



GROW
Terms of Reference
March 2007
**Evaluation of the GROW programme and
recommendations for GROW 2**

1. Introduction

On 17 January 2005, the INTERREG IIC West Steering Committee approved the Regional Framework Operation, GROW. It brings together five European regions – the South East of England (UK), Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Noord-Brabant (Netherlands), Malopolska (Poland) and Andalucia (Spain).

All participating regions are experiencing rapid growth, but they share a vision of 'smart growth', in line with sustainable development principles, rather than 'growth at any cost'. Through the three 'pillars' of the project, Green Growth, Business Growth and Inclusive Growth, the partners are supporting 16 projects which will help them to work towards integrated implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas at regional level. The programme terminates on 31 December 2007.

The programme was initiated by SEEDA in collaboration with the South England Regional Assembly and the Environment Agency. The GROW Secretariat is based at SEEDA and is responsible for the day-to-day management and coordination of the GROW programme. Each partner region has a Regional Correspondent who runs the help-desk of its own region.

The GROW partners have expressed their intent to prepare a successor GROW programme, GROW 2, under the forthcoming INTERREG IVC programme. On behalf of the GROW partnership, the South East England region has agreed to arrange a call for tender for an evaluation of the GROW programme, that will provide recommendations for the future GROW 2 programme. Preparation of GROW 2 will formally commence in July 2007 once the results of this evaluation are known.

This evaluation will be accompanied by two other studies, the results of which will be combined with those of this evaluation once all studies/evaluations are completed. The additional studies comprise:

1) A Comparative analysis of Regional Policies/Strategies.

This study aims to identify strategic priorities and sub-themes for GROW 2, by studying the regional strategies and policies in each partner region. The study is coordinated by the region of Malopolska. The results of this study will be made available to the successful contractor of the external evaluation (due to be completed early April 2007).

2) An Evaluation of the sub-projects scoring on the 3P model¹

This study aims to give insight on where each of the 16 sub-projects financed by GROW score on the 3P model. This study will be coordinated by the region of Noord-Brabant.

¹ Please see Annex 1 for explanation of the 3P model.

The final report is due to be completed on 8th of June 2007. The contractor will have access to the raw data from mid-April.

2. Objectives of the Evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation are threefold:

1. To evaluate the results of the 16 GROW sub-projects;
2. To evaluate the management of the GROW programme;
3. To make recommendations for taking forward GROW 2.

More specifically, the evaluation of the management and results of the 16 GROW sub-projects should consider the effectiveness of the programme in meeting its objectives, through the tendering and delivery of 16 sub-projects; the utility of the programme, considering if the programme has had an impact on the social, environmental and economic needs of the regions concerned (3P model²); and whether the programme has undergone an adequate and efficient implementation with regard to the preparation, contracting, and monitoring of the sub projects; promotion and communication activities, and the overall programme level management.

With regard to the third objective, the evaluation should provide a set of recommendations for the preparation of GROW 2. The recommendations should build on the successes of GROW, while proposing ways to strengthen other areas. The recommendations must take into account the new aims and objectives of the INTERREG IVC programme, while supporting relevant regional strategies and policies of the regions concerned (including the possibility of bringing additional region(s) into the partnership).

In summary, the finalised evaluation will provide an account of the results and achievements of the GROW programme, while providing constructive recommendations for a strengthened GROW 2 programme, cementing strategic co-operation between GROW regions.

3. Methodology

A coordinated approach should be adopted, that takes into account the findings that will be coming through from the "Comparative analysis of Regional Policies/Strategies" and of the "Evaluation of subprojects scoring on the 3P model" studies currently underway. A combined approach should in particular be taken with regard to the evaluation of the 16 sub-projects in order to minimise multiple requests to the sub project partners.

The contractor shall propose a mix of methods he/she considers most appropriate to develop the evaluation. The proposed methodology mix shall amongst others, take into consideration desk-based research, interviews with key stakeholders and experts as well as participation in relevant meetings.

The evaluation will be carried out in English across the participating regions but the contractor will need to be prepared to work with non-native English speakers with project leaders and participants from Poland, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands, so language support may sometimes be needed.

² See attachment explaining the 3P model.

4. The Process, expected outputs and timing

The evaluation will be carried out by an independent evaluation company tendered out and contracted by the GROW Secretariat based at SEEDA in the UK. The outcomes of the external evaluation will be presented to the network of Regional Correspondents and the Steering Committee for comments and discussion in preparation of GROW 2.

