



an roinn fiontar, trádála agus fostaíochta
department of enterprise, trade and employment



IRELAND

EQUAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE 2000-2006

Annual Implementation Report 2006



esf: helping develop employment by promoting
employability, the business spirit and
equal opportunities and
investing in human resources

PREFACE TO THE SIXTH ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2006

Under Article 37 of EU Regulation 1260/99, the EQUAL MANAGING AUTHORITY is obliged to produce an Annual Implementation Report on the EQUAL CIP implementation in the previous year for submission to the Commission before the end of June each year. The format and content of the Plan is largely in accordance with a template devised by the EU Commission in order to ensure standard presentation among the Member States.

This Report has been approved by the EQUAL Monitoring Committee.

This annual implementation report includes information on:

- *Recent socio/economic developments concerning EQUAL*
- *Progress on the implementation of the Programme*
- *Financial implementation and data*
- *Aspects of implementation – quality and effectiveness*
- *Mainstreaming Strategy and developments*
- *Technical assistance activities*
- *Compatibility with Community policies*
- *Coordination with all other Structural Assistance*
- *North/South Developments*
- *Contribution to the European Employment Strategy and National Employment Action Plan*

The present text is submitted to the Commission in accordance with the information requirements for 2006.

**MANAGING AUTHORITY,
EQUAL Community Initiative
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Dublin 2**

June 2007

EQUAL CCI No. 2000IE050PC001

Decision Reference and Date: C(2001)588 22 May 2001

Subsequent Amending Decision C (2005) 1235 Dated 14 April 2005

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INTRODUCTION

The Annual Implementation Report

This Sixth Annual implementation Report covers the implementation of the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme (CIP) in the year 2006. The Report should provide the Commission with a full understanding of implementation issues and key factors affecting Programme performance. It provides the Monitoring Committee with the opportunity to take annual stock of the programme. It also provides the necessary information to facilitate an effective discussion between the MANAGING AUTHORITY and the Commission during the annual review. The Annual Implementation Report is also required by the Commission to make interim payments.

Approval of the Monitoring Committee

The MANAGING AUTHORITY is responsible for producing the Annual Implementation Report. However, it must be approved by the Monitoring Committee before it is sent to the Commission. This is an important stage in engaging with the Monitoring Committee as a partner in the ongoing management and development of the EQUAL CIP.

Requirements & Procedures

Regulation 1260/99 requires that MANAGING AUTHORITIES submit an Implementation Report on Operational Programmes to the Commission "within six months of the end of each full calendar year of implementation" (Article 37,1). The deadline for submission of the Sixth Annual Implementation Report in this case is 30 June 2007.

The Commission has two months to respond on receipt of the Report. It must decide firstly whether the report is satisfactory. If it feels that it is unsatisfactory, it must inform the Member State within two months. If the Commission does not reply within this time, the Report is deemed to be accepted. Reports are judged in terms of their coverage of standard issues and additional points agreed bilaterally in the framework of the partnership with the Commission and on whether they allow for a full understanding of implementation issues and key factors affecting programme performance.

The Annual Review Process

According to Article 32.3 of Regulation 1260/1999, the degree to which the National Authorities have acted upon Commission recommendations within the specified time period (or have communicated the reasons why no measures have been taken), where those recommendations are intended to remedy serious shortcomings in the monitoring or management system which undermine proper financial management of the programme, is one of the conditions upon which interim payments shall be made by the Commission.

1. EQUAL OVERVIEW AND ANY CHANGES IN GENERAL CONDITIONS OF RELEVANCE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSISTANCE

1.1 Overview

Objective of EQUAL

EQUAL seeks to identify and address fundamental forms of discrimination and inequality in the labour market through the development of new and innovative policies and practices initiated by EQUAL Development Partnerships

A total of 21 EQUAL Development Partnerships (DPs) have been funded under Round 1 and a total of 22 EQUAL Development Partnerships (DPs) are currently being funded under Round 2 of the EU EQUAL Community Initiative (www.equal-ci.ie) in Ireland. Round 1 was launched in 2001 and Round 2 was launched in 2004. The Initiative is part-funded through the ESF (€34.49 million¹) and seeks to identify and address fundamental forms of discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market through the development of innovative policies and practices piloted by the EQUAL Development Partnerships. EQUAL Round 1 commenced in November 2001 and was completed by mid-2005. Round 2 of EQUAL commenced on 1st January 2005, following the application and selection process, and is due to finish by end-2007.

