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Subject:

**ENTITLEMENT FRAMEWORK SUPPORT: GUIDANCE ON
ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2008/09 SCHOOL YEAR**

Circular Number: DE 2008/12

Date of Issue: 17 June 2008

Target Audience:

- Principals and Boards of Governors (BoG) of all grant-aided post-primary schools and special schools with secondary departments;
- Education and Library Boards (ELBs);
- Further and Higher Education Colleges (F&HE);
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS);
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG);
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE);
- Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (NICIE);
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI); and
- Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team (ESAIT).

Summary of Contents:

This circular, issued by the Department of Education, outlines the development of the Entitlement Framework policy and details the support arrangements to assist schools to make progress towards the delivery of the Entitlement Framework.

Enquiries:

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Governor Awareness: Essential

Status of Contents:

For information and action by schools

Related Documents:

- DE 2005/18 – Entitlement Framework – Initial Guidance
- DE 2006/20 – Entitlement Framework – Further Guidance
- DE 2006/20A – Delivering the Entitlement Framework
- DE 2007/06 - The Education (2006 order) (Commencement No. 1) order (Northern Ireland) 2007
- DE 2007/20 - The Education (2006 order) (Commencement No. 2) order (Northern Ireland) 2007

Expiry Date: N/A

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Introduction

1. This Circular should be read in conjunction with the related documents listed above, in particular DE 2006/20A ;“Delivering the Entitlement Framework”, DE 2007/06 and DE 2007/20.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lorraine Finlay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'L' and 'F'.

Lorraine Finlay

14-19 Team

PART 1 - Entitlement Framework Support - Policy Context

Legislative Position

1. The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (2006 Order) is the statutory basis for the Revised Curriculum and the Entitlement Framework (EF). At Key Stage 4 (KS4), the statutory curriculum requirements have been significantly reduced to give young people more choice and flexibility. The statutory requirements are:

- to develop the cross curricular skills (Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT);
- to develop the other skills, defined as Problem-Solving, Self Management and Working with Others;
- Learning for Life and Work;
- PE; and
- RE, based on the core syllabus specified by DE.

Post primary schools are also required to provide pupils with a broad and balanced education and therefore must provide at least one course related to each area of learning.

2. The EF is the counter-balance to the reduced core curriculum at KS4 and ensures that pupils have more equal access to a broad range of courses, including greater balance between general (academic) and applied (vocational/professional/technical) courses. From September 2013 schools will be required to provide all pupils with access to a minimum number of courses at KS4 (current target 24) and minimum number of courses at post-16 (current target 27). In both cases at least one-third of the courses must be general courses and at least one-third applied courses. The legislation in relation to the specified numbers has not yet been commenced as the Department of Education (DE) has sought to emphasise that it is more important that schools concentrate on the quality and coherence of their offer rather than rush to introduce a particular number of courses. The “numbers” are a means to an end (a broad and balanced offer) rather than an end in themselves.

3. The over arching policy objective of the EF is to guarantee all post primary pupils aged 14 and above greater choice and flexibility by providing them with access to a wide range of learning opportunities suited to their needs, aptitudes and interests, irrespective of where they live or the school they attend. It will:-

- Increase choice from a wider range of general and applied courses to support progression and employment prospect of all pupils.
- Redress issues of access to courses across the geographical and sectoral divides.
- Facilitate the development of courses that match pupil needs and support economic growth.
- Enhance the ability of schools to plan and manage collaborative arrangements for the benefit of all pupils in the local area.
- Build capacity in terms of whole school and area based planning, ensure effective use of resources within a local area partnership/community and avoid duplication in schools and FE Colleges.

Progress to date

4. It is recognised that while some schools will be able to deliver the requirements of the EF, many others will have to work in collaboration with other schools, FE Colleges and other providers to provide their pupils with access to the full range of courses. Over the last 4 years DE and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) have been supporting the development of collaborative arrangements among schools and between schools and FE Colleges and other providers with the principal objective of exploring options for the delivery of the EF. The main programmes of support have been:-

- Vocational Enhancement Programme (VEP) (jointly funded by DE and DEL); and
- School Collaboration Programme (SCP) (funded by DE).