The evaluation report should include the following key elements:

1. Measure the impact of the GROW programme through the evaluation of the 16 sub projects (In Coordination with the work and findings of the TELOS study on "Evaluation on the sub projects' scoring on the 3P model". See Annex 2 for specifications of this study).
 - Assessment of the results of the sub projects with regard to the programme's objectives and of the aims of the INTERREG IIIC programme.
 - Assessment of the level of innovation within the sub projects (e.g. multiple-measure projects addressing more than one of the three pillars).
 - Evaluation of the strength of partnership working between the project partners e.g. exchange and transfers of good practice and experience; commitment of partners.
2. Evaluate the implementation and coordination of the GROW programme in the 5 participating regions.
 - Evaluation of the effectiveness of the generation/application stage identifying any barriers or difficulties experienced (raising awareness of the GROW programme; outreach to organisations; timing to develop bids; frequency of bidding rounds; support by GROW secretariat and regional correspondents).
 - Evaluation of the project appraisal process (e.g. assessment scoring process).
 - Evaluation of the management and coordination structure (Secretariat, regional correspondents).
 - Evaluation of the tools and systems in place: manuals, guides and in particular the on-line monitoring system.
 - Evaluation of the project contracting, and monitoring procedures, including the bi-annual claim and audit procedures.
 - Evaluation of the programme level management and reporting to the INTERREG IIIC West Joint Technical Secretariat in Lille.
 - Evaluation of the marketing impact and promotion of the programme ("GROW" branding)
 - Evaluation of the effectiveness of communication channels between the GROW secretariat and the regional correspondents; between the GROW secretariat and the project partners; between the regional correspondents and the project partners.
 - Assessment of the skills and experience of the programme staff and of training initiatives taken to develop these.
3. Provide a set of recommendations to inform the preparation of the GROW 2 programme.
 - Draw on the strengths and achievements of GROW to capitalise on these for the future GROW 2 programme. In addition, highlighting areas where lessons have been learnt.
 - Suggest recommendations on implementation and monitoring systems for GROW 2, taking into account the experiences of the implementation of the GROW programme.
 - Consider the institutional framework of the regions concerned and propose a structure of working which takes into account these differences so that maximum impact can be achieved.
 - Assess the wider impact of the GROW programme (e.g. through additional outputs generated, spin-off projects etc) and suggest ways to build on this in the future (such as development of new projects under other EU funding streams, strategic linkages with other Policy networks e.g. the Lisbon network)

Timescale

First working meeting – early April 2007

Second working meeting – early May 2007

Third working meeting – early June 2007

Discussion and presentation of the first draft in Bologna – 20 June 2007

Submission of final report (to include an Executive Summary) – 13 July 2007

It is envisaged to conclude the contract in July 2007.

5. Sources of material (not exhaustive)

- GROW Application Form to INTERREG IIIC
- Materials relating to GROW available on www.grow3c.com (e.g. on-line monitoring system)
- GROW Contracts with the 16 Sub-Projects, detailing planned outputs and finances
- Sub-Project outputs as they are produced
- INTERREG IVC Programming Document as well as other relevant documents, available on www.interreg3c.net
- Regional Economic Strategy available on www.seeda.co.uk (and equivalent regional policy documents in partner regions)
- South East Plan (and similar documents in partner regions).
- Securing the Future – delivering UK sustainable development strategy (March 2005);
- The Integrated Regional Framework 2004: A better quality of life in the South East;
- "Stimulating innovation through the cohesion and environmental policies" Ideas paper containing DG ENV's contribution to the funding priorities for 2007-13.
- Comparative analysis of regional policies/strategies

In addition, the contractor will have access to information and data when deemed necessary for the fulfilment of the tasks described.

6. Selection and award criteria

The contractor must be independent of the administrations responsible for the implementation of the current GROW programme. The expert(s) should have the following qualification profile:

- Proven experience in the evaluation of EU cooperation programmes/projects;
- In depth knowledge of programme/project evaluation methods and tools;
- Experience / understanding of programme/project management;
- Knowledge of policies relevant for the Interregional Cooperation objectives;
- Knowledge of policies relevant to Sustainable Development;
- Very good communication skills. Fluency in English, both spoken and written.
- Previous work experience and knowledge of participating regions

Based on the Terms of Reference, the evaluator's proposal should set out the following issues upon which the proposal will be judged:

- A demonstrated understanding of the scope and purposes of the assignment;
- A realistic methodology and implementation schedule;
- A proposal for suitable expert(s) including CVs;
- Specific inputs (person/days) and availability of expert(s);
- A budget plan broken down into: expertise per unit costs (person/days); general costs (overheads, material) and other costs (e.g. travel and daily subsistence allowance).