The rationale for the EQUAL Programme and the activities of the EQUAL Development Partnerships is strong on a number of fronts including the development, through EQUAL, of holistic pilot programmes and delivery mechanisms that do not exist in mainstream programmes and that respond objectively to the individual's comprehensive needs and the broader equality agenda. The workplace of the future will be characterised by increased levels of diversity. Lifelong learning and the accommodation of diversity have emerged as the dominant themes in the work of a significant number of existing Development Partnerships and networks.

EQUAL will also continue to intersect with the European Union's integrated strategy to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Focusing on the labour market, EQUAL will continue to form part of that strategy and will support efforts to tackle discrimination on all of these grounds.

The opportunities for local and national policymakers to establish linkages between the activities of the EQUAL Development Partnerships and mainstream labour market, educational and training measures is being developed in Ireland in a more strategic way under EQUAL. The constituent organisations within the EQUAL DPs include the social partners, State and semi-State bodies,

¹ Includes indexation amounts

Government Departments and organisations from the community and voluntary sector all working together on common objectives. Therefore, the potential to impact and/or influence policy and practice is strong.

Particular attention has been given to dissemination, networking and mainstreaming on the part of individual projects, the national thematic networks and the Mainstreaming Policy Group (established in May 2002). For example, a Mainstreaming matrix has been developed to assist DPs to maximise their Mainstream potential and it enables the DPs to approach the process of mainstreaming in a systematic way. Another development involved the setting up of a subgroup of the Mainstreaming Policy Group (chaired by the Equality Authority) to discuss the key learning from EQUAL and to draft a proposal for submission to the ESF Unit for consideration in the identification of priorities for the next round of ESF funding 2007 to 2013. These and other developments are discussed further in later chapters of this Annual Implementation Report.

Relevant developments in the socio and economic environment

Labour Force Growth

Ireland's economic progress in the years since 2001 has followed a pattern of steady, moderate growth. In 2006 Ireland's economy demonstrated continued improvement achieving growth at the rates of 6% (GDP) and 7.4% (GNP). While this is lower than the average rates of 10% achieved in the closing years of the last millennium, it still represents a strong performance relative to the performance of the EU economy as a whole

The labour force continues to grow strongly, growing by 4% in the 12 months to the end of the 2006. Growth in employment is also strong with an increase of 4.3% recorded for the year. There was a small decrease in the number unemployed as the rate of unemployment decreased slightly to 4.1% while the rate of long-term unemployment dropped slightly to 1.3%. Both rates remain low in absolute terms and when compared to the EU average.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (Annual Average) ²						
Year:	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Rate:	3.9%	4.4%	4.6%	4.4%	4.4%	4.1%

² Source: *Seasonally Adjusted Standardised Unemployment Rates(SUR)* – CSO (www.cso.ie)

Future economic prospects

Given that Ireland has continued to experience economic growth despite the global economic downturn of the 2001-2003 period, it is well placed to react to any improvement in global circumstances. For 2007, the Department of Finance predicts an economic growth rate of 5%³. The independent research body, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) is predicting growth for 2007 at the rates of 5.4% (GNP) and 5% (GDP)⁴.

The Irish labour market in 2006

Labour Force Growth

The labour force grew by 82,900 to 2,154,800 in the year to the fourth quarter 2006 – an increase of (4%). Over the same period the female participation rate rose from 52.1% to 53% while that for males increased from 72.5% to 73.1%.(QHNS , Q4, 2006)

Unemployment

There were 88,500 persons unemployed in the fourth quarter of 2006, a decrease of 2,600 in the year. The number of persons in short-term unemployment decreased by 2,100 to 61,400 while the long-term unemployed decreased by 500 to 27,100. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased over the quarter to 4.1% compared with 4.4% in the same quarter of 2005.

LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED						
Year:	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Rate:	1.25%	1.25	1.4%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%

Employment

In the year to the fourth quarter of 2006 the number of men in employment increased by 46,100 (4.4%) while the number of females in employment

³ Source: *Department of Finance, Monthly Economic Bulletin April 2007*

⁴ Source: *Quarterly Economic Commentary, Spring 2006, ESRI – (www.esri.ie)*

increased by 37,100 (4.7%). The increase in full-time employment (+77,200) accounted for ninety percent of the overall annual increase in employment while it is estimated that foreign nationals accounted for almost 52% or 44,000 of the annual increase. There were 2,068,500 persons in employment in the fourth quarter of 2006, an increase of 85,500 in the year.

Sectoral Employment

Employment in the *Construction* (+28,400) and *Financial and other business services* (+15,000) sectors grew strongly in the year to the fourth quarter of 2006. *The Health* (+18,700) and *Education* (+11,700) sectors also continued to grow strongly..

The largest occupational increases were evident in Personal and protective service (+17,800), Professional (+23,800), Craft and Related (+12,800). The only decline being in Managers and administrators (-3,000) and *Plant and Machine Operators* (-1,700)

Full-Time and Part-Time Employment

In the year to the fourth quarter of 2006, the numbers engaged in full-time employment increased by 77,200 to 1,717,000. This annual increase comprises 32,800 females and 44,300 males.

The number of persons in part-time employment increased by 8,300 in the year to the fourth quarter of 2006, whilst the numbers in self-employment increased by 12,100.

Regional Comparisons

In the year to the fourth quarter of 2006, employment grew by 24,800 (4.9%) in the BMW region, and by 60,700 (4.1%) in the SAE region. An annual decrease in unemployment occurred in the SAE Region (1,900) while a decrease of 600 was recorded for the BMW region.

At NUTS 3 level employment grew in all regions with the South-East (+7.5%) and the border +(6.6%) showing the highest growth rates over the year. There was an annual increase of 24,000 (+4.1%) in the numbers in employment in the Dublin region.

The Labour Force Status of Non-Irish Nationals

Estimates of the labour force status of Non-Irish nationals produced by the Central Statistics Office show that there was an estimated 301,100 foreign nationals aged 15 years of age or over in the State in the last quarter of 2006. Of these, 215,500 were in employment while 14,300 were unemployed. The number

of persons from the new EU Accession states in the labour force was 93,600 in the fourth quarter of 2006. The number of Non-Irish nationals in the labour force from outside the EU rose from 51,500 to 69,300 over the year.

In the fourth quarter of 2006 Non-Irish nationals accounted for just over 10% of all persons aged 15 years and over in employment. Just over 28% of workers in the Hotels and restaurants, 13.4% of the Construction and 12.1% of the other production industries sectors were foreign nationals.

Trends and issues in Employment and Unemployment, 2006

A number of emerging trends and issues have been identified as follows:

Employment rates in Ireland at the end of 2006 were:

- total employment 68.7%;
- female workers 59.6%;
- older workers 52.2%.

The Lisbon employment rate targets for 2010 are 70%, 60% and 50% respectively. It is anticipated by the EU Commission that Ireland will reach all targets on time.