5. In addition DE has provided resources to the ELBS, CCMS, CnaG and NICIE for EF Development Officers (DOs) to support and facilitate schools developing collaborative arrangements, the Regional Training unit (RTU) has received funding to support the Online Learning and Teaching for Educators (OLTE) programme as the quality assurance framework for online courses and one of the most important aims of the Specialist Schools programme has been to link the ongoing reforms and support and extend local collaboration. DEL also made resources available to FE Colleges to explore innovative ways of working with schools to deliver courses which meet the EF specifications.

6. Schools, FE Colleges and other providers have faced many challenges in their endeavour to work together and much work has gone into developing arrangements to

prepare for full implementation of the EF. Significant progress has been made with many more schools now engaged in innovative and creative approaches to collaborative working and this represents a culture change. There are now 31 Area Learning Communities (ALC) established across all ELB areas within which schools, FE Colleges and other providers are working to increase the range of courses for pupils in local areas; all six Regional FE Colleges are delivering a range of professional and technical courses to pupils from all school types; an EF Online Audit which provides schools and ALCs with data on all courses offered by schools has been developed by the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) on behalf of DE and in consultation with the other ELBs, CCMS, CnaG and NICIE; 100% of post primary schools have elected to complete the audit; around 70 teachers are involved in the OLTE programme and a series of pilot projects will be identified to develop models of best practice for on line learning. The progress towards collaborative working clearly demonstrates that there are significant benefits for young people when schools, FE Colleges and other providers work together to maximise the curricular offer in a local area.

Part 2 – EF Support – Guidance on Arrangements for 2008/09

Purchaser/Provider Model

7. Last year DE and DEL indicated that the 2 EF support strands (VEP and SCP) would be merged into one programme and that resources would be allocated directly to schools to facilitate a move to a purchaser/provider model. (Annex A details all guidance issued in relation to the EF and these documents should be read in conjunction with this one). Schools and the wider education sector have highlighted the need to move away from protracted annual application processes to a system whereby schools have a framework within which they can plan for longer periods. There is a significant body of evidence which highlights the issues that affect the delivery of the EF through the VEP and SCP.

Programme Priorities

8. The new EF Support arrangements have taken these issues into account and the priorities of the programme are to:-

- increase the range of level 2 courses at KS4 and level 3 courses at Post 16, with an emphasis on applied courses, to meet the needs and aspirations of young people and to support economic growth;
- support the work of the ALCs to enable schools, both individually and collectively, to determine their own priorities for the delivery of the EF within the local area, taking account of DE guidance and criteria;
- support schools to expand their curricular offer in a manageable and coherent manner ensuring a match between desired progression pathways and the combination of courses chosen by young people;
- support collaboration to avoid duplication of provision and to maximise the impact of expertise and resources for the benefit of young people; and
- remove unnecessary demarcation between providers delivering general and applied courses and the previously protracted application processes.

Influencing Factors

9. All schools receive funding for each pupil in accordance with the LMS Common Funding Formula to secure the curricular provision for their pupils. The new EF Support arrangements provide additional funding and have been developed based on the following assumptions:-

- Schools can deliver the EF through collaborative arrangements or on a stand alone basis;
- Schools will require additional resources to plan for the delivery of an expanded curricular offer delivered within their own school;
- Schools working in collaborative arrangements will incur additional costs in relation to planning, co-ordination, delivery and monitoring of such arrangements;
- Delivery of general courses can be accommodated through
 - Own school
 - Partnership with other school either exporting or importing pupils;
 - Partnership with FE (however it is not envisaged that many general courses will be delivered by FE Colleges as their primary focus is the delivery of applied courses - this will be kept under review with DEL);
- Delivery of applied courses can be accommodated through
 - Own school
 - Partnership with other school either exporting or importing pupils (however it is not envisaged that these will be the professional/technical courses which FE Colleges have the relevant and necessary expertise and equipment to best deliver – this will be kept under review with DEL)
 - Partnership with FE Colleges and other providers;
- There are additional costs incurred by rural schools working in partnership with other schools and FE Colleges particularly in relation to transport.

