

**Summary of UK's
ANNUAL PROGRAMME 2008
European Return Fund**

MEMBER STATE: United Kingdom

FUND: European Return Fund

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY: United Kingdom Border
Agency, Criminality & Detention Group

PERIOD COVERED: 2008

1. GENERAL RULES FOR SELECTION OF PROJECTS TO BE FINANCED UNDER THE PROGRAMME

1.1 Apportionment of RF funds

The UK Border Agency, an Agency of the Home Office Department, has established an independent Apportionment Board to advise on the UK's proposed allocation of the European Return Fund (RF) 2008.

The Board is made up of a senior manager of the UK Border Agency who has an overview of the priorities and business of the Agency, along with three independent members. Details of the membership of the Apportionment Board are:

Chair: UK Border Agency Strategic Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Board Members: Representative, UNHCR

Representative, Department of Communities and Local Government

JHA Counsellor, UK Permanent Representation in Brussels, FCO

The Board is presented with proposals for each of the three EU Solidarity Mechanism Funds in which the UK participates, including the Return Fund.

The process whereby each fund is regulated by an EU legislative act and supplemented by European Commission published 'Strategic Guidelines' is outlined to the Board. As part of the procedures laid out in those acts, in particular Article 12 (Partnership) of Council Decision 575/2007/EC, the Board then considers the UK's proposed expenditure as set out in the plans provided in preparation for the Multi-Annual and Annual Programme proposals.

In determining the validity of the proposals through this process, the Board considers whether the plans take into account the *actions* and *priorities* outlined in the Commission and Council documents. Member States are required to ensure each *action* is addressed at some point during each of the two, three-year multi-annual programmes. The Commission also requires that Member States address the priorities *at some point* during the six year lifetime of the fund although Member States are free to specify the sums and the duration of projects. Most funding requires 50% match funding from the Member States. Projects which address the Commission's *priorities* are entitled to up to 75% match funding.

The Apportionment Board met on 15th November 2007, and approved the UK Border Agency proposals for the RF Annual Programme for the year 2008.

1.1.1 UK Annual Programme 2008

The Annual Programme proposed to the UK Border Agency Apportionment Board, plus internal and external splits for 2008, for each objective as specified in Council Decision 575/2007/EC Article 3 (1), is summarised here:

- Objective A: Introduction and improvement of the organisation and implementation of integrated return management: 92% (£5,648,346.81 / €7,102,158.70)
- Objective B: Enhancement of the cooperation between Member States within the framework of integrated return management and its implementation: 1% (£3,000 / €3,772.16)
- Objective C: Promotion of an effective and uniform application of common standards on return in line with policy developments in this field: 0%
- The balance of the fund will finance UK Technical Assistance at 7% (£425,370.19 / €534,855.01)

The UK Border Agency does not propose to allocate RF funds to Objective (c) from Council Decision 575/2007/EC Article 3 (1) during 2008. Instead, it will be addressed during subsequent years of the RF Multi-Annual Programme cycle as outlined above, and referred to the Apportionment Board for consideration with the UK Border Agency's allocation proposals for the future Annual Programme years 2009 and 2010.

1.2 Selection of projects when the Responsible Authority acts as executing body (Internal Allocation – general rules for selection)

As provided by Article 7(3) of the draft Commission Decision laying down rules for the implementation of Council Decision 575/2007/EC, the UK RF Responsible Authority can act an executing body if *“the characteristics of the project leave no other choice for implementation, such as de jure monopoly situations or security reasons. In these cases, the rules concerning the final beneficiary shall apply mutatis mutandis to the responsible authority.”*

Therefore, the Responsible Authority (RA) requires 'internal' project proposals to submit applications for consideration by the independent Apportionment Board outlined in Section 1.1 above. The RA requires the same financial and project information to be provided from internal bidders as for external project proposals (see Section 1.3 below). In addition, internal bidders must justify how they fulfil the condition that they are *de jure* monopoly providers or why the project can only be delivered by the UK Border Agency.

