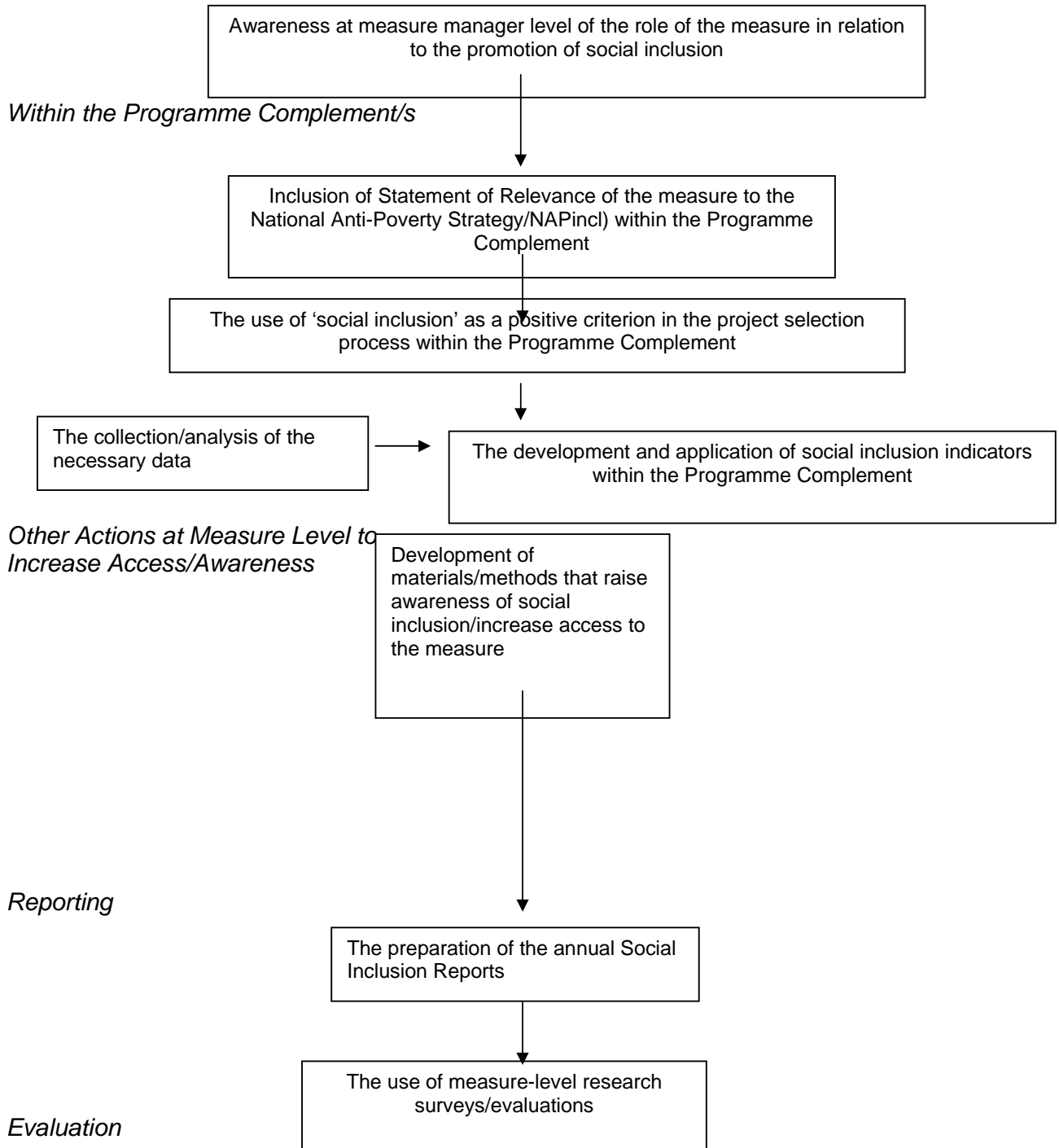
# Chapter 3 Implementing Poverty Proofing

## 3.1 A Poverty Proofing Approach

One way of embedding social inclusion within the NDP is to apply a poverty proofing approach. The mechanisms for implementing poverty proofing at a measure-specific level have emerged over time. They can be categorised into a number of distinct elements.

**Figure 3.1: Poverty Proofing at Measure Level**

*Awareness at Measure Level*



### **3.1.1 Awareness Raising**

- *Awareness of the Role of the Measure in Relation to the Promotion of Social Inclusion*  
In many instances measure managers are aware that their measure has a role to play in relation to the promotion of social inclusion. Where measure managers are not aware, awareness raising and the provision of support to translate awareness into practical action is one of the roles played by the Combat Poverty Agency and the Office for Social Inclusion.

