The Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme

III Application & Approval

Technical Assessment Process

Background

All project applications submitted by the close of the Call for Proposals the latest will be assessed following a standardized procedure. The Programme Secretariat carries out the technical assessment of the projects, according to the approved procedure and criteria, using the technical assessment forms.

Before the assessment procedure begins a letter acknowledging receipt of application is sent to the Lead Partner. If essential information is missing the acknowledgement letter informs on this as well.

The assessment procedure is split into two phases, the eligibility check and the second phase, based on the core selection criteria and the priority considerations. Prior to this standardised procedure, the secretariat offers project applicants pre-assessments of their draft project ideas.

Guidance

Pre-assessment of project drafts

Once a project idea has been outlined, project developers have the possibility to submit a 3-4 page draft with the main aim, activities and outputs of the project to the Secretariat.

Good applications need to address a range of issues and the pre-assessment gives the opportunity to receive comments on the project idea's strength and weaknesses at an early stage. The sooner this can be done, the longer partners can work on developing the idea before the actual deadline. A pre-assessment can never provide a guarantee that a project will be approved but it can improve its chances.

As the secretariat also carries out the final assessment of project applications for the Steering Committee, a separation of responsibilities between giving advice to projects and then carrying out technical assessments is required. As a result the secretariat will not carry out pre-assessments on applications that are virtually complete or once the Call for Applications has opened.

This service is in great demand and a queuing system has therefore been introduced to cope with the workload. Each project can only ask for one pre-assessment and it takes about 3 weeks to carry it out. The pre-assessments are made by the Project Development Unit that will consult a Finance Officer when a draft includes any financial issues.

The North Sea Region Programme Secretariat
Jernbanegade 22, DK 8800 Viborg, Denmark
Phone: +45 8728 8070 | Fax: +45 8660 1680
www.northsearegion.eu

Investing in the future
by working together for a
sustainable and competitive region

Eligibility check

Only projects that have passed the eligibility check will be considered by the Steering Committee for approval or rejection. The reason for this is to make sure that projects presented to the Steering Committee meet the basic requirements of the relevant EU regulations as well as the basic requirements of the Interreg IV B North Sea Programme.

If a project fails the eligibility check, the Lead Partner will receive a letter explaining why the application is ineligible. Lead Partners of eligible projects will be informed about the outcome of the eligibility check and in addition a copy of the application is sent to the National Authority to ensure that the project is not against national policy.

Assessment against Core Selection Criteria and Priority Considerations

The Project Development Unit at the Secretariat completes the technical assessment of all eligible applications, consulting the Finance Unit on financial matters. Every eligible project is assessed against a number of Core Selection Criteria, including Measure Criteria, and Priority Considerations. (Detailed description in Application Guide)