Interested contractors are invited to contact the GROW secretariat to discuss the specification in further detail.

The proposal should be submitted in English no later than 10 April at 5.00pm by email to: grow@seeda.co.uk and by post to: Kathy Vuillaume, GROW Secretariat, South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), Cross Lanes, Guildford GU1 1YA, England. Tel: 01483 484 200.
Alternative contact: Alexandra Bolland, Tel: 01483 500 783.

3 Current situation – the Telos approach

The term sustainability covers a broader area than just environmental problems. It also takes increasing prosperity and a growing population into account, as well as a proper division of wealth between the northern and southern hemispheres, both now and in the future.

The historical analysis showed that the term sustainability first needs to be specified and put into operation before possible and desirable technological developments can be assessed.

In the Brundtland report an all-encompassing criterion for sustainability is proposed: the resource capital. Each coming generation must have at least the same amount of resource capital as the previous generation inherited. The capital left not only includes natural resources but also goods produced, etc. This implies that capital produced by man and natural capital are mutually exchangeable and can be valued in the same terms: their use to the quality of living. This is disputable, even if we ignore the complete anthropocentrism of this view of nature as a collection of resources. Besides that, the measurement of natural capital as a sustainability criterion is very problematic from a practical perspective.

Telos, the Brabant Centre for Sustainable Development, is a multidisciplinary organisation that focuses on issues concerning sustainable development. Initiated by the provincial government after a public debate on opportunities and challenges for 'Our common future', four regionally based knowledge institutes and universities joined forces in this new network organisation. In 2001 Telos developed a model to assess regional sustainability that resulted in the first sustainability balance sheet for Noord-Brabant. The results are depicted in figure 2.

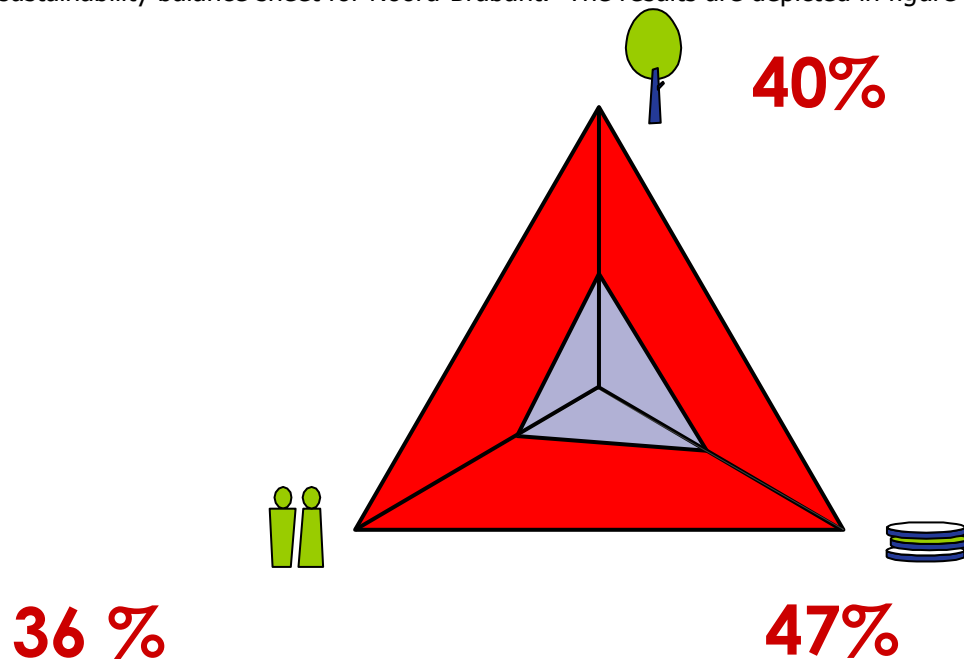


Figure 2 The capital stocks in Noord-Brabant in 2001

The basic assumption within the Telos model is that sustainable development is an integrated, normative and dynamic process concerning an ecological, an economic and a social dimension. Actual and desired values along these three dimensions are expressed by using capitals, stocks and indicators, based on both expert and stakeholder meetings. The sustainability balance sheet is an instrument for monitoring as well as multi-stakeholder communication and development. The sustainability balance sheet was published twice for Noord-Brabant and subsequently in three other Dutch provinces.