This support has been proactively offered in the form of bilateral meetings to discuss the incorporation of social inclusion into particular measures so as to increase the visibility of the social inclusion work supported by the measure. A number of different actions can be taken, e.g. changes within the Programme Complement, and/or the development of materials and strategies to increase the accessibility of the measure to disadvantaged groups, communities, and individuals.

The main challenge involved in awareness raising is the creation of the necessary opportunity and space to enable meetings to be held between the specialist social inclusion agency (CPA/OSI) and measure managers. Measure managers found that their level of understanding of what constitutes inclusion and poverty-proofing actions within a measure was considerably clarified, making subsequent action easier.

### **3.1.2 Poverty Proofing Actions within the Context of the Programme Complement**

- *The Development of a Statement of Relevance to Social Inclusion*  
Each measure-specific Programme Complement should include a short paragraph that details how the measure relates to NAP/inclusion. Making clear linkages between the work undertaken under a particular measure and the promotion of social inclusion, together with a clear linkage to NAP/inclusion and the NAPS targets, is sometimes a challenge. The work undertaken under some measures will be directly relevant to a number of the key anti-poverty targets, e.g. Housing, while the impact of others may be less obvious, e.g. e-Commerce and communications.

What is important is that a connection be made between the work supported under the measure and its impact on social inclusion. This in turn should serve as a reminder for those implementing the measure of the need to ensure that the social inclusion agenda continues to be considered and progressed within the work of the measure.

- *'Social Inclusion' as a Project Selection Criteria*  
The use of 'social inclusion' should be a positive criterion in the project selection process. Where possible measure managers should ensure that positive consideration be given to applications from disadvantaged urban/rural communities, disadvantaged groups, and the NAP/inclusion target groups. This is generally easier to apply at design stage although it can also be undertaken retrospectively.

Fáilte Ireland, as part of the pilot project on Social Inclusion Indicators, for example, circulated some guidelines to successful project promoters on how they could practically support and promote social inclusion in the context of the development of new capital infrastructure. Examples of practical suggestions include the insertion of a local labour clause in construction contracts.

- *The Development of Social Inclusion Indicators*

The development of 'social inclusion indicators' is another part of the process by which progress in relation to social inclusion can be tracked on an ongoing basis. As part of the pilot work on social inclusion indicators, a series of different types of social inclusion indicators were developed and used:

- location indicators to test whether projects were supported in the geographical areas of greatest disadvantage, e.g. percentage of projects funded in a RAPID<sup>7</sup> area and a CLÁR<sup>8</sup> area
- target group indicators to test whether those groups most affected by poverty benefited from the structural fund measures, e.g. number of people with disabilities participating in a particular measure or strand of a measure
- participation indicators to test whether participants in programmes or employment came from a disadvantaged economic or social situation, e.g. analysis of the primary occupation of the main income earner in the home of a young person participating in a particular programme
- outcome indicators to test whether the circumstances of programme participants improved, e.g. the rate of recidivism of participants in a particular support programme.

Some indicator types were easier to apply in practice than others and the methods by which they have been applied have been simplified over time. As a consequence of the difficulties associated with a number of the more spatially defined indices, a decision was made to map location using a RAPID/CLÁR area as a proxy for location in a disadvantaged area. This made location indicators easier to apply, use and report on.

In the same way, while efforts were initially made to collect data on a number of different target groups, this again proved to be very time-consuming. Thus, a decision was made to prioritise one or two NAP/inclusion target groups within a particular measure and to report on their participation.

More recently, there has also been an attempt to develop indicators linked to NAP/inclusion. For example, in relation to the Acute Hospitals Measure within the Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme, there is a proposal to use a NAP/inclusion target as the basis for the development of indicators which will report on the number of specific facilities funded to address three health-target areas: circulatory diseases, cancers, and injuries and poisonings. The relevant NAP/inclusion target is: 'to reduce the gap in premature mortality between the lowest and highest socio-economic groups by at least 10 per cent for circulatory diseases, for cancers and for injuries and poisoning by 2007.'

One of the key criteria required to enable the development of social inclusion indicators is the availability of the relevant data and the existence of IT systems capable of processing this data. In some cases data were neither available nor were they collected. In other instances it was collected (largely on paper) but never aggregated or analysed. The process of computerisation across Government Departments is also not uniform, with some measure managers only in the process of establishing the necessary systems to enable them to aggregate the analysis of their data.