Core Selection Criteria cover the essential criteria that a project must fulfil in order to be approved. If a project is assessed as being weak in these criteria, it will be recommended for rejection. Every project has to apply under one of the programme's measures. If it relates to several, the most relevant should be chosen. The *Measure Criteria* assess the contribution that the project will make towards achieving the objectives of the relevant measure. Projects must demonstrate that they will make a valuable contribution.
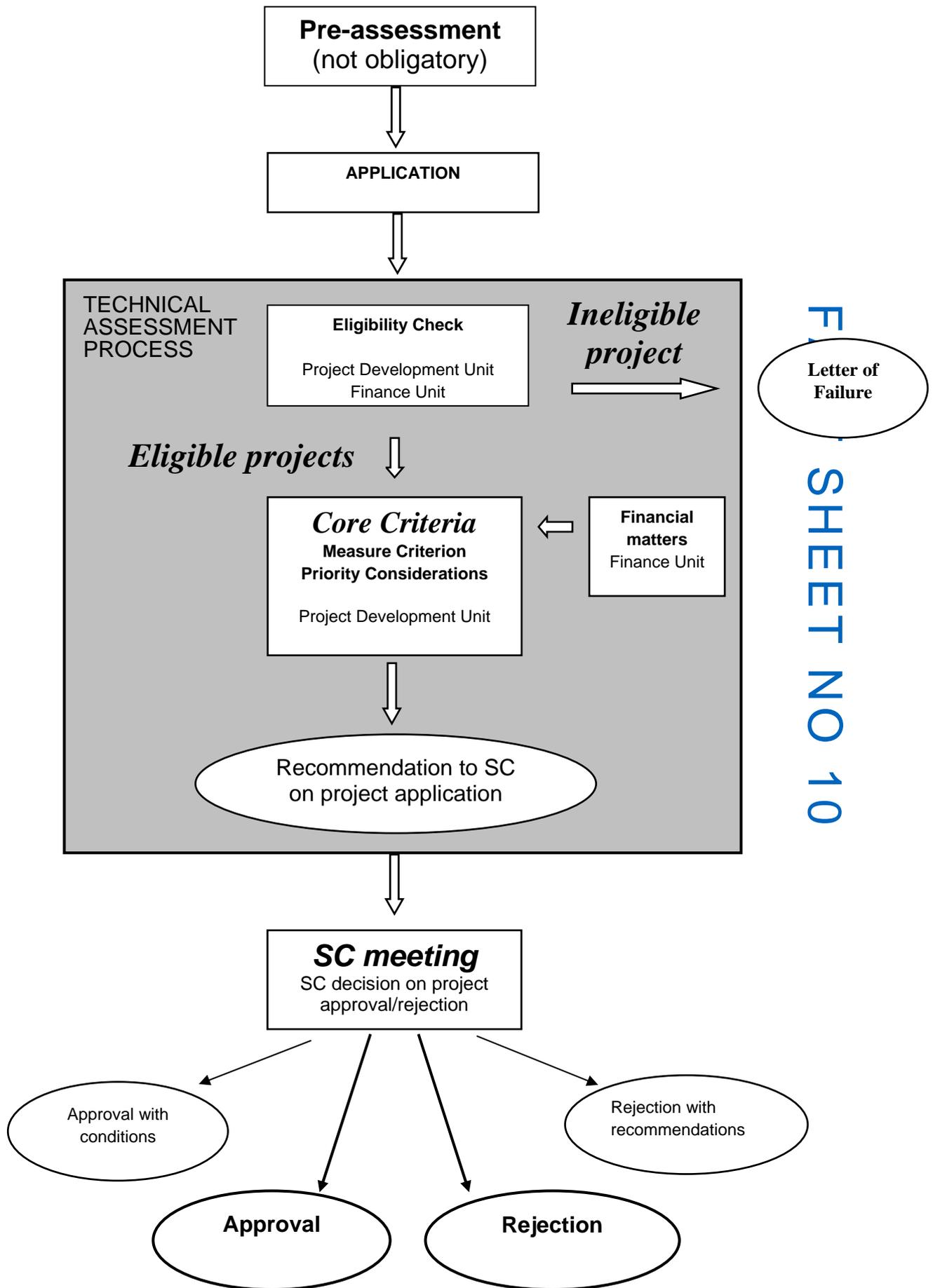
The *Priority Considerations* do not refer to the Priorities and Measures of the programme but to other aspects of a project that are considered valuable. If there are more project applications which pass the eligibility check and comply with all Core Selection Criteria than the programme budget allows for, the Steering Committee can use the Priority Considerations for selecting between project proposals.

Recommendation and decision

A conclusion is reached based on the assessment described above. The technical assessment and application form of each eligible project is sent to the Steering Committee members 3 weeks before the Steering Committee meeting.

The members of the Steering Committee are guided by the secretariat's recommendations but it is the members of the committee themselves who make the final decision on a project. A project may be approved, rejected but invited to reapply, rejected or, in very exceptional cases, approved with minor conditions.

The Lead Partners of the projects considered by the Steering Committee will be informed of the Steering Committee's decision following the meeting.

Pre-assessment
(not obligatory)

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APPLICATION

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TECHNICAL
ASSESSMENT
PROCESS

Eligibility Check

Project Development Unit
Finance Unit

Ineligible project → **Letter of Failure**

Eligible projects ⇓

Core Criteria
Measure Criterion
Priority Considerations

Project Development Unit

⇐ **Financial matters**
Finance Unit

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Recommendation to SC
on project application

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SC meeting
SC decision on project
approval/rejection

Approval with conditions

Approval

Rejection

Rejection with recommendations

FACT SHEET NO 10