- The unemployment rate remains low at 4.1%; the long-term unemployment rate is also low at 1.3%.
- Female employment increased at a higher rate than male employment (+4.6% versus +4.3% respectively). Part of this increase is due to the rise in the number of married women participating in the labour force from 15,400 to 437,000.
- Non-Irish nationals in employment amounted to 10%, an increase of nearly 2% on the previous year.
- Labour/skill shortages continued to be experienced in all sectors, particularly construction and services

Ireland's National Reform Programme (NRP) 2005-2008 brings together a broad range of policies and initiatives, the implementation of which aims to sustain strong economic growth and employment performance as its overall contribution to the re-launched Lisbon Agenda over the period to 2008. In order to ensure that labour market policy contributes to making the economy more knowledge based and innovation-driven, Ireland will focus in particular on two major challenges:

- Ensuring an adequate supply of labour to meet the needs of the economy and to sustain economic growth. Labour will be supplied through a number of sources including: the underlying population increase; increased participation by the unemployed and those outside the labour force and migration.
- Maintaining a strong focus on education and training, including lifelong learning, to ensure the development of a high skilled, adaptable workforce.

1.2 Implications

Ireland continues to have a thriving economy with an expanding labour force and, in that regard, the macro-economic issues of primary importance to EQUAL such as potential shortage of labour supply and a tightening labour market validate the appropriateness of the overall strategy adopted by the Irish authorities when drafting the Community Initiative Programme (CIP) in 2000. The following overarching policy objectives for the labour market are in accordance with that strategy:

- To promote employment growth and employment for all who seek it;
- To mobilise labour supply, including through increased female participation, equal opportunities and a balanced increase in immigration;
- To enhance labour quality through education, training and lifelong learning by making education and training available outside of the formal systems and encouraging people to continuously add to their skills,
- To promote economic and social inclusion and eliminate long-term unemployment;
- The targeting of policies to the needs of those most distant from the labour market and those who suffer severe disadvantages in keeping or holding a job in the open labour market remains a priority;
- The adoption of family friendly practices.

1.3 Issues relating to National co-financing of the Structural Funds Assistance

The Financial Control and the Internal Audit Units at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment conducted an exhaustive audit of EQUAL

that began in 2005 and ran into 2006. The outcome was positive and some detail in that regard is provided below:

Round 1 Closure

Financial management issues, almost exclusively related to record keeping, were identified in relation to three projects; however, the issues in question are being addressed and, at time of writing, it is likely that they will be substantially resolved. It is expected that the reports of this audit will be forwarded to the European Commission by the Audit Authorities very shortly.

Article 4 Checks on Round 1 and Round 2 Projects

Visits to projects under EU Regulation 438/2001 – on site monitoring/control preliminary checks - have continued. At 22 March 2007 all Round 2 projects, with one exception, have received at least two visits each.

Financial Monitoring Returns – Round 2 Projects 2006 Expenditure Returns

The latest monitoring returns indicate a total spend of €8.92m for 2006 (full year) of which the ESF provided €5.92m or 66.4%. Public match funding accounted for €2.33m or 26.1% of total spend and Private match funding accounted for €0.67m or 7.5% of total spend.

Up to 30 September 2006, the largest cost category across the 22 projects was Administration at €3.35m or 37.6% of Total Expenditure (a reduction from 42.8% at the time of the last report). This percentage continues to fall as projects more fully engage in other core areas of activity such as training, participants' costs, transnational and mainstreaming/dissemination.

Expenditure continues to be highest in the Employability Pillar at €3.45m (9 projects) although Adaptability follows closely at €3.33m (6 projects). Expenditure also continues to be lowest under the Asylum Seeker pillar (€0.41m – 2 projects).

Under-spends to date

In 2006 the Managing Authority notified the Commission of transfers between Pillars (based on predicted underspends at that time). These transfers were based on the best estimates of project and pillar-based capacity to spend over the life of EQUAL. This request is still under review with the Commission and a decision is due in the very near future

The National Support Structure (NSS) continued to work closely with projects to identify capacities for further expenditure. Where such capacities were identified and where projects made written requests, and these were recommended by the NSS, the Managing Authority has approved, or is in the process of approving, specific additional allocations. The total ESF approved allocation to the 22 Round 2 projects is now €17,108,876 which is divided into annual allocations as follows:

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2005	€3,921,388
2006	€6,791,823
2007	€6,395,665

The Managing Authority and the NSS are continuing to monitor projects closely and to work with projects in actively managing their ESF allocations.