The Apportionment Board then considers all internal applications against the domestic priorities agreed during the high level apportionment process, in addition to whether the criteria for Article 7(3) are met. The Board also advises on whether the use of the funds as proposed in the application submitted, constitutes value for money and provides feedback on any aspects of the application for which they recommend adjustment prior to approval.

1.3 Selection of projects when the Responsible Authority acts as an awarding body (External Allocation – general rules for selection)

The UK has undertaken an external call for tender. The result of this tendering exercise sees the UK acting as a grant awarding body, in accordance with Article 9 of the Commission Decision laying down rules for the implementation of Council Decision 575/2007/EC.

In accordance with Article 9(1) the call for proposals was published in the national press and included (as set out in Article 9(1)):

- (a) the objectives
- (b) the selection criteria
- (c) the arrangements for Community and, if applicable, national financing
- (d) the arrangements and final date for submission of proposals.

To fulfil Article 9(2) and ensure that potential beneficiaries were informed of eligibility rules for expenditure, time limit for implementation and the financial and other information to be kept and communicated, extensive documentary guidance was provided together with the application form. The External Project Application Guidance document, a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document for external projects, and the External Application Budget Toolkit constituted the suite of supporting documentation which the UK RA provided.

Project applications were submitted electronically to the UK Border Agency procurement division, external to the RA, where they were sifted to ensure all key documents were included and whether core criteria had been satisfied.

In accordance with Articles 9(3) and 9(4), a selection panel convened to independently review project bids against specified criteria. Panel members were not drawn from the RA team, but were suitably qualified and briefed on the requirements of the RF regulations and domestic criteria against which the RA required selection to be undertaken. During the selection process, a selection matrix was completed and officially recorded.

Successful and unsuccessful projects were provided with decisions in writing, along with relevant feedback on their application (Articles 9 (5) and 9(6)).

Successful projects were invited to attend a preliminary workshop where the Commission Rules, plus monitoring, audit and evaluation requirements of RF funding were presented in detail. This element was undertaken in accordance with regulations laid down in Article 10.

1.4 The UK Procurement Process

The UK has a strict internal procurement process. This process ensures regularity and value for money as well as an open and transparent process for the tender of any contracts. All procurement is operated by the Commercial Directorate within the UK Border Agency.

2. CHANGES IN THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEMS

Not applicable.

3. ACTIONS TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE PROGRAMME UNDER THE PRIORITIES CHOSEN

3.1 Actions implementing Priority 1: “Support for the development of a strategic approach to return management by Member States.”

As the removal of failed asylum seekers either via enforced return or by a voluntary return programme continues to form one of the highest business priorities, the UK will allocate the largest proportion of funding to projects that support the objectives of Priority 1. Assisted Voluntary Return programmes will play a key role in the delivery of the UK Border Agency strategic objectives and therefore the majority of funding falls to projects supporting this aim within Priority 1. The UK Border Agency has earmarked €6,944,985.31 (90%) for projects that support this priority.

Return management projects must specifically demonstrate how they will add value by their contribution to UK Border Agency strategic targets in the removal of third country nationals with no entitlement for leave to remain within the United Kingdom.

The eligible actions to be carried out as part of the projects which will be externally tendered in the UK are provided for by the list set out in Article 4, paragraph 1 of Council Decision 575/2007/EC. This does not include actions listed under Article 4 (1) (d).

(a) Purpose and scope of the action

(i) Project 1 – Voluntary Assisted Return & Reintegration Programme

The Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP) was previously funded under the European Refugee Fund (Phase II).

(ii) Project 1 – How does the Project work?

VARRP is administered by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in conjunction with the UK Border Agency. VARRP is aimed at those in the asylum system who want to return permanently to their country of origin. It has been in operation since 1999 and is the UK Border Agency’s most successful assisted voluntary return scheme.

Eligibility

The programme is open to those who:

- have an asylum application pending
- have been refused asylum and are appealing against that decision
- have been refused asylum and have exhausted the appeals process
- are in the asylum process and are in long term immigration detention

- fall within any of the above categories and are detained by the UK Border Agency solely in relation to immigration offences, except where the applicant has been assessed by Detention Services as violent and/or may pose a threat to IOM staff
- have been granted time-limited exceptional leave to enter/remain or discretionary leave outside the immigration rules. This falls within the target group as defined in Article 7 (1) (b) and may include for instance a third-country national who is given a time limited period of leave to remain in the UK as their country of origin is not deemed safe to return at the current time, for example as the country of origin is in civil war.
- Where there has been more than one asylum claim, for the purposes of the AVR programmes, the most recent application date will be taken as the asylum application date.