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<sup>7</sup> The RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) Programme targets urban areas and towns with the greatest concentration of disadvantage for priority funding under the National Development Plan.

<sup>8</sup> The CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) Programme targets investment in disadvantaged rural areas. It supports investment in physical, community and social infrastructure across a variety of measures.

It is also the case that some data, particularly in relation to participation type indicators, were not collected because of what was reported as fears associated with confidentiality. In other situations, particularly in relation to the collection of data associated with outcome indicators, some further thinking was required to determine what data would be the most useful to collect.

In summary then, while some progress has been achieved in relation to the first three types of indicators, crucially outcome type indicators have been difficult to measure for the variety of reasons identified above. In some instances, the only way in which outcome indicators can be measured would be through longitudinal studies and systematic evaluations.

### **3.1.3 Other Actions to Increase Access and Awareness**

- *Other Actions*

Other initiatives to support social inclusion within measures have included commitments to provide materials for applicants in a variety of accessible formats and using plain language. Some measure managers have also committed to enhance their website accessibility by ensuring it is compatible with best practice<sup>9</sup> guidelines.

### **3.1.4 Reporting at Measure Level**

- *Preparation of Annual Social Inclusion Reports*

As part of the NDP/CSF prioritisation process, measure managers are now required to submit an annual reporting template which details the actions that have taken place over the previous year to incorporate social inclusion within the measures. They are also required to report on progress against indicators and are given the opportunity to raise issues to be addressed at Managing Authority level.

Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion see these reports as an opportunity for measure managers to include more general organisational change and the introduction of good practices, e.g. the provision of enhanced levels of access to information through the availability of materials in more accessible formats.<sup>10</sup>

### **3.1.5 Evaluations**

- *The Use of Measure-Level Evaluations*

The development of participation and outcome indicators at measure level has already been identified as problematic. In some instances data on participation and outcome indicators are best collected through the use of measure-level evaluations or research surveys and longitudinal studies.

## **3.2 Key Challenges**

The key challenges faced in applying a poverty-proofing approach can be identified at the level of the overall NDP and at a measure level.

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<sup>9</sup> Information on Best Practices in Web Accessibility is available from the Irish National Disability Authority IT Accessibility Guidelines website at: [http://accessit.nda.ie/guidelineindex\\_1.html](http://accessit.nda.ie/guidelineindex_1.html)

<sup>10</sup> Accessible formats include: Audio tape, Braille, Electronic Format, HTML, Plain Text, large print, High Contrast print and easy to read as well as in a range of other languages for non-English speakers.

- ***At a Level of the Overall National Development Plan***

- *An absence of buy-in at measure level*

The successful incorporation of the social inclusion horizontal principle within a measure depends (in the absence of any sanctions) on the buy in, commitment and interest of the particular measure manager. In some instances this worked well, while in others little or no progress has been made.

The key is the creation of sufficient understanding and awareness of poverty proofing and the generation of sufficient skills to enable its implementation at a measure level. The absence of any form of incentives for measures to address social inclusion as a horizontal principle also means that there is little reward or recognition for those who do engage in this process.

- *An absence of adequate resources at measure level*

The resources required to successfully support measure managers in implementing and/or enforcing social inclusion as a horizontal principle were not fully understood or anticipated. Where additional resources were located (one-off funding from the Department of Finance) and used to provide extra specialist social inclusion support, significant progress was made.

The types of supports provided included: bilateral meetings with measure managers to discuss measure-specific issues and concerns, and the generation of suggestions and proposals as to how social inclusion as a horizontal principle could be located within particular measures, including the development of social inclusion indicators. Advice on how social inclusion could be written into the terms of reference for measure-level evaluations was also provided. Advice and comments were also provided in relation to the completion of the Annual Social Inclusion Reports.

- ***At a Measure Level***

- *Relevance*

It is difficult in the case of some measures to demonstrate the clear linkage/s between the work undertaken under a particular measure and the NAPS and NAP/inclusion and how this might feed into its targets. This is an ongoing issue and one that may need to be considered within the development of the new NAP/inclusion 2006-2009.

- *Technical Issues/Data*

The use of indicators depends on the availability and accessibility of relevant data. Currently not all schemes and programmes store their information in a computerised format and this makes the monitoring process very difficult. Also, the data necessary to assess the impact on social inclusion may not be collected. In the first instance many programmes are in the process of establishing data systems which in time will generate the necessary information. In the second case the specialist agency (in this case Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion) is currently confined to actively encouraging and supporting measure managers to begin the process of collecting this information.

