

Project application and decision process (grants £1,000 - £9,999)

This paper should be read in conjunction with the flowchart PAOM6iv.

Application and commissioning systems

The Programme has two systems for funding activities to deliver its objectives. The 'project application' process entails a local organisation matching its expertise and knowledge of local need to Plain Action's objectives and criteria, and developing a proposed activity (or 'project') which will contribute to one or more of the objectives and deliver measurable outputs.

When it appears that the objectives are unlikely to be wholly achieved through the application process Plain Action will develop a specific activity ('project') and place a contract for the delivery of this through its commissioning process, as set out in PAOM 16.

Criteria

All potential funded activity is judged at each stage against the following criteria, incorporating the GRADE (GR) requirements as indicated. These are considered proportional to the size of grant requested.

- Technical eligibility for funding (GR commercial)
- Direct match with one P.A. Objective and both themes. (GR strategic)
- Likely contribution to the Programme's output targets (GR economic, strategic)
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- Evidence of the quality of the project design and achievability
- Evidence that the proposed organisation is competent to deliver and fit for purpose (GR management)
- Genuine additionality (GR management)
- Evidence that the proposed activity, or the benefits of it, will be sustainable in the broadest sense (GR financial)
- Value for money (recognising that not all benefits will be quantifiable) (GR management)
- Additional benefits in harmony with Plain Action overall objectives

Enquiries and early discussion stage

Enquiries and referrals will be encouraged through the Plain Action website, newsletters, notices, press releases and general relevant networks. There will be informal discussion between the potential applicant and Plain Action and transfer both ways of information by means of email, telephone calls, post and meeting(s). Enquiries will be recorded on PAOM 11ii.

Expression of Interest (Eoi) stage

- On the basis of the information provided through the means described above the Programme staff will complete an enquiry /eoi form, PAOM 10ii, which is logged on PAOM 11i and PAOM 11iii.
- The PM will decide whether the proposal is technically eligible and potentially fits the criteria for Plain Action funding, and notify the applicant accordingly.
- The Programme team will provide potential full applicants with the application documentation, PAOM 13iii and PAOM 7.

Development and receipt of full applications

- Programme staff and others may assist in the development of the proposal. The intention is to produce proposals which ultimately will contribute to the Programme. However, no person taking part in this process may subsequently be involved in the subsequent appraisal or decision making process.
- All applications need a limited amount of supporting documentation.
- Both electronic and signed paper copies are required.

- The application is checked by PM/staff for completeness and technical accuracy, and logged on PAOM11 i and iii.
- The application is then submitted to appraiser(s) (1 for applications £1,000 to £4,999, 2 for applications £5,000 to £9,999) and simultaneously submitted to the Accountable Body for financial risk assessment.
- A maximum of 10 working days is allowed between receipt of a formal complete application and its submission for appraisal.

Appraisal stage

- Appraisers are selected, appointed and trained according to PAOM15. They are asked if they wish to appraise applications below £10,000 (not a requirement.)
- Each application receives an independent appraisal and is scored on PAOM 14i against the Programme's criteria.
- The appraiser(s) in each case is selected by the Programme Manager on balance of technical expertise, interest and availability. The intention is to distribute the appraisals across the full Panel.
- Appraisers are encouraged to discuss the application with the PM for clarification purposes, and with the applicant if the appraiser(s) and Programme Manager agree this would be beneficial.
- Appraisers are required to complete and return appraisals within 10 days of receipt.
- Appraisers may support an application, support it subject to a number of qualifications, or not support it on the grounds that it fails to satisfy the criteria sufficiently to warrant further consideration without fundamental change.

Decision stage

- The PMG Members are responsible for the final decision on applications, subject to Accountable Body and SWRDA approval on financial risk, eligibility and procedural aspects as set out in PAOM4 and PAOM 5i and ii.
 - Individual PMG Members play no part in deciding on applications in which they have any interest, or in which they have been involved at all since EoI stage.
 - For applications below £40,000 the application is considered electronically. All Members receive a short checklist and response form, the application, the completed appraisal, and Accountable Body risk assessment. 3 Members are specifically requested to respond, chosen by the Programme Manager for their technical expertise and contextual knowledge appropriate to that application. A minimum of 6 responses is required, including the Chairman or Vice-Chairman; approval requires a majority and minimum of 4 in favour. Non-responses are taken as neutral. In the event of an uncertain outcome the application goes to the next PMG meeting, with a presentation by the applicant.
 - The full application information listed above and received by Members is transmitted at the same time to SWRDA for technical consideration, and SWRDA either attends the meeting at which the decision is taken or comments in advance.
 - For applications of £40,000+ the PMG considers the information as above, plus a business plan, plus a presentation in person.
 - 12 weeks is the maximum time between formal receipt of an application in its final form and a decision by the PMG. 6 weeks is the target period.
 - Applicants will be informed of PMG meeting dates so that as far as possible decisions are reached in within the target period.
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