The programme is **not** open to those who:

- are British citizens or European Economic Area (EEA) nationals
- have been granted humanitarian protection, indefinite leave to remain and/or refugee status
- have never sought asylum in the United Kingdom
- have permission to enter or remain in the United Kingdom for non-asylum/humanitarian reasons (e.g. students, spouses, visitors, etc.)
- are short term immigration detainees and have had removal directions set;
- are convicted prisoners subject to deportation orders
- have been convicted of a serious immigration offence
- whose purpose in leaving is to nullify their adverse immigration status in order to re-enter the United Kingdom
- prior to IOM receiving an application, the applicant has received custodial sentences, in the United Kingdom, totalling in excess of 12 months.

In each individual case, applications are received and screened by IOM. In each case the final decision about the suitability of the applicant for VARRP rests with the Assisted Voluntary Return Team situated within the UK Border Agency.

In addition to the above criteria, the majority of individuals who have previously returned under VARRP are excluded from applying a second time following their subsequent return to the United Kingdom. Each application by a previous applicant will be carefully considered, taking all relevant factors into consideration, and the appropriate decision made. Relevant factors may include: a significant change in the country situation; a new basis of asylum claim; a previous application for VARRP as a dependant.

(b) Expected grant recipients

The IOM is the recipient of the grant.

(iii) Project 1 - How the grant is to be administered – as Executing Body or Awarding Body

Awarding Body method

(iv) Project 1 - Expected quantified results and indicators to be used

For the 2008 year of the programme, the UK Border Agency aim to achieve the sustainable return of 3,000 individuals in line with the eligibility status of the individual already detailed.

(v) Project 1 - Visibility of EC Funding

Project managers will be responsible for ensuring the correct reflection of EC funding in project documentation and presentations. They will be expected to fully understand the rules and guidelines regarding visibility and advise project colleagues accordingly. The Responsible Authority will provide guidance as necessary. IOM will be expected to ensure that all information produced about the programme in the UK will clearly illustrate the source and nature of the funding. The EC logo and reference to funding support will be printed on all VARRP information materials and adverts placed in ethnic newspapers in the UK. In outreach meeting presentations, EC funding to this project will always be acknowledged.

(vi) Project 1- Complementarity with similar actions financed by other EC instruments, if appropriate

This project complements and builds upon actions undertaken with the support of the European Refugee Fund II.

(vii) Project 1 - Financial information

Community contribution is 50%; and 50% co-financing.

Every detail with regard to incurred cost will held on record. This will include all details of assistance in the UK and in the respective country of return, not only details of reintegration assistance, but also expenditure incurred while assisting each individual. IOM will provide the UK Border Agency with regular notifications of progress and the financial cost associated with this will be held by them. These will be open to the audit and certification processes employed by the Responsible Authority to ensure eligibility of expenditure and validation of outcomes.

(a) Purpose and scope of the action

(i) Project 2 – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

As a result of the internal call for tender, a bid from within the UK Border Agency aimed at the return of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children was received to fund a 3 year project. This was presented to the Apportionment Board and accepted as a viable project for funding.

(ii) Project 2 – How does the project work?

The purpose of this project is to dismantle and stem an increasing flow of unaccompanied asylum seeking children to the UK, from which a new and sustainable EU child-centred strategy can be built. Family tracing will play a key role in the project

and will offer a valuable opportunity to assess the family's true circumstances and assess the feasibility of return.

The UK Border Agency will enter into contracts with tracing service providers in the targeted countries of the project and will facilitate the provision of resources for handovers in the country of origin. The UK Border Agency will also facilitate the provision of semi-residential and residential places in the targeted countries, including post-tracing services.