## Chapter 4 Poverty Proofing in Action

This chapter provides some examples of poverty proofing at the following measure/sub-measure levels:

- The Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme Energy Conservation Measure
- The Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme School Completion Measure and National Employment Service Measure
- The Regional Operational Programme Garda Youth Diversion Programme Measure
- The Regional Operational Programme Childcare Facilities Measure

### 4.1 Energy Conservation Measure

This measure within the Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme is delivered by Sustainable Energy Ireland which reports to the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. It has a number of different strands: (1) Research and Development, (2) Energy Efficiency Built Environment, and (3) an Institutional Infrastructure strand which supports the salaries and overheads of Sustainable Energy Ireland, along with those of a number of other non-capital programmes. The original Programme Complement made no reference to how the measure was to support social inclusion.

#### *Awareness*

Meetings were held between Combat Poverty, the Office for Social Inclusion, and the staff in Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. Through this process a number of actions were identified which, if applied, would enhance the visibility of social inclusion within the measure as follows:

- The inclusion of a paragraph which made a direct link between work undertaken under the measure and the National Anti-Poverty Strategy. In this case it was possible to make a clear link between the Built Environment sub-measure and the NAP/inclusion Housing targets
- The development and inclusion of a definition of low-income housing
- The development of a 'location type indicator' which provides a breakdown of the number of homes insulated in (1) RAPID areas and (2) CLÁR areas
- A suggestion regarding the development of an indicator in relation to the dissemination of information/learning.

#### *Changes to the Programme Complement*

An additional participation-type indicator was identified and agreed as follows: 'A breakdown of the percentage of energy rating inspections conducted in low-income housing'. The Programme Complement was amended to reflect all the changes agreed.

#### *Annual Social Inclusion Report*

The Department subsequently submitted a detailed annual social inclusion report for the measure, where it included some useful additional information on the number of socially orientated projects conducted in the context of the 'House of Tomorrow'<sup>11</sup> Programme.

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<sup>11</sup> The House of Tomorrow Programme aims to accelerate improvements in the quality of energy features in Irish housing. It funds projects that research, develop and demonstrate more sustainable energy practices.

## 4.2 School Completion Programme

This measure within the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme seeks to provide a variety of supports. These include the 8-15 year old Early School Leavers Initiative and the Stay in School Retention Initiative, which aims to retain pupils to the completion of senior-cycle post primary education. The measure is managed and overseen by the Department of Education and Science.

The measure clearly has a direct and positive impact on social inclusion, with data provided on an ongoing basis in relation to the numbers of Travellers and Non-Nationals (both NAP/inclusion target groups) participating in the various Programmes. The original Programme Complement for the measure also contained a direct reference to the original National Anti-Poverty Strategy.

### *Awareness*

Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion held a round table meeting to which all the relevant measure managers within the Department of Education and Science were invited. A measure-specific meeting was then held at the request of the measure managers.

### *Changes to the Programme Complement*

As a result of meeting with the measure managers, specific suggestions were developed in relation to how the role of the measure in promoting social inclusion could be made more visible and could be tracked more effectively over time. Suggestions identified included the following:

- The strengthening of the existing paragraph on social inclusion as a horizontal principle in the Programme Complement by linking the measure directly to a specific NAP/inclusion target: 'to reduce the number of young people who leave the school system early, so that the percentage of those who complete upper second level or equivalent will reach 85 per cent by 2003 and 90 per cent by 2006' (NAP/inclusion, p. 28)
- The addition of further project selection criteria to ensure that positive consideration be given to applications from disadvantaged urban and rural areas (using the presence of RAPID or CLÁR as the proxy disadvantage indicator)
- The introduction of some additional output and result social inclusion indicators in the Programme Complement, using location indicators as follows:
  - Percentage of schools participating in the School Completion Programme in (1) RAPID areas and (2) CLÁR areas
  - Percentage of schools participating in the Stay in School Retention Initiative in (1) RAPID areas and (2) CLÁR areas
- The development of impact indicators as follows:
  - Percentage of pupils in the School Completion Programme that transfer from Primary to Post Primary level
  - Percentage of participants that successfully sit the Junior Certificate.

- The possibility of using the occupation of a parent/guardian as a proxy for the economic status of the participants. This suggestion, however, proved too complicated given the data and confidentiality requirements associated with the collection, storage and updating of this type of information.