2.1 Programme Complement

The Programme Complement was prepared by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment as Managing Authority for the EQUAL CIP in accordance with Article 15 (6) and 18 (3) of EU Council Regulation 1260/1999 laying down general provisions on EU Structural Funds.

It details the implementation, assistance strategy and priorities established in the framework of discussions and negotiations between Ireland and the Commission in the drafting of the CIP.

The role of the Programme Complement is essentially to:

- Amplify and detail the contents of the CIP;
- Stress the prime responsibility of the Monitoring Committee in the new funding period;
- Initiate the flow of payments;
- Provide a basis for necessary ongoing modifications.

The Programme Complement for EQUAL was approved by the Monitoring Committee at its meeting of 31 May 2001 and subsequently submitted to the Commission with minor amendments for its information on 12 July 2001. It contains details on a measure-by-measure basis and for each year of the ESF co-financed contribution including total eligible cost, total public cost and private eligible cost and revenue.

The ESF funds the programme up to a maximum intervention rate of 75% each year with the exception of technical assistance, which is co-funded at 50%.

2.1.1 Amendments to Programme Complement

It was decided in November 2006 that approval would be sought from the Monitoring Committee by written procedure in respect of a proposed revised Financial Plan. The Monitoring Committee agreed to the modified Financial Plan.

A formal notification was issued to the European Commission in December 2006 with regard to the modification of the Financial Plan published in the Commission Decision C (2005) 1235 of April 2005 amending decision C (2001) 588. This request is still under review with the Commission and a decision is due in the very near future.

An increase of ESF funding was proposed under the Employability and Equal Opportunities pillars by €300,000 in light of the forecast overspend beyond 2% of original financial allocations in each pillar and a decrease in ESF funding under

the Entrepreneurship and Adaptability pillars by €300,000 in light of the forecast under spend in each of these areas was also proposed

The amended table below indicates the new overall Priority proportions as follows:

EMPLOYABILITY	38%
ENTREPRENEURSHIP	9%
ADAPTABILITY	27%
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	13%
ASYLUM SEEKERS	5%

Accordingly, the revised Financial Table for the years 2001-2006 is presented as follows

APPENDIX

Financial Table for Operational Programme by priority and by year

Commission Reference No Operational Programme : SG (2001) D/288704

Member State: IRELAND

Title: Community Initiative EQUAL - IRELAND

Meuro

Priority/Year	Total Eligible Cost (+2+9+10) 1	Total Public Elig. Cost (3+4) 2	ESF partic. 3	Total (5+6+7) 4	National public participation			Other (to be specified) 8	Private Elig. Cost (est.) 9	Revenue (est.) 10	
					Central 5	Regional 6	Local 7				
Priority 1 Employability	17.645589	16.763309	13.234192	3.529117	3.529117	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.882280	0.000	38%
2001	3.120000	2.964000	2.340000	0.624000	0.624000				0.156000		
2002	3.441600	3.269520	2.581200	0.688320	0.688320				0.172080		
2003	3.417600	3.246720	2.563200	0.683520	0.683520				0.170880		
2004	2.336112	2.219306	1.752084	0.467222	0.467222				0.116806		
2005	2.430886	2.309342	1.823165	0.486177	0.486177				0.121544		
2006	2.899391	2.754421	2.174543	0.579878	0.579878				0.144970		
Priority 2 Entrepreneurship	4.199821	3.989830	3.149865	0.839965	0.839965	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.209991	0.000	9%
2001	0.693334	0.658667	0.520000	0.138667	0.138667				0.034667		
2002	0.764800	0.726560	0.573600	0.152960	0.152960				0.038240		
2003	0.759466	0.721493	0.569600	0.151893	0.151893				0.037973		
2004	0.773003	0.734353	0.579752	0.154601	0.154601				0.038650		
2005	0.797264	0.757401	0.597948	0.159453	0.159453				0.039863		
2006	0.411954	0.391356	0.308965	0.082391	0.082391				0.020598		

