



**EVALUATION OF EAST AYRSHIRE COALFIELD AREA
SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP**

2003

RESEARCH BRIEF FOR CONTRACTORS

August 2003



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Communities Scotland has allocated resources to allow for the independent evaluation of 27 Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs) with designations ending March 2004.

East Ayrshire Coalfield Area Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) therefore wishes to commission an evaluation that examines the impact of SIP programme activities locally, and its performance in relation to contributing to the Scottish Parliament's aims of promoting Social Justice in neighbourhoods experiencing disproportionate levels of poverty and social exclusion.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) programme was established in 1999 and comprises a network of 48 local partnerships. In November 2002, Communities Scotland (CS) issued a document, setting out proposals for updating and revising its monitoring and evaluation arrangements, including the evaluation arrangements for the 27 SIPs with designations ending in 2004. These 27 SIPs, including 14 thematic and 13 area-based SIPs, are to have local evaluations undertaken in 2003. East Ayrshire Coalfield Area SIP is one of the area-based SIPs.
- 1.2 The evaluation addresses fundamental questions about the overall impact and effectiveness of the SIP. It, therefore, provides an assessment of whether the aims of the SIP have been met and the overall costs and benefits. It measures the extent to which each SIP has achieved its stated objectives and targets and whether these were realistic in terms of timescale for delivery and available resources. In particular, each individual evaluation should summarise the performance of the SIP to date, identifying what has worked well and the factors that have contributed to those achievements.
- 1.3 In addition, it informs CS and other funding bodies on whether their investment has been used effectively. Clarity of the SIP's vision, objectives and targets will, therefore, be of critical importance in order to ensure that evaluations are effective.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 SIPs are a key part of the Scottish Parliament's regeneration and social justice agendas. They also make an important contribution to the Parliament's priority of 'Closing the Opportunity Gap'.
- 2.2 They are structured around three main principles – the need to **prevent** further exclusion from happening, the need to **co-ordinate** approaches to tackling existing exclusion, including focusing on the sustainability of initiatives, and the need to look at **innovative** new approaches to regeneration. They are

also designed to have communities at their heart, recognising the key role that communities and their representatives themselves play in the partnership. Another key feature of the partnership approach is that efforts to combat the many inter-linked problems often associated with deprivation and exclusion, such as local unemployment, poor housing, low educational attainment, bad health, crime and other adverse social conditions, can be tackled in a more holistic way. Through working together as a partnership, SIPs will be able to influence the targeting of local mainstream programmes to tackle social exclusion at the local level and to lever in resources from other sources.

- 2.3 The CRS (Community Regeneration Strategy) outlines proposals for the SIPs integrating with Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), where they will continue to play an important role in taking the social justice agenda forward at the local level. As part of this process, CS has been developing a transition framework to inform this integration, and local evaluations will inform transitional arrangements. The evaluations will reflect on what has been achieved locally by SIPs, and inform the implementation of the transition framework for integrating SIPs into the new CPP structure.
- 2.4 The evaluation has been designed to enhance the capacity of SIPs in various ways: as experts on their communities; as users and analysers of evidence; and as commissioners and participants in the evaluation process. The evaluation, therefore, contributes to developing the capacity in SIPs, including developing the skills base, improving information and evidential resources and skills, and supporting effective partnership working. This, in turn, will enhance the capacity of CPPs to achieve their goals.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The evaluation process aims to examine and assess the performance of 14 'thematic' and 13 'area-based' SIP programmes to date, identifying what has worked well and the factors that have contributed to those achievements. The evaluations will be part of a national overview of the SIP programme and also contribute to the evidence base to inform the development of national policy on regeneration and social justice and, more specifically, social inclusion partnership interventions. It is, therefore, important to ensure that individual evaluations are conducted to a consistent and robust standard and against a pre-determined framework..
- 3.2 The evaluation framework will contain a combination of core objectives and SIP specific objectives. This will enable Communities Scotland to take into account the different objectives and targets that SIPs have set themselves. The core objectives include:
 - Gathering evidence on progress and to report on performance in relation to an assessment of:
 - ? output and outcome indicators for example, Core Compulsory Indicators (CCIs), and the impact of wider partnership activities;
 - ? the extent to which each SIP programme has achieved its stated objectives and targets and whether these were realistic in terms of timescale for delivery and available resources;
 - ? achievement outcomes in terms of building partnerships and, in particular, their effectiveness and efficiency;