#### *Annual Social Inclusion Report*

The majority of these suggestions were incorporated in the revised Programme Complement, while some baseline information on the current situation in relation to these indicators was included in the Social Inclusion Annual Report.

### **4.3 National Employment Service Measure**

This Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme Measure is managed and delivered by FÁS. It seeks to match job seekers with available vacancies. It draws on a network of FÁS Offices and Supports and incorporates the Local Employment Services which focus on the long-term unemployed or socially excluded. The National Employment Service advises training providers on the changing needs of those seeking work and operates jobs clubs to help unemployed people develop their job-seeking skills.

The measure clearly has the potential to have a positive impact on social inclusion, given that it is proactively targeting a variety of supports at the unemployed. The original Programme Complement contained indicators on the number of long-term unemployed registering with jobs clubs, the numbers who successfully completed their formal training and the number who then subsequently progressed to employment, further education and training.

#### *Awareness*

Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion met with FÁS staff to discuss this and other FÁS measures prioritised under the social inclusion principle. A number of suggestions were identified as to how the impact of the measure on social inclusion could be made more visible and could also be tracked over time.

#### *Changes to the Programme Complement*

Following a further meeting, FÁS agreed to the inclusion of an additional ‘target group’ type indicator which requires the organisation to divide the five headline indicators into a number of sub-categories (NAP/inclusion target groups):

Total number of people registering with FÁS categorised as follows:

- Percentage of persons placed in jobs
- Percentage of persons placed in FÁS Programmes
- Percentage of persons who leave the live register
- Percentage of FÁS registrants who achieve a positive result.

All to be categorised by

- Number (broken down by gender) who are young people (18-25 years)
- Number (broken down by gender) who are older people (55-65 years)
- Number (broken down by gender) who are people with disabilities.

#### *Other Actions to Increase Access and Awareness*

A number of more general suggestions were made in relation to ensuring the accessibility of information available from FÁS. One related to increasing the accessibility of the FÁS website according to the widely accepted Web Content Accessibility Guidelines<sup>12</sup> (WCAG).

It was also suggested that the follow-up survey of FÁS Programme Participants, undertaken by the Economic and Social Research Institute, be modified to reflect the changes in the questions asked as part of the new European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions Survey<sup>13</sup> (EU SILC).

A third suggestion was that consideration be given to collecting more detailed qualitative information to supplement the formal follow-up survey for the purposes of tracking the types and rates of progression to employment or future education for the various subgroups. The implementation of these more general suggestions will depend on the availability of resources and the commitment of senior FÁS staff to this type of change.

#### **4.4 Gárda Youth Diversion Programme**

The Gárda Youth Diversion Programme within the Regional Operational Programmes is managed by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and implemented by An Garda Síochána. It supports projects that target young people at risk, diverting them from becoming involved in criminal and anti-social behavior. It also aims to support and improve relationships between An Garda Síochána and the community.

The measure clearly has a strong social inclusion focus, given that it targets supports at young people at risk, one of the key target groups in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy. The link between the measure and social inclusion is made clear within the original Programme Complement. However, the original Programme Complement made no reference to the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, nor did it have a mechanism by which the social inclusion impact of the measure could be tracked.

##### *Awareness*

The Garda Youth Diversion Programme was one of the measures included in the pilot project on Social Inclusion Indicators. As part of that initiative, Combat Poverty had met with the measure manager and had subsequently mapped the location of the individual projects according to the Hasse Index<sup>14</sup> of Deprivation. Of the 20 projects, 90 per cent were located in what could be termed designated disadvantaged areas. This provided objective evidence that the majority of projects were located in disadvantaged areas.

##### *Changes to the Programme Complement*

As part of the prioritisation of the measure under the social inclusion principle, Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion submitted a series of proposals to the measure manager for consideration. This was followed by a meeting to discuss the suggestions. Among the changes discussed/agreed at the meeting were the following:

- The strengthening of the existing paragraph on social inclusion with the inclusion of a direct reference to the NAPS and NAP/inclusion, early school leaving, access to employment, and young people as a NAP/inclusion target group

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<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.w3.org/WAI/> for full details

<sup>13</sup> This is carried out by the CSO and is the replacement for the Living in Ireland Survey conducted by the ESRI.

<sup>14</sup> The Hasse Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation provides a single measurement of overall deprivation based on the 2002 Census Figures. This Index has subsequently been revised and updated.