(b) Expected grant recipients

UK Border Agency will be the beneficiary of the grant although part of the project will require the UK Border Agency to outsource some functions to a partner organisation. The management of the project will remain with the UK Border Agency.

(iii) Project 2 - How the grant is to be administered – as Executing Body or Awarding Body

The RA will also award a grant under the Executing Method. Due to the sensitivities of this vulnerable group and the need to retain control of who is selected under the programme and subsequently returned, this project can only be run by the UK Border Agency as a *de jure* monopoly as no other organisation will have access to the relevant data or have the authority to remove. External organisations may be employed as a part of the project, for instance to trace family members within the country of origin, but the UK Border Agency will hold sole responsibility for the welfare of the child throughout the process both whilst they are in the UK and establishing without doubt that family have been traced. The UK Border Agency also hold sole authority to take forward the necessary action to reunite the child with the family.

(iv) Project 2 - Expected quantified results and indicators to be used

The following actions will cut across the duration of the lifespan of the project:

- Family tracing
- Provision of handover facilities from Her Majesty's Government care to relatives/care providers/host government in all countries. These are likely to be basic, in the form of a private office at or near the airport where the handover service provider can complete the relevant paperwork.
- Provision of places at residential facilities. These are likely to be children's homes with educational or training facilities, with the option where necessary for the child to remain there on a long-term basis.
- Provision of new operational posts within the UK Border Agency for the project. This will include 6 Senior Executive Officer senior caseworkers for the duration of the project, one within each of the UK Border Agency's geographical regions. They will be tasked with identifying suitable cases for return and will be responsible for operational/caseworking activities in relation to tracing referrals and preparation for removal (all work prior to handing the case over for enforcement).
- Scoping work in Vietnam and China to include establishing options for tracing and residential care.

(v) Project 2 - Visibility of EC Funding

All records detailing expenditure will be retained by the UK Border Agency. These will be available for scrutiny and for audit and certification purposes. The project will be informed that the EC Logo plaque must be erected in their work area and that all communications with external bodies must include the EC logo and clearly state that the project is co-funded from the Return Fund.

(vi) Project 2 - Complementarity with similar actions financed by other EC instruments, if appropriate

Not applicable.

(vii) Project 2 - Financial information

Community contribution is 50%; and 50% co-financing.

All records and accounting systems will be managed and completed by the UK Border Agency project team and held locally for scrutiny, audit and certification purposes. Regular financial toolkits will be submitted to the RA along with progress reports. These will be evaluated by the RA and his team and will form a part of the monitoring visit process.

3.2 Actions implementing Priority 2: “Support for the cooperation between Member States in return management.”

UK Border Agency has earmarked €3772.16 (1%) for projects that encourage closer working between Member States that will enhance the strategic approach to return management across the Community and which the UK Border Agency is funding from internal sources.

Projects that increase the level of joint working between Member States must specifically demonstrate how they will add value by their contribution to the UK Border Agency strategic targets by forging new processes and policies within the Community to remove third country nationals with no entitlement for leave to remain within the United Kingdom.

Any successful projects will need to demonstrate eligibility of their actions in accordance with Article 4 Paragraph 2 of Council Decision 575/2007/EC. This does not include actions listed under Article 4 (2) (a-b), (d-g).

(a) Purpose and scope of the action

(i) Project 3 – Planning and coordinating meetings for joint working with one or more Member States other than under the auspices of FRONTEX.

As a result of the internal call for tender, a bid was received from within the UK Border Agency to fund a 3 year project looking at encouraging greater working with other Member States. The UK Border Agency will look to create preparatory meetings to discuss potential joint working on the return of third country nationals and through this,

the UK and potential Member State partners can look to build new policy and develop joint working initiatives.

(ii) Project 3 – How does the project work?

The UK has previously secured funding from the Preparatory Action Fund to plan and implement joint working on removals with other Member States. That source has now ended and funding for this project was presented to the UK Apportionment Board who approved this as a project to receive a grant from the Return Fund.