- ? achievement, and where there are weaknesses and barriers in terms of community involvement and capacity, and voluntary and private sector participation; and
 - ? achievement in terms of value for money and the extent to which SIPs have been able to bend mainstream spend.
- Identifying key lessons from the SIP Programme by examining:
 - ? factors that contribute to what has worked well and where there are difficulties to success and achievement;
 - ? how specific funding streams, for example, the 'Empowering Communities' and 'Misuse of Drugs', have been utilised;
 - ? evidence of project and programme based innovation and approaches that can be drawn upon; and
 - ? key issues still to be addressed and how should these be tackled.

4. Methodology

- 4.1 It is for the contractor to propose a methodology that will best meet the objectives of the evaluation. However, a multi-method approach is envisaged, adopting both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. It should be stressed that different research techniques are not mutually exclusive.

Research Techniques

- 4.2 Literature review and desk-top study of key documents, covering the programme's aims and objectives, partnership working arrangements, strategy development and Annual Reports. Where appropriate, completed evaluation work on the SIP, should also inform the context for the programme. This is crucial in determining local circumstances and the particular strategic and political context in which SIPs were established and have had to operate over the life of the programme.
- 4.3 The baseline data for evaluation will be from 1999. Two types of monitoring data are available: indicators that SIPs have chosen to monitor their progress towards aims and objectives; and core compulsory indicators (CCIs) specified by CS. The former will include previous CCI data, although this should only be considered if it has specific relevance to the SIP's strategic objectives, and is mainly concerned with how changes to groups and areas are a response to programme interventions. It is anticipated that monitoring data from the latest available year will be compared with baseline data in the final evaluations. This allows the direction of change to be identified, proportional changes in indicators to be calculated and helps to establish whether SIP targets have been met (or are progressing in the right direction). The appointed contractor will be expected to provide a clear statement of actual and expected outputs and outcomes. Where annual data are available, it would be helpful if these were presented.
- 4.4 In addition, key indicators for the SIP area should be benchmarked with the same indicators for the local authority area and Scotland as a whole. This data will commonly be available from secondary sources. However, there may be instances where benchmarking data are not available, particularly for indicators that are survey driven.

4.5 It is envisaged that the perceptions and experiences of the Partnership's strategic activities will be elicited through a programme of qualitative research work. This will be a crucial element of the evaluation, as most of the 'core objectives' lend themselves to this approach. Whatever shape or form it takes, encouragement with key groups and stakeholders (and potentially the targeted group) should be as wide ranging as is deemed suitable for the study and, in practical terms, the most efficient way to gather evidence. This should include a representative from every agency or organisation involved in the Partnership, including public, private, voluntary and community representatives. Contact should be made with office bearers of the Coalfield Communities Federation to consider the impact of the SIP at local level. In addition, a series of focus group meetings should be convened with SIP projects to identify the impact programmes have had on the overall SIP Strategy and examples of good practice. It will tackle issues outlined in the core objectives, as above, but should also include issues that focus on the bending of mainstream budgets and the value for money generated by the SIP. Questions on this might include:

- *What has worked well? What factors have contributed to success?*
- *Who have been the main beneficiaries?*
- *Have the original or revised aims and objectives been achieved?*
- *Has the partnership worked together effectively and efficiently?*
- *Has the partnership undertaken activities (or influenced others to) and achieved outcomes that would not have occurred otherwise?*
- *What is actually needed (project work), what is actually taken up, and what users feel about quality?*
- *What has been achieved in terms of community involvement and capacity?*
- *How involved have the voluntary sector and the private sector been in the planning and delivery of the SIP strategy and with what effect?*
- *What has been the impact of additional funding streams that are specific to SIP work, for example, 'Empowering Communities' and 'Drugs Misuse'?*
- *Are there examples of innovative approaches that can be drawn upon?*
- *What are the key issues still to be addressed and how should these be tackled?*
- *What are the implications for the transition arrangements for the SIP?*

4.6 Contractors will also be expected to identify examples of good working practice and to highlight innovative approaches that have been adopted in the SIP area. This will be especially important for providing qualitative research data that informs the SIP 'transition' to Community Planning as planned by the Parliament. The appointed contractor will be expected to provide an overall assessment of future needs of the SIP area based on the quantitative and qualitative data collected and collated in the course of the evaluation.

4.7 Individual project appraisals and or evaluations conducted by the SIP will be a useful source of information. It is anticipated that a supplementary document to the evaluation report will set out the projects, partly or wholly, supported by the SIP and present summary information on project aims and objectives, principle activities, target groups, main activities, project outputs, outcomes and costs. A project activity template will be provided to contractors. Any synergy resulting from projects should be highlighted and the sustainability of these projects should be critically examined. Relevant research data and other SIP documentation will also be made available to the appointed contractor.

4.8 The appointed contactor will be expected to assess the 'value for money' of the SIP and how the SIP has managed to bend the budgets of its constituent partner agencies. A financial audit of funding which tracks programme expenditure and shows the sources of all funding will be required. In addition, some notion of the public expenditure associated with the SIP and the impact of this spend will also be needed. Qualitative research work might usefully elicit partner agency perspectives on how the funding (particularly their own) was used and the expected outcomes. This quite distinct measure could usefully be split into 3 parts, including an assessment of:

- actual 'value for money', in terms of what and how effective resources have been utilised;
- where there has been a bend of mainstream spend, although this could be in both financial and 'other resource' terms; and
- funding from other sources, including project related leverage.

A template for the last two will be provided to the appointed contractor. However, it would be useful if contractors could outline how they would proceed with this assessment in their tender document.

Data Sources

4.9 Contractors will be expected to maximise the use of existing data and to collect primary research data where appropriate. Existing data will be made available to the contractors. It is anticipated that the following data sources will be used as appropriate:

- Review of literature relating to the SIP, in terms of its policy objectives and strategic framework locally, Annual Reports and other key documents, including evaluation work completed previously (this might focus on project delivery and programme activity).
- Data collected for CCIs, as specified by CS in both the previous monitoring framework, and the recently revised list of CCIs. Data will also have been collected and maintained for supplementary indicators specified by the SIP locally, which are part of their internal monitoring systems, and reflect the aims and objectives of the SIP Strategy.
- Information elicited during a programme of qualitative research work that might include, for example, interviews and focus groups with key groups and respondents.
- Summary information from project appraisals and other project case study work that has been completed to date.
- Other relevant research data and documentation held by the SIP and its partners, which includes information collected by the SIP as part of the recent audit of 'Empowering Communities' funding.

5. Target Audience and Outputs

5.1 The outputs for the commission will comprise:

- A first tranche of evidential data.
- An interim/draft report.
- A final evaluation report, comprising the components listed below, although a slightly more detailed template for the report will be provided to the contractor. The contractor should provide the SIP with 3 copies of each output (one unbound), and should be accompanied by a disk containing the text, and an online version (MS Word format). Any graphs are to be presented in MS Excel.
 - ? An Executive Summary.
 - ? A clear statement of the SIP's aims and objectives.
 - ? A clear statement of the activities implemented to tackle the aims and objectives.
 - ? Examination of core indicators, from a baseline year, and benchmarked against Local Authority and Scottish data.
 - ? Examination of the effectiveness of the partnership in relation to its strategic work.
 - ? Examples of good practice and innovative approaches.
 - ? Assessment of value for money.
 - ? Conclusion and recommendations.