- The introduction of some 'location type' social inclusion indicators including (a) the percentage of the projects located in RAPID areas and in CLÁR areas and (b) the percentage of participants (categorised by gender) attending projects in RAPID areas and in CLAR areas
- The undertaking of a longitudinal study/evaluation (over five years) to examine the progression of programme participants in relation to education, training, employment and personal development. This commitment to undertake a longitudinal study is particularly welcome because it will enable the impact of the measure to be examined over time.

#### **4.5 Childcare Measure**

The Childcare Facilities measure within the two Regional Operational Programmes provides capital grants for the purchase, improvement, refurbishment or construction of childcare facilities. The measure is managed by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and administered by Area Development Management Ltd. on behalf of the Department. Funding is available for large- and small-scale private and community based not-for-profit applicants, including projects in disadvantaged areas. The measure is primarily focused on sustaining economic growth and employment through the provision of childcare places to enable individuals to remain in or return to education/the workplace.

The measure also has the capacity to support social inclusion in terms of the provision of support for facilities servicing particular areas and communities. The socio-economic and demographic profile of an area was identified as one of the criteria for the selection of projects.

#### *Changes to the Programme Complement*

Making a direct connection between this measure and the National Anti-Poverty Strategy was a challenge for the measure managers, given that they believed that the primary focus of the measure was to support participation in/progression to the workforce. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy, however, has a broader remit and it was subsequently agreed to use the language of NAP/inclusion, which refers to sustaining economic growth and employment, and to include a direct reference to NAP/inclusion. In particular, the provision of childcare facilities in areas of disadvantage was recognised as a support to other national actions being taken to break the cycle of poverty.

A 'location based' social inclusion indicator was also included in the revised Programme Complement, to reflect the uptake of the scheme in designated disadvantaged areas in terms of: (a) the percentage of new facilities established in RAPID areas and in CLÁR areas and (b) the percentage of facilities upgraded in RAPID areas and in CLÁR areas.

## **Chapter 5 The Role of Social Inclusion Monitoring and Evaluation in the NDP**

Poverty proofing at a measure level is the first part of embedding social inclusion in the NDP. The second part is monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this work at an Operational Programme level and at a national level. Monitoring of the social inclusion horizontal principle is undertaken by a number of organisations through a number of different structures.

### **5.1 The Role of the Specialist Unit**

Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion work collectively as the specialist unit for the social inclusion horizontal principle. They have a dual role: providing support to the relevant measure managers, and monitoring the information and reports provided by the measure managers. Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion make regular reports to the various Authorities responsible for the management of the Operational Programmes and attend the Operational Programme Monitoring Committee Meetings.

### **5.2 Operational Programme Monitoring Committee Meetings**

Two Monitoring Committee meetings are held annually for each of the Operational Programmes. These meetings provide an opportunity to review progress based on the submission of progress reports from each measure. Representatives from the various specialist units attend these meetings. The meetings provide an opportunity to raise the issue of progress, or lack of it, in relation to social inclusion as a horizontal principle, and agree how to move this agenda forward.

### **5.3 NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit Reviews**

The NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit occasionally undertake formal reviews that include some consideration of social inclusion as a horizontal principle within the NDP. Most pertinent of the studies undertaken to date in relation to the social inclusion principle was the review of the relevance of the horizontal principles within the NDP, which in turn led to the prioritisation of particular measures under particular horizontal principles. The NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit was also involved in the establishment of the NDP/CSF Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Coordinating Committee.

### **5.4 Mid-Term Reviews**

Each of the Operational Programmes was the subject of an independent external Mid-Term Review. The evaluators were asked to examine how and to what extent the various Operational Programmes had promoted social inclusion (one of the four core objectives of the NDP). Many of the evaluations identified weaknesses in the operation of the horizontal principles, while some of the evaluators went on to identify a number of recommendations in relation to enhancing the impact of the Programme on social inclusion.

### **5.5 The NDP/CSF Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Coordinating Committee**

The NDP/CSF Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Coordinating Committee provides a vehicle at national level through which social inclusion and equality issues arising from a particular measure or Programme can be raised and discussed. Some of the issues raised at these forums have been progressed in the context of formal reviews and the Mid-Term Evaluations.

## Chapter 6 Analysis of the Issues Arising from the Review

The key issues are examined under the following three headings: (1) the implications of the experience of poverty proofing the NDP for the achievement of wider social inclusion policy objectives, (2) the implications of the actions undertaken at measure level, and (3) the role of monitoring and assessment.