Components of the Allocation to schools

10. The allocation to schools will comprise 4 separate elements and will be calculated on an individual school basis. The components are:

- i. **EF Online Audit Formula element** - calculated using the verified information from each school contained on the EF Online Audit;
- ii. **Development element** – calculated based on a standard daily teacher substitution cover rate of £150 per day for 20 days in a school year;

- iii. **Collaboration Element** – this will be determined by the Department and directly linked to the available resources. However evidence from the VEP and SCP will influence decisions on the level of funding allocated; and
- iv. **Transition element** – this will be determined by the Department and is currently set at £5000 per school. It will be available only in 2008/09 to enable schools to make the transition to the new arrangements – a key priority for this element is to protect those pupils in years 12 and 14 who in September 2008 are entering the second year of a course previously funded under VEP or SCP.

i. Online Audit Formula Element

11. The EF Online Audit has been developed and refined over the last 3 years and provides a valuable source of information from which this element can be determined for allocation to schools to support the delivery of the EF. The rationale behind this approach is the need to take account of the type of course, the delivery mechanism and the number of pupils involved, all of which are detailed on the Online Audit information. Since February 2008 schools have been given opportunities to input, check and validate this information on the understanding that this will be the basis on which allocations will be determined by DE. Information on the likely costs involved in the delivery of courses has been drawn from the VEP and SCP data bases. Annex B provides details of the basic rates and the weighted factors that will be used to calculate the formula based element of the allocation to schools. This “formula “ approach to funding will be piloted in the 2008/09 year, with a view to allocating in the 09/10 and 10/11 years on broadly the same basis, (though the precise nature of the formula in future years will reflect the experience of the first year of the pilot).

12. This element will be available to all schools and the allocation will be directly linked to the school’s curricular offer, method of delivery and the number of pupils involved. In addition, rural schools will receive a higher weighting, principally to reflect higher transport costs. Allocations will be retrospective in the same way as the Local Management of Schools (LMS) Common Funding Formula is applied. Figures for 2008/09 will be based on the information provided by schools for 2007/08 year.

ii. Development Element

13. Work has been ongoing within schools and ALC to plan for the implementation of the EF and in recognition of this each school will receive a sum based on 20 substitute cover days at a rate of £150 per day totalling £3,000. This will allow schools to consider the range and coherence of their curricular offer and to determine the likely pathways that are accessible to young people registered in the school. This should be done at school and ALC level, based on a rigorous research of courses using the online audit and pupil and parent preferences. It will be a matter for schools to determine the best use of these resources, this is likely to include internal discussions and possibly external liaison with other providers to determine how best to maximise the offer to pupils. The resources may also be used to support the school's role in the ALC.

iii. Collaboration element

14. This element is directly targeted at those schools actively participating within the ALC. It aims to support the ALC concept and ensure that schools take account of the current local provision when planning new provision in order to avoid unnecessary duplication. These resources are a contribution towards all related activities which may include establishing and implementing the management structures of the ALC including systems for strategic planning, quality assurance of provision, co-ordination costs, study visits, research and administrative support. This list is not exhaustive and it will be a matter for the partners within the ALC to agree how best to support the delivery of the targets set in the ALC Action Plan. This will be a fixed amount in 2008/09 of £10,000 per school within the ALC. Each ALC is required to draw up an action plan which identifies the key priorities for the area (see Annex C for suggested template). The focus should be on:-

- Courses to be delivered through collaboration from September 2008;
- Courses planned for delivery through collaboration in 2009; and
- Development of the capacity of the staff within the ALC to understand the implications and impact of the implementation of the EF.