The UK will use the grant to hold regular meetings with potential partners to explore ways to work jointly on returns and where agreed, to plan and execute projects on the area of charter flights. The grant will finance the travel, accommodation and hospitality when the UK either chairs the meetings or visits other Member States. The meetings themselves will have a wide remit and will incorporate developing an EU wide approach to the UK policy on charters. The meetings will also act as a conduit to exchange experience and address commonly occurring problems. Cooperating in organising and administering charter flights will also be considered including methods of addressing expenses and recovering associated costs.

(b) Expected grant recipients

The UK Border Agency is the beneficiary of this grant. Projects of this nature require a level of confidentiality in the initial forging of agreements between Member States and the UK for potential joint operations to remove third country nationals.

(iii) Project 3 - How the grant is to be administered – as Executing Body or Awarding Body

The RA will award the grant under the Executing Body method. Policy on the enforced return of third country nationals and the actual enforced removal of third country nationals are and can only be the sole responsibility of the UK Border Agency and as such it holds a *de jure* monopoly in this field

(iv) Project 3 - Expected quantified results and indicators to be used

This is measured by the following:

- Increased cooperation on returns with other Member States, transit and receiving countries through the operation of joint flights for enforced removal of third country nationals.
- Ensure that Member States can cooperate to use charter flight removals effectively.
- Increased understanding of other countries' legal and practical basis for returns.
- Develop an appreciation of other Member States immigration laws to fully understand how these are compatible with those to which are in force within the UK.
- Increased returns for all participating countries (these are to be effected in a safe and timely manner, with full regards to the rights of irregular migrants who are removed and respect for their welfare).

- Identify and build on good practice.
- Identify on areas of mutual concern.
- Develop expertise in this field, both in the administration of removals, their organisation and coordination between participating countries.
- To evaluate ongoing Projects..

(v) Project 3 - Visibility of EC Funding

The project falls below the €100,000 threshold, so no plaque to acknowledge EU funding is required, but the Project will be made aware that all communications with regard to the project to external bodies and other Member States should fully acknowledge that it is co-funded from the Return Fund. The monitoring visits undertaken by the RA and his team will check communications issued to ensure compliance.

(vi) Project 3 - Complementarity with similar actions financed by other EC instruments, if appropriate

Not applicable.

(vii) Project 3 - Financial information

Community contribution is 50%; and 50% co-financing.

All records and accounting systems will be managed and completed by the UK Border Agency project team and held locally for scrutiny, audit and certification purposes. Regular financial toolkits will be submitted to the RA along with progress reports. These will be evaluated by the RA and his team and will form a part of the monitoring visit process.

3.3 Actions implementing Priority 3: “Support for specific innovative (inter)national tools for return management.”

The UK Border Agency has earmarked €157,173.39 (2%) for projects that set up or improve counselling and return information measures, reintegration measures for returnees in the country of return, modes of co-operation with consular and/or immigration services, including training, and measures to gain information on undocumented third-country nationals or stateless persons.

The successful projects demonstrate the eligibility of their actions in accordance with Article 4 Paragraph 2 of Council Decision 575/2007/EC. This does not include actions listed under Article 4 (2)(c) and (e-h).

(a) Purpose and scope of the action

(i) Project 4 – Installation of Video conferencing facilities within the UK Detention Estate

As a result of the internal call for tender, a bid was received from within the UK Border Agency to fund a 3 year project targeting increasing the efficiency of the documentation process for third country nationals being held in the UK Detention Estate. The aim of the

project is the installation of video conferencing facilities within the UK Detention Estate that can link in with UK based Embassies and High Commissions.

(ii) Project 4 – How does the project work?

The UK has an extensive Detention Estate and these Immigration and Removal Centres are located throughout the length and breadth of the country. Third country nationals held within the Detention Estate are often required to attend Embassies or High Commission for travel documentation interviews and these, on the majority of occasions, are based in Greater London. Through the installation of video conference facilities within the Detention Estate, there will be a reduced need to escort third country nationals to Embassies and High Commissions. Interviews will be able to be undertaken from within the Detention Estate and this will speed up the documentation process, not necessitate detained individuals spending time travelling in an escorted vehicle and therefore be more cost effective to the UK Border Agency business. In addition, it is envisaged that this will increase the turnover of those in the Detention Estate, thereby assisting with a greater number of removals.