### 6.1 Social Inclusion Policy Objectives

While progress towards the identification and tracking of the social inclusion outcomes of the NDP has been limited, embedding social inclusion in the National Development Plan through the use of a poverty-proofing approach has provided a useful structured mechanism to achieve some key social inclusion policy objectives. These include the following:

- Raised awareness of social inclusion across most Operational Programmes within the NDP (the Productive Sector Operational Programme would appear to have been largely exempted from the promotion of social inclusion)
- Making clear connections between the work undertaken under particular measures of the NDP and the achievement of the NAP/inclusion vision, objectives and targets. This was complicated by the fact that the objectives and targets of the original National Anti-Poverty Strategy and the more recent NAP/inclusion are not categorised into actions. As such it was often difficult to make clear linkages between measure-level action outputs and results and the relevant NAP/inclusion targets.
- Ensuring social inclusion remained a continually visible cross-cutting issue across the organisations and structures of the NDP. The introduction of prioritisation, which by default enabled non-prioritised measures to ignore social inclusion as a horizontal principle, provides evidence, if evidence were required, that the issue of social inclusion would and could be largely ignored were it not a priority cross-cutting issue.

Achievements to date can be seen to have been largely predicated on the existence of publicly available Programme Complements. These detail measure-level objectives, project selection criteria, indicators (both financial and physical) targets and responsibilities. The existence of the Programme Complement or equivalents has been critical since it provides detailed measure-specific information within which the social inclusion objective can be both embedded and made visible. As such, the prospect that there may not be any formal Programme Complements within a new NDP is a worrying development, both from an accountability and a social inclusion perspective.

### 6.2 Specific Actions to Promote Social Inclusion

A number of actions have been undertaken to support social inclusion at measure level. They include the following:

- *The Provision of Technical Support*

Measure managers with responsibility for measures prioritised under the social inclusion (horizontal) principle were contacted and offered practical support and advice from Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion in relation to the work to be done, to ensure they addressed the issue of social inclusion as a horizontal principle. More than half of those offered support took up the offer, indicating that there was a need for the provision

of technical support in relation to social inclusion. The absence of clear guidelines for measure managers in relation to how they might address social inclusion as a horizontal principle may also be a reason for the high levels of uptake of support and indeed may also be a contributory factor in relation to the limited levels of progress to date.

- *Raising Awareness Levels*

Meetings were sometimes held between Combat Poverty, the Office for Social Inclusion and individual measure managers. Measure managers reported that they found these very useful in terms of raising their awareness of what social inclusion meant in the context of their measure. Some measure managers had limited awareness of their measure's ability to promote social inclusion and address poverty. These meetings were also useful in terms of clarifying what was technically possible, or not possible, in terms of reporting.

- *Changes to the Programme Complement*

The majority of measure managers prioritised under the social inclusion principle made positive changes to their Programme Complement from a social inclusion perspective. These changes focused on a number of key areas:

- The inclusion of a statement of relevance of the measure to the National Anti-Poverty Strategy/NAPincl within the Programme Complement. This is a key action to promote social inclusion at a measure level. Such a statement provides a formal and visible recognition of the relevance of the measure to social inclusion, specifically the most recent NAP/inclusion, and is part of the streamlining of key government policies and plans. The Programme Complement is the ideal vehicle to absorb this statement, given that it provides a readily accessible and detailed outline of the measure.
- The introduction, where relevant and feasible, of the use of 'social inclusion' as a positive criterion in the project selection process, within the Programme Complement. This is difficult to introduce retrospectively and ideally needs to be outlined at the outset of a Programme. It could be actively encouraged in the context of the next NDP or its equivalent successor.

- *The Development of Social Inclusion Indicators*

Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion sought to support and encourage measure managers to develop additional social inclusion indicators. A small number of new output type indicators were developed. In many cases measure managers decided to break down the existing indicators to provide information on uptake, or support for selected NAP/inclusion target groups, or information on the percentage of projects funded in designated disadvantaged areas. Almost all of the social inclusion indicators introduced to date were output indicators.

This is probably linked to the fact that the majority of indicators in the current NDP tend to be output-type indicators. Many of the measures within the 2000-2006 NDP are focused on capital expenditure, e.g. construction or refurbishment of childcare facilities, acute hospitals, harbours, etc., with success generally measured and recorded as the number and nature of outputs created, i.e. the number of facilities constructed. This focus on physical outputs is a challenge from a poverty-proofing perspective, given that it provides no qualitative or outcome orientated information. Neither does it involve any conditions in relation to the potential or actual usage or accessibility of such facilities for excluded and marginalised groups and individuals.