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Priority 3 Adaptability	12.253238	11.640577	9.189930	2.450647	2.450647	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.612661	0.000	27%
2001	1.386665	1.317332	1.040000	0.277332	0.277332				0.069333		
2002	1.529600	1.453120	1.147200	0.305920	0.305920				0.076480		
2003	1.518934	1.442987	1.139200	0.303787	0.303787				0.075947		
2004	2.688405	2.553985	2.016304	0.537681	0.537681				0.134420		
2005	2.751328	2.613762	2.063496	0.550266	0.550266				0.137566		
2006	2.378306	2.259391	1.783730	0.475661	0.475661				0.118915		
Priority 4 Equal Opportunities	5.919784	5.623795	4.439838	1.183957	1.183957	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.295989	0.000	13%
2001	0.832000	0.790400	0.624000	0.166400	0.166400				0.041600		
2002	0.917760	0.871872	0.688320	0.183552	0.183552				0.045888		
2003	0.911360	0.865792	0.683520	0.182272	0.182272				0.045568		
2004	0.927604	0.881224	0.695703	0.185521	0.185521				0.046380		
2005	0.956716	0.908880	0.717537	0.191343	0.191343				0.047836		
2006	1.374344	1.305627	1.030758	0.274869	0.274869				0.068717		
Priority 5 Asylum Seekers	2.299909	2.184913	1.724932	0.459981	0.459981	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.114996	0.000	5%
2001	0.346666	0.329333	0.260000	0.069333	0.069333				0.017333		
2002	0.382400	0.363280	0.286800	0.076480	0.076480				0.019120		
2003	0.379734	0.360747	0.284800	0.075947	0.075947				0.018987		
2004	0.386501	0.367176	0.289876	0.077300	0.077300				0.019325		
2005	0.398632	0.378700	0.298974	0.079726	0.079726				0.019932		
2006	0.405976	0.385677	0.304482	0.081195	0.081195				0.020299		
Total on priorities 1-5	42.318341	40.202424	31.738757	8.463667	8.463667	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.115917	0.000	92%
Technical Assistance Measure 7a											
	2.069918	2.069918	1.034959	1.034959	1.034959	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000000	0.000	3%
2001	0.312000	0.312000	0.156000	0.156000	0.156000						

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	2002	0.344160	0.344160	0.172080	0.172080	0.172080						
	2003	0.341760	0.341760	0.170880	0.170880	0.170880						
	2004	0.347852	0.347852	0.173926	0.173926	0.173926						
	2005	0.358766	0.358766	0.179383	0.179383	0.179383						
	2006	0.365380	0.365380	0.182690	0.182690	0.182690						
Technical Assistance Measure 7b												
		1.379946	1.379946	0.689973	0.689973	0.689973	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000000	0.000	2%
	2001	0.208000	0.208000	0.104000	0.104000	0.104000						
	2002	0.229440	0.229440	0.114720	0.114720	0.114720						
	2003	0.227840	0.227840	0.113920	0.113920	0.113920						
	2004	0.231900	0.231900	0.115950	0.115950	0.115950						
	2005	0.239182	0.239182	0.119591	0.119591	0.119591						
	2006	0.243584	0.243584	0.121792	0.121792	0.121792						
Technical Assistance Measure 7c												
		2.069918	2.069918	1.034959	1.034959	1.034959	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000000	0.000	3%
	2001	0.312000	0.312000	0.156000	0.156000	0.156000						
	2002	0.344160	0.344160	0.172080	0.172080	0.172080						
	2003	0.341760	0.341760	0.170880	0.170880	0.170880						
	2004	0.347852	0.347852	0.173926	0.173926	0.173926						
	2005	0.358766	0.358766	0.179383	0.179383	0.179383						
	2006	0.365380	0.365380	0.182690	0.182690	0.182690						
Total		47.838123	45.722206	34.498648	11.223558	11.223558	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.115917	0.000	100%

Note: All funding is ESF related i.e. an estimate for non co-financed expenditure has not been included
 Intervention rate for 2000 - 2006 is 75%. Technical Assistance is at 50% intervention for all years

2.2 State of Implementation

2.2.1 Round 1 Action 3 Activities

Twenty of the 21 Round 1 Development Partnerships completed their work in 2005. The Blanchardstown Equal Development Partnership was granted an extension of Action 2 type activity until 31st August 2006.