Telos defines sustainability as finding the balance between economic capital (the material production of goods and services), social-cultural capital (aspects that play a role in the well being of people) and ecological capital (the whole of living and non-living elements of nature). To assess the sustainability all capitals are divided into stocks and each stock is defined with the help of local stakeholders. These stakeholders set requirements that subsequently can be operationalised and measured by several indicators. Figure 3 shows an example for the ecological capital. For each indicator a value judgement is made stating whether the score is positive (sustainable) or negative (unsustainable). Indicators and stocks are added together using weighing factors.

Ecology	Economy	Social-cultural
Nature and biodiversity	Income	Cultural diversity
Soil	Labour	Health
Water	Capital	Consumption
Air	Natural resources	Education
Minerals	Knowledge	Population
	Infrastructure	Citizenship
	Economical structure	Solidarity
		Living environment

- fine particulate matter
- ozone layer
- greenhouse effect
- smog days
- inconvenience by smell
- inconvenience by noise

Figure 3 The Telos operationalisation of sustainability: the three capitals and the stocks that are considered. For the stock 'Air' is also shown what indicators are measured. [Source: Telos, 2002]

A model of a complex and sometimes vague concept as sustainability is always open for discussion. In the Telos approach a vital part of the method is the participation of stakeholders in setting the agenda on important issues, and the weighing of these issues against each other. One can discuss about whether the right indicators are chosen, whether the indicator score is good or bad, or the weighing factors that are used. But it is a good attempt to clarify and put the concept of sustainability into operation. As so it is a good instrument for further discussion over the state the province of Brabant is in.

Annex 2 Specification for the "Evaluation of sub-projects using the 3P-model"

Evaluate GROW subprojects with the 3P-model

Back ground

The overall objective of GROW is to establish a framework of co-operation, encouraging multinational projects to overcome the challenges of balancing social, environmental and economic constraints to achieve sustainable growth. At the moment an evaluation of GROW takes place on three levels:

- 1) Evaluation of the management and results of GROW.
- 2) Evaluation of the subprojects scoring on the 3p-model.
- 3) Research of regional strategies towards new priorities.

This proposal covers the second element of the total evaluation.

Goal

To give insight on where the individual sub projects score on the 3P-model and finalise it into a report which can be used for dissemination of the GROW results.

Description

GROW has more or less adopted the Telos-triangle and the underlying methodological concepts concerning sustainable development as the bottom-line for the GROW programme. In order to say something about the contribution of each of the subprojects and of the GROW programme as a whole to sustainability it's necessary to get an idea how each of the subprojects 'score' on the 3P-model. Telos therefore will develop an instrument to score the subprojects on the 3P-model. For each of the P's, the corners of the triangle, a number of specific requirements will be defined. The project leaders will indicate whether these requirements are relevant in their projects and whether the project contributes to the fulfilment of these requirements and to what extent.

The instrument exists of a simple (one A4) questionnaire and a guideline to fill it in. It will take the project leaders the maximum of one hour to complete the form.

Telos will analyse the evaluation documents of each subproject and work it out in a report. This report will give insight in the score of the different subprojects on the 3P-model and analyse the contribution of GROW towards sustainable growth.

The regional correspondents have a coordinating role in completing the questionnaires. Lead partners will fill in the document together with the regional correspondents. This gives discussion and helps to formulate the answers. In order to make this process easier and to avoid unnecessary questions about definitions etc. the regional correspondents will be trained by Telos. The project leader will be advised to send the results to the project partners for validation and if possible discuss these results during a project meeting.

Planning

nr	Activity	when	Result
1	Discussion of the proposal with the regional correspondents.	1 th of February (during conference call)	Go/no go decision.
2	Working out of the instrument for ex ante evaluation by Telos	Before 2 March	Questionnaire with guideline
3	Training of the regional correspondents	2 March (meeting in Brabant)	Regional correspondents are trained
4	Fill in the forms by the project leaders and regional correspondents	Before 16 April	16 completed forms
5	Analysis of the forms by Telos with possibility to ask	Before 18 May	Insight of the 16

	questions for clarification.		sub projects score on 3P
6	Writing of a report with the results of the analysis	8 June	Report of the score of GROW on the 3P
7	Presentation and discussion of the results at the steering committee	20 June (Bologna event)	Determined report by steering committee.

Costs

The costs can be divided in two elements:

- development of the evaluation instrument and
- Analysis of the results of the 16 subprojects.

Additional

Additional to this evaluation Telos can analyse 3 subprojects (one of each element) more in depth. Under supervision of Telos the partners in these projects will have a discussion of outputs and results. Telos will finalise this in a report. If there is a need for this additional research, it can be decided at the steering committee in June.