## **6.3 Monitoring and Assessing Progress**

### **6.3.1. At Measure Level**

The use of measure-level evaluations to assess the impact of a particular measure is a rare occurrence. This may, however, be a useful direction to follow in terms of tracking impact on social inclusion. Notwithstanding, significant further work needs to be done in relation to the development of both result and impact indicators in general, and social inclusion indicators in particular.

The introduction of a requirement for the submission of measure-specific Annual Reports (although only on a limited <sup>15</sup> scale), together with attempts to develop output-based social inclusion indicators are welcome developments. When fully implemented, they should provide regular and detailed measure-specific updates on progress in relation to support for social inclusion.

- *Data Difficulties*

Difficulties continue in relation to the accessibility and availability of certain types of data in readily accessible and computerised formats. These difficulties in turn can be seen to hinder reporting in relation to certain measures.

### **6.3.2 At Programme Level**

- *The Role of the Managing Authority*

Some of the Managing Authorities, in particular the BMW and the Southern and Eastern Regional Assemblies, have been very proactive in terms of the priority they have afforded monitoring progress in relation to social inclusion as a horizontal principle. This is evidenced in terms of their commitment to actively encourage measure managers to comply with the requirement to consider social inclusion as a horizontal issue within their measures, and their frequent identification of inadequate reporting. Some Managing Authorities ensured social inclusion was regularly tabled as an issue for discussion at Monitoring Committee Meetings. The Regional Assemblies also encouraged Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion to regularly report on progress.

- *The Monitoring Committee*

Some Monitoring Committees had social inclusion as a regular agenda item. This was a useful development since it ensured social inclusion remained firmly on the radar of the Committee, the Managing Authority and indeed the Programme in general. It also can be seen to have provided some leverage in relation to the 'identification of non-compliance' generated from regular reporting of non social inclusion compliant measures. The community and voluntary sector is represented on most Monitoring Committees. Interestingly, the role/potential role of the community and voluntary sector in relation to the promotion and overseeing of poverty proofing and as another social inclusion champion remains undeveloped and largely unexplored.

- *The NDP/CSF Unit Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Coordinating Committee*

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<sup>15</sup> Only measures prioritised under the social inclusion horizontal principle by the NDP/CSF Unit 2004 prioritisation exercise are included.

The exact role and purpose of the NDP/CSF Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Coordinating Committee in relation to poverty proofing of the NDP was never clearly defined. Under the current Plan this structure would appear to have functioned more as a forum for discussion between responsible parties rather than having a more specific function or purpose. Some attempts were made in 2004 to revisit the agenda and format of the meeting in an effort to re-invigorate the structure.

- *The Role of the Specialist Social Inclusion Agencies*

Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion targeted their supports at the 'prioritised measures'. Face-to-face meetings with measure managers were found to be the most successful fora for progressing the work. From these initial meetings it was possible to put together a list of practical and agreed suggestions for changes. The success of this approach is evidenced by the fact that most of the measure managers provided with supports by Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion were able to make the necessary changes to their Programme Complements and indeed to complete their Annual Social Inclusion Reports to a satisfactory standard.

Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion not only supported positive changes, they also monitored in detail the revisions made to the Programme Complements and the completed annual reports. In that way they were able to provide the Monitoring Committees with regular updates on progress and ensure that social inclusion was regularly included as an agenda item for meetings. The absence of any incentives or sanctions for measures and measure managers, with the exception of 'being named' at a Monitoring Committee meeting (both role models and non-compliant measures were named) was, however, a hindrance.

Prioritisation, in contrast, was a double-edged sword in that it supported compliance by the prioritised measures but by default allowed other measures to make no effort to address social inclusion as an NDP objective. The decision of Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion to direct support exclusively at the prioritised measures, while pragmatic (in the light of limited resources), may in some way be seen to have reinforced this situation or at least provided passive compliance. That is not to say that there is no need for prioritisation but perhaps there needs to be a broader range of prioritisation types than what currently exists (prioritised or not prioritised). Clearly with an initiative as broad in scope as the NDP, some element of prioritisation will be critical.

If poverty proofing is to be effective it requires actions across a range of areas, some of which may have a strong social inclusion focus, while others might be less obviously and less traditionally related to areas and activities that have a social inclusion focus. This could involve the introduction of a certain minimum social inclusion requirement which at the very least could include the development of a public statement of the relevance (direct and/or indirect) of a particular measure to social inclusion and NAP/inclusion.