15. A school will be able to access this element when it demonstrates that it has :-

- signed up to the remit/constitution and modus operandi of a named ALC;
- agreed a vision for education within the local area;

- identified priorities for expanding the curricular offer to pupils and agreed a costed action plan (see Annex C for sample action plan);
- an agreed Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the ALC;
- a recorded minute of the Board of Governors meeting which ratifies the remit/constitution of the ALC, SLA, costed action plan and secures agreement to fund the elements specifically identified as being the responsibility of that school; and
- forwarded these minutes to the relevant DOs who will then submit them to DE. Only on receipt of the ALC action plan and ratification minutes for each of the named schools will these resources be released.

iv. Transitional Element

16. This element will be a discretionary amount available only to those schools that have previously received funding under the VEP and SCP programmes. The aim of this element is to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged in this transitional year as we move to the new EF Support Arrangements. In particular schools should ensure that pupils entering the second year of a course previously funded under VEP/SCP are protected and this includes pupils in Special Units in mainstream schools. In addition these resources are intended to support schools as they develop new working practices to work with FE Colleges and other providers under the new purchaser/provider model. Consideration will also be given to those schools entering into collaborative arrangements with FE Colleges and other providers for the first time. Where this is the case schools should highlight this to the DOs who will draw this to the attention of DE.

Special schools

17. Special schools have played a very important part in the developing collaborative arrangements and in VEP. DE wishes to ensure that this work continues and we will work closely with the Special Sector to ensure effective ongoing support. DE recognises that the level 2 and level 3 courses offered under the EF are not always suitable for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and those that are suitable do not meet the requirements of the EF as it is currently described in the DE Circular 2007/23. Work is already underway to determine what is appropriate in relation to SEN pupils however this work will not be completed in time to be included in the 2008/09 arrangements. In order that no pupil is disadvantaged, funding for Special Schools will be directly linked to

the funding they received last year under VEP and SCP and DE will provide an estimate for each Special School for the 2008/09 year.

18. Funding for Special Schools 2009/10 and 2010/2011 will be determined over the coming months and it is the Department's intention to adopt a "formulaic" approach similar to the one described in this circular and based on an appropriate "entitlement" for pupils with SEN.

Monitoring and evaluation:

Online Audit

19. The Minister has indicated that the EF will become mandatory from September 2013 and all schools should now be actively planning to meet this target date. The Online Audit will provide a clear indication as to the progress of schools towards the minimum requirements of 24/27 and DE will monitor closely the position of all schools. All schools will therefore be asked to complete and verify the Online Audit on an annual basis. Schools should ensure that documentary evidence is retained within the school to support the information submitted on the EF Online Audit as these may be required for audit purposes.

20. Schools either on a stand alone basis or collectively within the ALC should review the curricular offer to ensure that the offer is relevant to the needs of the pupils and that the courses offered are being taken up. Consultation with pupils and parents should be an integral part of this process. It is recognised that pupil and parental choice varies over time however where a course is offered and is consistently not taken up by pupils a schools should review the suitability of that course for inclusion in the school's curricular offer.

Role of the ETI

21. Given that the EF is an integral part of the curriculum provision for KS4 and Post 16 DE will ask the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), as part of the school inspection process to comment on the progress towards delivery of the EF and the coherence and quality of the curricular offer in each school. It is not envisaged that this

will be a separate exercise but an ongoing process as we move towards and beyond 2013.

22. DE will consider the evidence from the Online Audit and the qualitative evidence gathered by the ETI to determine how best to support the implementation of the EF. The formula will be kept under review and may be amended to ensure that it supports the EF policy objectives and the wider developments in education.

DE will continue to monitor the performance of pupils in terms of attainment and progression.

Role of the EF DOs

23. The EF DOs have a key role in supporting schools to determine the most appropriate arrangements for delivery of the EF. DE Circular 2006/20A – “Delivering the Entitlement Framework” paragraph 6.1 outlines the role of DO. Broadly they will continue to facilitate and support discussions with other schools, FE Colleges and others, facilitate conferences, seminars and other meetings to share best practice.

24. Since the issue of Circular 2006/20A an EF Regional Forum has been established to:-

- Ensure a consistent and co-ordinated support strategy for the delivery of the EF across Northern Ireland, taking account of the links between the EF and other aspects of the E2S Programme and more generally the wider educational context.
- Support and facilitate schools and other providers in the development of collaborative arrangements.
- Facilitate the sharing of good practice.
- Develop common practices and management tools to enable the consistent and co-ordinated approach to support for the delivery of the EF.
- Advise the Department of Education on matters relating to the effective delivery of support for the implementation of the EF and related matters as required.
- Monitor and report to the Department of Education on progress towards the implementation of the EF on a regular basis.