(b) Expected grant recipients

UK Border Agency will be the beneficiary of this grant agreement.

(iii) Project 4 - How the grant is to be administered – as Executing Body or Awarding Body

The UK Border Agency holds sole responsibility for third country nationals detained within the UK Detention Estate. The organisation to attend a travel documentation interview is arranged by the UK Border Agency in conjunction with the Embassies and High Commissions and the UK Border Agency holds a de jure monopoly in this area. Therefore the grant will be awarded under the Executing method.

(iv) Project 4 - Expected quantified results and indicators to be used

The project will look to install 5 video conferencing facilities across the UK Border Agency Detention Estate in the first year of the project. The impact that this will have includes:

- Speedier issue of travel documentation.
- Reduced security implications as third country nationals will not have to travel to attend the interview.
- Quicker resolution of queries
- Reduction in escorting costs.
- Reduction in stress for the third country national as escorted travel will not be required.
- Reduction in time that third country national is held in detention prior to removal resulting in improved availability of bedspace.

(v) Project 4 - Visibility of EC Funding

The project lead will be made aware that as the value of the grant awarded exceeds €100,000 all communication with external bodies must detail the EC logo and state that the project is funded jointly through the European Return Fund.

(vi) Project 4 - Complementarity with similar actions financed by other EC instruments, if appropriate

Not applicable.

(vii) Project 4 - Financial information

Community contribution is 50%; and 50% co-financing.

All records and accounting systems will be managed and completed by the UK Border Agency project team and held locally for scrutiny, audit and certification purposes and be available to the RA for inspection. Regular financial toolkits will be submitted to the RA along with progress reports. These will be evaluated by the RA and his team and will form a part of the monitoring visit process.

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

4.1 Purpose of the Technical Assistance

As a part of the continuing improvements to the Management and Administration of the European funding in the United Kingdom following the European Commission audits of the European Refugee Fund II (ERF II), a range of Technical Assistance measures have been developed and improved.

The UK will provide thorough Technical Assistance during the start-up of Return Fund projects. It is the Responsible Authority's (RA) opinion that working closely with the projects from the onset will ensure that many problems, misunderstandings and potential risks can be avoided. Not only will this ensure the RA will be forewarned of many of the risks and difficulties experienced by the projects but it will also assist the RA to ensure sound financial and value for money procedures are established by all the projects from the very start of the European Return Fund.

It is the intention of the UK to fully utilise the Technical Assistance allocation as defined in Article 17 of Decision 575/2007/EC to finance the requirements of Articles 27 to 30 of 575/2007/EC.

All projects selected from the open tender competition will be required to attend a preliminary workshop where the key features and requirements of the Return Fund will be outlined. The preliminary workshop will include details about monitoring reporting requirements, data collection on outputs, auditing and evaluation requirements as well as an opportunity for new projects to meet the senior members of the RA team. The preliminary workshop will ensure projects are fully cognisant with the requirements of the Fund. Attendance at this workshop will be compulsory.

Technical Assistance will be regularly provided by the RA through a variety of channels. Paragraph 4.2 details the formal meetings between the RA and the project, both on a 1-to-1 basis as well as in formal workshops. In addition to these formal meetings the RA will operate an informal approach acting as a helpdesk for projects, especially in the earlier stages. It is the RA's intention to provide as much support as possible to the projects to reduce the risks of the projects either failing or, more importantly to ensure that they adhere to all rules and regulations.

4.2 Expected quantifiable results

Technical Assistance will cover the following actions for the 2008 selected projects:

- Preliminary Workshop – both for financial management and for general Return Fund purposes
- Initial Monitoring Visits – frequency to be determined
- Post-monitoring action plans, if required.
- Workshop to assist projects with their interim financial and progress reports
- 2nd Monitoring Visits
- Post-monitoring action plans, if required.
- 2nd Workshop to assist projects with completing their final financial and progress reports.
- A publicising event for the Return Fund detailing how the Fund can benefit projects with regard to return management and how this can be achieved by working in tandem with the UK Border Agency when appropriate. Future events in later years will detail the results of the 2008 projects co-financed by the Return Fund.