6. Professional Conduct and Equal Opportunities

6.1 Contractors are expected to specify the Code of Professional Conduct to which they adhere. This will include acceptable provision regarding contractor's responsibilities towards research participants and equal opportunities. The contractor will also be responsible for ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act (1984) and must agree to abide by any guidelines issued by their profession.

7. Timetable

7.1 It is expected that evaluations will be commissioned by September 2003 and that all evaluations will be completed by December 2003.

The timescale for the project will be:

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| • Appointment of contractors | August 2003 |
| • Draft local evaluation reports | November 2003 |
| • Completed local evaluation reports | December 2003. |

8. Project Management arrangements

8.1 The project will be managed by the Community Planning and Partnership Manager, as representative of East Ayrshire Coalfield Area SIP, supported by

the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, who will be responsible for the day-to-day liaison with the contractor.

8.2 An Advisory Group, comprising representatives from the Partnership, will be established to oversee the project. The role of the Advisory Group will be to assess progress and to provide advice and guidance to the contractors on aspects of the evaluation. It also plays an important role in commenting on early outputs from the study and providing feedback to the contractor. The contractor will be required to attend a minimum of three Advisory Group meetings at key stages of the project, one at the outset, to agree the approach and focus of the work, and one to discuss the contractor's draft report. Membership of the Advisory Group will comprise:

- two representatives of the Implementation Group
- Community Planning and Partnership Manager
- Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
- two representatives of the Coalfield Communities Federation (CCF).

9. Costing

9.1 The tender sum is inclusive of VAT, and should cover liability for all costs, including staff, equipment, travel and subsistence and overheads. Consultants liable for VAT on government-funded projects should indicate this on their proposal. An indicative allocation of £20,000 per SIP has been allocated from Communities Scotland.

10. Contractual Arrangements

10.1 A contract between the SIP and the contractor for the work detailed within this research brief will rest upon an exchange of letters. The first will be in the form of an offer of appointment from the SIP to the contractor, which will be accompanied by Standard Terms and Conditions. Together, these documents will specify SIP contractual terms and conditions. The second will be a letter of agreement from the contractor to the terms and conditions of the contract. A copy of the Standard Terms and Conditions is attached.

11. Tender/Proposal Document

11.1 Prospective contractors are invited to submit detailed costed proposals for the project. Proposal documents should contain and will be evaluated on the following information:

- details of the proposed method;
- critical workplans detailing phasing of programme and key milestones;
- the names and curriculum vitae of the key personnel who would comprise the study team, along with details of any previous work undertaken by the study team which is pertinent to this project;
- a clear specification of the individual responsibilities of each member of the study team as well as the time input of each member, the day rate charged for each individual and total person days on the project;

- a clear specification of the data required to undertake this study and where this will be sourced. If this data is expected to be supplied by the SIP, this should be clearly stated by the contractor in the proposal. Any additional data requests made to the SIP during the research may be subject to a charge;
- a clear specification of any input the contractor expects from the SIP;
- detailed fee costings, which should include and identify separately individual staff costs, fieldwork costs (where appropriate), equipment and materials, secretarial expenses, computing expenses, estimated travelling and subsistence expenses, any other costs or overheads and VAT;
- travel and subsistence expenses should be reimbursed at cost rather than a percentage basis; and
- the names of referees may be requested.

12. Closing Date

- 12.1 Four copies of your tender proposal and one copy on a computer disk must be submitted to the SIP no later than **2pm on Friday 22 August 2003**, following the instructions in the letter which accompanies this brief.
- 12.2 Selection interviews will be held on **29 August 2003** and those consultants short listed will be invited to deliver a 10/15 minute presentation on their proposals.