Overall there were no significant difficulties encountered with the implementation of Action 3. Regular Article 4 and other monitoring was undertaken and the majority of projects ultimately produced the results they expected in terms of products, training and other interventions.

Mainstreaming applications from two of the Round 1 projects, SONAS (Asylum Seeker) and Equal North East (Employability Pillar), were accepted as full mainstreaming proposals.

The Equal North East project is using its mainstream funding to engage in a multi-learning approach to the re-integration of the long-term unemployed into the workforce. The model which has been developed by the project has been very successful on a progression related basis and has been expanded to a regional basis. The model has attracted a lot of attention at corporate level in FÁS.

The Sonas project is also in receipt of mainstreaming funding and is examining ways of integrating asylum seekers into the workforce. The project is working with state agencies such as the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA).

2.2.2 Round 2 Actions 2 and 3

The monitoring system that operates in respect of EQUAL in Ireland captures a wide range of data concerning activity at the level of the project that is subsequently aggregated up to measure and programme level. Hard and soft data is collected as appropriate regarding participants, beneficiaries, transnational activity, project personnel and expenditure patterns over a range of headings. This information is, typically, provided to the Monitoring Committee and is likewise available for input to newsletters and other documentation such as the Annual Report.

The following information on participant profiles for 2006 is extracted from that monitoring system.

Data for the period to December 2006 shows a total of 995 participants registering with 15 of the 22 Round 2 Equal projects. This is a relatively large increase from the 681 participants that were registered with projects by the end of June 2006. Table 1 below provides details of the number of participants reported on by project:

Table 1 Participant profile by project to December 2006

Pillar	DP Name	No. Participants	Valid %
Employability	DP9	49	4.9
Employability	You're Equal	69	6.9
Employability	Carlow Equal	108	10.9
Employability	Education 4 Employment	43	4.3
Employability	WAM	29	2.9
Employability	Tallaght Equal Assists	39	3.9
Employability	Equal Youth	17	1.7
Entrepreneurship	Longford Equal DP	38	3.8
Entrepreneurship	Emerge	156	15.7
Adaptability	Clare Lifelong learning Network	198	19.9
Adaptability	Equal Ireland	167	16.8
Adaptability	Equality Through E-work	40	4.0
Adaptability	Senior Select Retain and Retrain	14	1.4
Equal Opportunities	LIFT	20	2.0
Asylum Seeker	Roma Cultural Mediation	8	0.8
	Total	995	100

Participant Profile by gender and age

Of the participants who reported on their gender and age (n=972) 61% were female and 39% were male. The majority of participants (n=654, 67.2%) are aged between 25 and 54. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the age and gender of participants.

Table 2 Participant Profile by gender and age

	<18	18-25	26-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	>65	Total for gender
	%							
Male	3.3	8.3	8.3	10.9	4.7	2.1	1.2	38.9
Female	1.2	6.9	13.0	17.5	12.9	5.8	3.9	61.1
Total for age	4.5	15.2	21.3	28.4	17.6	7.8	5.1	100

Marital status and care responsibilities

A total of 980 participants reported on their marital status. Of these, 47% (n=459) are married and 41% (n=404) are not married. Four and a half percent (n=45) are separated and the remaining 7.3% reported their marital status as either divorced or other.