The Technical Assistance allocation will also be utilised to ensure the United Kingdom undertakes a formal evaluation and indicator development visits.

In addition the UK's Technical Assistance allocation will fund the auditing of the projects to ensure projects are following sound financial management procedures.

The UK's Technical Assistance allocation will also pay for the staffing costs of the RA team. The RA will focus on both finance and monitoring requirements to ensure that value for money is achieved by projects funded by the Return Fund.

The application form will be designed by the RA to ensure that all successful bidders will be given clear and measurable outcomes and outputs. Technical Assistance will be used to ensure that projects adhere to and conform to these stated aims and objectives.

In addition, bespoke monitor criteria will be set up for each individual project. This will ensure the projects provide the RA with regular monitoring information to ensure the projects are making satisfactory progress and delivering outputs that represent value for money. To ensure projects submit monitoring and evaluation forms at the appropriate time, the Grant Agreements include a clause that states the RA will not release funding until all documentation required by the RA is submitted to the satisfaction of the RA.

With these measures in place, it is envisaged the UK will fully adhere, if not surpass the requirements of Article 49 of Decision 575/2007/EC. This will also ensure the UK conforms to the requirements set out in Article 15 of the Provisions Common to the Four Funds.

The UK Border Agency has appointed an Audit Authority that is shared by the three SOLID funds in which the UK participates. It sits under the Home Office's Audit and Assurance Unit (AAU). It is therefore located outside UK Border Agency and will provide an independent assessment of the projects activities. The UK Border Agency has also appointed a Certifying Authority and as with the Audit Authority, the Certifying Authority is common to the three SOLID funds in which the UK participates. It sits with the UK National Audit Office (NAO), headed by the Comptroller and Auditor General. It is therefore located outside both the UK Border Agency and the UK Home Office. The Certifying Authority sits under the Financial Audit Division. Again all activities undertaken by the Certifying Authority will be financed through the Technical Assistance.

Evaluation of the projects to determine their value for money will be the result of an external tendering process that the three UK Responsible Authorities of the Return Fund, European Integration Fund and the European Refugee Fund III will commission.

4.3 Visibility of EC funding

As defined in the Provisions Common to the Four Funds, the RA will ensure all projects receiving over €0.1m (approximately £0.08m*) will display a permanent plaque detailing the name of the project and timing of EC funding.

All projects will prominently display the EC logo on published reports, journals and any other publication regarding the project co-financed by the Commission as set out in Article 35 of the Commission Decision laying down rules for the implementation of Council Decision 575/2007/EC.

5. DRAFT FINANCING PLAN

Annual Programme – Draft Financial Plan								
Table 2: Overall table								
Member State: UK								
Annual programme concerned: 2008								
Fund: European Return Fund								
<i>(all figures in euro)</i>	Ref Priority	Ref. specific priority (1)	Community Contribution (a)	Public Allocation (b)	Private Allocation (c)	Total (d=a+b+c)	% EC (e= a/d)	Share of total (d/total d)
Action 1: Return Management	Project 1: Voluntary Return & Reintegration Programme	1	6,410,595.77	6,410,595.77	0	12,821,191.54	50%	83%
Action 1: Return Management	Project 2: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	1	534,389.54	534,389.54	0	1,068,779.08	50%	7%
Action 1: Return Management	Project 4: Installation of Video Conferencing in UK Detention Estate	3	157,173.39	157,173.39		314,346.78	50%	2%
Action 2: Cooperation between Member States	Project 3: Planning co-ordinating meetings for joint flights with other Member States	2	3772.16	3772.16	0	7,544.32	50%	1%
Action 3: Promotion of common standards and policy development	No projects allocated against Action 3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technical Assistance	Priorities 1, 2 & 3	1-3	534,855.01	0	0	534,855.01	100%	7%
Other operations	n/a	n/a	0	0	0	0	0%	0%
Total	0	0	7,640,785.87	7,105,930.86	0	14,746,716.73		100%

NB Exchange rate used £0.7953 = €1 taken from European Commission exchange rates 26 August 2008