The EF DOs will provide a link through the EF Regional Forum to DE Officials responsible for the policy in relation to the EF.

25. Partners within the ALC will be responsible for determining the administration and secretariat arrangements required to support the ALC and funding these from the resources provided through the Collaboration Element of the EF Support Arrangements. The DOs will continue to work with the ALCs in an advisory capacity to ensure that the plans are in line with the EF priorities.

DO Role in relation to the EF Support Arrangements Estimates

26. The DOs have detailed knowledge of the local arrangements and are best placed to deal with the initial queries relating to the new EF Support Arrangements. Each school will have access through the EF Online Audit website to an estimate of the EF Online Audit element funding as well as the information submitted and verified by the Principal. Schools should consider their provisional offer of funding alongside this Circular (2008/12) and if there are any issues which schools wish to raise regarding its contents or the application of the Online Audit Formula Element, they should contact the relevant DOs for clarification. Where appropriate, the DO will bring any outstanding issues to the attention of the Department and these will be considered.

Timetable for allocation of resources

Date	Issues to Schools
June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools will receive guidance and estimate of EF Support Allocation • Schools will consider the allocation and highlight any issues to the relevant EF DOs • DE will consider any issues raised by schools
September 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools will receive allocations of elements 1 and 2 • Schools will be required to finalise costed area plans and seek ratification by BOGs
October 2008 (or earlier if all schools in ALC met the eligibility requirements specified in Circular 2008/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of Collaboration element of EF Support Grant to schools in ALC • Allocation of Transitional element

DE Policy Documents

The following circulars have been issued to schools and are also available on the DE website <http://www.deni.gov.uk/index.htm>

- DE 2005/18 – Entitlement Framework – Initial Guidance
- DE 2006/20 – Entitlement Framework – Further Guidance
- DE 2006/20A – Delivering the Entitlement Framework
- DE 2006/24 - Approval of Qualifications, and Guidance on the Classification of Courses
- DE 2007/03 – Entitlement Framework Support – Strand One: Vocational Enhancement Programme
- DE 2007/08 – Entitlement Framework Support – Strand Two – School Collaboration Programme
- DE 2007/06 - The Education (2006 order) (Commencement No. 1) order (Northern Ireland) 2007
- DE 2007/20 - The Education (2006 order) (Commencement No. 2) order (Northern Ireland) 2007
- DE 2007/23 - Approval of Qualifications, and Guidance on the Classification of Courses

EF On Line Audit element – Baseline Formula

DE Circular 2007/23 defines a course at KS4 and Post 16 and these definitions determine the number of guided learning hours that DE will fund. The base rate of the formula was determined on the following assumptions:

- To count for the EF courses have specified guided learning hours
 - Level 2 course at KS4 must normally be at least 160 glh over 2 years; and
 - Level 3 course at Post 16 must normally be at least 320glh over 2 years.
- An average FE hourly rate for a course is £65 based on an average class size of 14 pupils;
- Applied courses are usually practical in nature and should be within the guidelines on Class Size in Practical Subjects.
- Where courses are double or triple award they will attract double or triple the relevant factor (see audit website for details).

Base Rate Formula

KS4 -160glh x £65 / 2 /14= £371.42 Rounded to **£372** per pupil

16 + -320glh x £65 / 2 /14 = £742.85 Rounded to **£743** per pupil

Weighted Factors

Pupil Based Element					
General Courses			Applied Courses		
Delivery	U/R	Factor	Delivery	U/R	Factor
Own school	U	0.00	Own school	U	0.00
	R	0.00		R	0.00
Other school Export	U	0.25	Other school Export	U	0.50
	R	0.30		R	0.60
Host school Import	U	0.125	Host school Import	U	0.25
	R	0.15		R	0.30
FE	U	0.25	FE/TO	U	1.00
	R	0.30		R	1.20
Other – part delivery	U	0	Other – part delivery	U	0.25
	R	0		R	0.30

