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Transport Infrastructure Ireland

## TII Publications



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# Project Appraisal Guidelines for National Roads Unit 3.0 - Project Brief

PE-PAG-02012  
October 2016

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Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) is responsible for managing and improving the country's national road and light rail networks.

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<b>Activity:</b>	Planning & Evaluation (PE)
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## 1. Introduction

This PAG Unit provides guidance on the purpose and contents of the Project Brief and outlines where it fits into the appraisal process.

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## 2. Purpose of the Project Brief

The purpose of the Project Brief is to outline the need for the scheme, to set the objectives of the project and to outline relevant performance targets for the project. It considers the existing and likely future problems and reports on the options that have been considered. It also provides a history of the development of the project.

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### 3. The Project Brief and the Planning Process

The Project Brief should be prepared and updated as required at five Phases in the project planning process, namely:

- Phase 0 – Scope and Pre-Appraisal;
- Phase 1 – Concept & Feasibility;
- Phase 2 – Option Selection;
- Phase 3 – Design and Environmental Evaluation; and
- Phase 5 – Enabling and Procurement.

The Project Brief is first prepared at the overall project planning stage (Phase 0 – Scope and Pre-Appraisal), where it forms the basis for project planning initiation.

At each Phase, the Project Brief should be reviewed by the relevant Project Lead, who will check it for clarity and completeness. The Project Brief should be submitted to TII as part of the Project Appraisal Guidelines deliverables for each relevant project Phase as set out in Unit 2.0: Project Appraisal Deliverables.

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## 4. Structure and Content of the Project Brief

The Project Brief should be prepared in accordance with the structure presented below and that set out in the TII Project Brief Report Template provided as an attachment to this PAG Unit. A sample of a TII Project Brief Report is also provided as an attachment to this PAG Unit. Both attachments can be downloaded from the “Downloads” section of the TII Publications website under section PE-PAG-02012\_Unit 3.

The Project Brief should address the following issues:

- Background;
- Need for the scheme;
- Strategic fit and priority;
- Scope, constraints and interfaces;
- Scheme objectives; and
- Functional and operational outcomes.

### 4.1 Background

The background to the project should be outlined including any relevant history to the project. This should include references to relevant documents and their conclusions and recommendations.

In certain circumstances, the case for the project will have been identified as part of a strategy for a defined corridor or geographical area. In such cases, reference to and discussion of the strategy should be provided.

### 4.2 Need for the Scheme

The problems which the project is intended to address should be specified. Relevant documentation, information or data that supports the existence of the need should be briefly outlined. At each Phase of the project planning process a Go/No Go decision is made regarding the viability of the project dependent on the findings. It is therefore important that the scale of the problem is quantified as accurately as possible at each Phase of the project based on the information available. This information is particularly important at the initial Phases of the project as it will ensure that the scale of project options being put forward for assessment are reflective of the scale of the potential benefits. This is particularly important in ensuring a positive economic return on the investment.

A detailed presentation of existing conditions should be provided covering for example, traffic volumes, journey times, journey time reliability, safety, accessibility and key environmental issues.

It is important that the cause of the existing problems is clearly identified in the project brief as focusing on just the problems alone may result in solutions which miss the real underlying causes.

Problems or causes should not be defined in such a way that could be biased towards a specific solution.

Where possible, the discussion of project need should refer to evidence-based analysis of transport requirements and the future deficiencies that the proposed project is intended to address.

### 4.3 Strategic Fit and Priority

The compatibility of the proposed project with existing policies and plans should be set out. Any priority accorded the project in relevant plans and programmes should be noted.

The inclusion of the project in any plans and policies should be referenced. Documents may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- European Policies (e.g. EU TEN-T Policy);
- Government Transport Plans/Policies (e.g. Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021, National Planning Framework, Smarter Travel, Road Safety);
- Regional Planning Guidelines;
- County Development Plans; and
- Local Area Plans.

### 4.4 Scope, Constraints and Interfaces

The geographical scope of the project should be identified. Any significant, known, physical, environmental or engineering constraints or assumptions should be noted. The intended interface of the project with other existing or planned transport projects should be set out, along with any dependency on other projects or initiatives.

### 4.5 Scheme Objectives

National transport planning is focused on improving transport systems through a Common Appraisal Framework based on six criteria:

- Economy;
- Safety;
- Environment;
- Accessibility and Social Inclusion;
- Integration; and
- Physical Activity (where applicable).

The Project Brief should establish the objectives for the project in the context of these criteria.

An objective is the explicit intended result of a particular programme or project, measured as precisely as possible. An objective may be classed as either a qualitative or quantitative objective, depending on the nature of the appraisal criteria. Regardless of this classification, objectives should be clearly set out and defined.

For example there may be a need to reduce congestion on a section of road. To state the objective of works on that road as being “to reduce average journey times” would be unsatisfactory since it would not provide a basis for judging whether investment proposed to improve the roads has been effective.



Something more explicit is needed. "To reduce average journey times between Town A and Town B by X minutes" is a more precise objective. It should be noted that the degree to which the objectives can be specified will increase as the project progresses. Using the earlier example, once the preferred option has been determined, it may only then be possible to set a quantifiable journey time reduction target.

Project objectives should be expressed in terms of the benefits they are expected to provide and those whom they are intended to benefit. For example, the construction of a new road is not an end in itself; it must be seen in the light of the needs of the economy as a whole, and of the target groups for which the project caters (for example, freight traffic, tourist traffic, commuters etc.). .

#### **4.5.1 Economy**

The existing road may be inefficient or ineffective in terms of its use or maintenance costs. In terms of use, the road may, for example, have restricted capacity, operating speeds, or surface quality. Indeed the objective may be to provide a new transport corridor where none currently exists. The project may also be aimed at securing wider economic benefits such as inward investment or urban regeneration. The Project Brief should identify the objectives set for the project in terms of these or other relevant factors.

#### **4.5.2 Safety**

The existing road may have features that are giving rise to poor safety outcomes and the objective of the project may be to redress these features. If the route section has been identified as a high collision location by TII or in EuroRAP publications, this should be noted.

#### **4.5.3 Environment**

The existing road may have negative environmental impacts along one or more dimensions and the objective is to mitigate these environmental impacts. These are: air quality; noise; landscape impact and visual intrusion; land use; biodiversity; cultural heritage/archaeology, and water resources.

#### **4.5.4 Accessibility and Social Inclusion**

Current road systems may be providing poor access to people in remote areas or to deprived communities and the proposed project may help in remedying this.

#### **4.5.5 Integration**

There may be need to better integrate the road with the rest of the road network or cross border road networks in terms of consistent quality or layout. Similarly, there may be a need to integrate the road network more fully with other transport modes e.g. with the rail mode, or to create cycling or walking facilities. Integration with existing land use / planning policies may also be an objective.

#### **4.5.6 Physical Activity (where applicable)**

The health benefits derived from the different transport modes may be included as a scheme objective where appropriate. Where cycling and walking facilities are included in the scheme, the potential increase in physical activity can reduce short-term sick leave, which in turn can increase productivity in the economy.

## 5. Function and Operational Outcomes

Reference to any design or other standards to which the finished project is expected to adhere to should be outlined in this section. Measurable performance targets which the scheme can be assessed against should be indicated e.g. with regard to the level of service to be attained, overtaking opportunities or a reduction in road collisions to more acceptable norms.

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