



Office for Social Inclusion

An Oifig um Chuimsiú Sóisialta

Consultation on preparation of Ireland's National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2006-08

Guidelines to assist with written submissions

EU Member States are required to prepare on a regular basis a National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion. This process is designed to assist Member States in achieving the EU goal of making a decisive impact on poverty by 2010 and beyond. The current plan, covered the period 2003-2005, but the period was in effect subsequently extended to end August 2006 to facilitate the incorporation of the 10 new Member States to the process. A report on the implementation and evaluation of this plan can be obtained from the Office for Social Inclusion (OSI) or on its website – www.socialinclusion.ie

The next national plans are due to be submitted by all 25 Member States covering a two period starting on 1 September 2006. The OSI has responsibility for coordinating the preparation of Ireland's national plan, its 3rd for the EU, which includes coordination of this consultation process in liaison with the Combat Poverty Agency.

Consultation

As it is a national plan, the EU Member States have agreed that it should be the product of the widest consultation with all relevant stakeholders - those who are experiencing poverty and social exclusion and those who work to support them either directly or indirectly. The latter would include those who work at national, regional and local levels for Government and non-Government organisations – trade unions, employers, farming and other self-employed organisations, and for the voluntary and community sectors.

The consultation begins with this request for written comments. A series of direct regional consultations will then be held in the period October to December offering an opportunity to obtain views and feedback at regional level and specifically on the priorities for each region. These are scheduled to take place in Dublin, Carlow, Cork, Limerick, Mullingar, Carrick on Shannon and Donegal. The consultation process will culminate with the Social Inclusion Forum in Dublin in January 2006.

Guidelines - Introduction

These guidelines are designed to assist in developing your written submission. They are based on the specific objectives for the national plans agreed by EU Member States, including Ireland, and on EU guidelines for drawing up the plans. Both these objectives and the guidelines are currently being reviewed at EU level, but it is not anticipated that they will be substantially revised.

The guidelines are also designed to help us (OSI) in providing a fair, balanced but concise analysis and report on the views received. You can help us achieve this goal by following the guidelines and making sure your submission does not exceed 4000 words (approx. 16 pages).

Please do not consider that you have to give views under every heading. It is sufficient to give your views on these headings of specific concern to you and your organisation. In essence the consultation is about facilitating in a structured way an exchange of views among all stakeholders on combating poverty and social exclusion based on their knowledge, experience and expertise.

It would also be very helpful, if among all the proposals you may wish to have adopted and implemented, you would set out the priorities for the period 2006 to 2008.

Documents that may assist you and are of particular relevance to the consultation process include:

- ❑ The National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005;
- ❑ Joint Inclusion Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2005;
- ❑ Social Inclusion Forum 2005 report;
- ❑ June 2005 Implementation and Update Report on the National Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005

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Objectives

The broad objectives for the national plans are set out below in bold print with brief explanations in ordinary type, where necessary, as follows:

1. Facilitating participation in employment;
2. **Facilitating access by all to**
 - a. **resources**, such as social welfare payments,
 - b. **rights**,
 - c. **goods**, and
 - d. **services**, such as health, education, housing, transport, cultural, legal, recreational and sporting services;
3. **Preventing the risks of exclusion** such as homelessness, addiction, indebtedness, living in disadvantaged areas;

4. ***Helping the most vulnerable groups*** such as children, lone parents, older people, people with disabilities, the unemployed, migrants, Travellers, ethnic minorities, prisoners families, people discharged from institutions;
5. ***Mobilising all relevant bodies in fighting poverty and social exclusion***, such as creating greater awareness about the plan among policy makers, other stakeholders and the general public, ensuring that the plan's objectives are taken into account in policy development and implementation and in the administration of services and programmes, facilitating consultation at all stages of monitoring and evaluating its implementation and its further development.

The importance of promoting equality between men and women in all aspects of the fight against poverty and social exclusion should be taken into account in making proposals.

Policy Measures

Under the headings chosen you should set out the policy measures you would wish to have included in the plan. The following suggestions for measures may be of assistance.

Brief introduction, if desired, on strengths and weaknesses of current provision. This would be followed by suggested policy measures.

- A. Retaining existing policy measures, but improving them e.g increase social welfare rates
- B. Propose modifications to existing policy measures to enhance their impact and effectiveness in achieving objectives
- C. Suggest any new or additional policies or programmes to better achieve objectives
- D. State main priorities under each heading up to 2008

In relation to each policy measure you may wish to specify whether the administrative arrangements and service delivery could be improved or new arrangements introduced.

To avoid overlap, you do not need to repeat proposals made under Objectives 1 and 2, when making proposals under 3 and 4. but you may cross-reference.
e.g "Proposals have already been made above for social welfare increases, which should apply to these vulnerable groups"

Consider also whether you need to include a regional and local dimension to your proposals.

As mentioned above, it would be important to conclude with setting out your main priorities overall for the period up to 2008.

Example

The following is an example for structuring your views in relation to one objective

1. Participation in employment

Comments on strengths/weaknesses of present system and/or in relation to certain vulnerable groups or regions. Followed by proposals for

- A. Improvements to present system
- B. Modifications
- C. New measures
- D. Priorities

Further Information

- Further details regarding the NAP/inclusion process, social inclusion and poverty may be found on the OSI website www.socialinclusion.ie. Alternatively you can call the Office for Social Inclusion on 01 704 3851 or email us at OSI@welfare.ie.

Closing Date for Submissions is Wednesday 19 October 2005

Sending your submission:

- (i) Post to
Office for Social Inclusion
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada
Store Street
Dublin 1
- (ii) Oral submissions can also be sent on tape to the above address.
- (iii) email: osi@welfare.ie
- (iv) Make your submission online at www.socialinclusion.ie