Monetary value based on weighed factors

Pupil Based Element – KS4 – Baseline figure = £372					
General Courses			Applied Courses		
Delivery	U/R	£	Delivery	U/R	£
Own school	U	0.00	Own school	U	0.00
	R	0.00		R	0.00
Other school Export	U	93.00	Other school Export	U	186.00
	R	112.00		R	223.00
Host school Import	U	47.00	Host school Import	U	93.00
	R	56.00		R	112.00
FE	U	93.00	FE/TO	U	372.00
	R	112.00		R	446.00
Other – part delivery	U	0	Other – part delivery	U	93.00
	R	0		R	112.00

Monetary value based on weighed factors

Pupil Based Element – Post 16 – Baseline Figure - £743					
General Courses			Applied Courses		
Delivery	U/R	£	Delivery	U/R	£
Own school	U	0.00	Own school	U	0.00
	R	0.00		R	0.00
Other school Export	U	186.00	Other school Export	U	372.00
	R	223.00		R	446.00
Host school Import	U	93.00	Host school Import	U	186.00
	R	112.00		R	223.00
FE	U	186.00	FE/TO	U	743.00
	R	223.00		R	892.00
Other – part delivery	U	0	Other – part delivery	U	186.00
	R	0		R	223.00

ACTION PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2008/09 TO 2009/10**Introduction:**

The attached template is intended to guide schools as to the structure of an effective Action Plan. Schools may wish to amend this template to suit their particular needs and circumstances, however it is recommended that the key elements outlined below are retained whatever format is used. This template should be read alongside the accompanying guidance. For further information on target setting, see “School Development Planning”, DE, June 2005.

The most important aspect of drawing up an Action Plan is the setting of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) Targets. These targets should clearly identify the key priorities for the Area Learning Community (ALC) in the 2008 and 2009 academic years. Targets should clearly flow from a baseline audit undertaken by the ALC, for example where gaps in local provision have been identified, and evidence should also demonstrate an assessment of pupil and/or workforce demand.

Particular focus should be given to:-

- Courses to be delivered from September 2008 (specific, named courses with NDAQ ref numbers along with an estimation of pupil numbers);
- Courses planned for delivery in 2009 (as above); and
- Development of the capacity of the staff within the learning community to understand the implications and impact of the implementation of the EF.

Where targets relate directly to the delivery of courses, Section 4 of the template allows schools to plan and cost this provision in more detail.

The monitoring and evaluation section of the action plan should give the outline (but not the detailed substance) of the strategies and procedures put in place over the period of the plan. These strategies should be thorough, inclusive of all the participants, and refer specifically to the targets outlined in the plan. In drawing up monitoring and evaluation strategies for ALC, schools should address and agree the following:

- a.** How will the ALC monitor progress against targets at course and individual levels and evaluate the quality and impact of teaching and learning? If targets are not being met, what remedial action will be taken?
- b.** How are governors involved in monitoring and evaluation?
- c.** What data and other evidence do you need to collect to be able to tell how well targets are being met?
- d.** How will you approach reviewing and developing targets and implementation plans for the second half of the phase?

Section 1: Area Learning Community details

Name:

Partners :
.....
.....
.....
.....

Chair:

e-mail:

tel:

Lead DO(s):

Section 2: Audit

Audit of current position¹	Areas identified for Development

¹ Schools should include reference to the use and analysis of On-line Audit data.

Section 3: Targets and Implementation

SMART Targets ²	Actions to deliver targets	CPD ³	Cost
2008/09			
2009/10			

² Focusing on course delivery and capacity building within ALC (see above)

³ Continuous Professional Development

Section 4: Further details on specific courses to be delivered from September 2008

SMART Target (linked to target in Section 3):.....

School	Course⁴	Year Group	Pupil numbers	Provider	Cost

⁴ Including NDAQ reference.

Section 4 (cntd): Further details on specific courses to be delivered from September 2009

SMART Target (linked to target in Section 3).....

School	Course⁵	Year Group	Estimate of Pupil numbers	Provider	Estimate of Cost

⁵ Including NDAQ reference.

Section 5:

Monitoring and Evaluation: Please outline strategies, paying particular attention to the identification of success criteria and to the issues detailed in the introduction above.