Data on the number of participants' children is available for only 72% (n=715) of participants. Fifty-one per-cent have between 1 and 3 children (n=360) and 34% have no children. The remaining 15% (n=109) have between 4 and 10 children. A total of 896 participants reported on their care responsibilities with the majority reporting having no care responsibilities (71.4%, n=640) or reporting that care responsibilities are present and resolved (24.4%, n=219). The remaining 4.2% (n=37) reported unresolved care responsibilities.

Nationality and Immigration status.

A total of 992 participants reported on their nationality. The majority are Irish (76.6%, n=760) and the second largest grouping are non-EU/EEA nationals (17.3%, n=172). Nationals of 32 countries outside the EU/EEA area are participants on Equal with the largest grouping of nationals coming from Nigeria, India and Romania. The remaining 6% (n=60) of participants are citizens of other EU/EEA states.

All of the 172 non-EU/EEA participants reported on their immigration status. The majority (83.7%, n=144) reported their status as 'refugee/leave to remain.

Educational and economic status of participants:

Table 3: Highest educational qualification of participants by gender and age group.

	<25		26-44		45-64		>65		Total for gender	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
%										
Primary	5.8	1.5	3.0	2.1	2.0	3.4	0.4	1.5	11.2	8.6
Junior cert	3.2	1.8	3.5	5.9	1.4	6.3	0.4	0.1	8.6	14.1
Leaving Cert	1.7	2.8	4.4	12.8	1.4	6.3	0.2	1.0	7.7	22.8
Certificate	0.2	0.3	1.4	3.0	0.2	1.5	0.1	0.2	2.0	5.1
Diploma	0.1	0.2	1.8	2.9	0.7	0.9	0.0	0.9	2.5	4.8
Degree	0.8	0.8	2.0	3.6	0.4	0.6	0.0	0.3	3.2	5.3
Higher Diploma	0.0	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.8	0.7
Post graduate	0.1	0.1	1.2	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.8
Total for age (%)	11.9	7.6	17.8	31.2	6.8	19.3	1.3.	4.1	37.9	62.1
Total for age (no.)	108	69	162	283	62	175	12	37	344	564

A total of 908 participants reported on their highest educational qualification from full-time formal education. Approximately one fifth (19.8%, n=180) of participants have completed their primary education. A little over half (53.2% n=483) have completed either the junior certificate (22.7%, n=206) or leaving certificate (30.5%, n=277). Just over one quarter of participants (27%, n=235) have attained post-secondary qualifications.

Within the population of male participants, the largest grouping indicate that their highest educational attainment is at primary level with 29.6% (n=102), followed by 22.6% (n=78) at Junior Certificate level. Within the population of women participants, the largest grouping indicates that their highest educational attainment is at leaving certificate level i.e. 36.7% (n=207). Table 3 above provides a breakdown of the highest educational attainment of participants by age and by gender.

Literacy difficulties are experienced by 12.1% (n=100) of participants (825 participants reported on their literacy levels). Approximately 18.1% (n=66) of all male participants experience literacy difficulties and 7.3% (n=34) of female participants reported experiencing literacy difficulties. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the literacy levels of participants by age and by gender.

The majority (69.4%) of the 940 participants who reported on their ICT skills levels indicated having basic or competent ICT skills. Of these, 70% are under 45 years old. A significant proportion (30.6%, n=288) of all participants report having no ICT skills. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the ICT skills of participants by age and gender.

Table 4: Literacy level by age group and gender

	<25		26-44		45-64		>65		Total for gender	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No Literacy difficulties	8.8	8.0	19.2	19.9	6.9	20.1	1.2	3.8	36.1	51.8
Presence of literacy difficulties	4.5	1.5	2.5	1.0	1.0	1.3	0.0	0.4	8.0	4.1
Total for age (%)	13.3	9.5	21.7	20.8	7.9	21.5	1.2	4.1	44.1	55.9
Total for age (no.)	110	78	179	172	65	177	10	34	364	461

Table 5: ICT skills of participants by age and gender

	Under 25		26-44		45-64		65+		Total for gender	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
%										
No ICT Skills	7.2	3.4	4.4	5.6	1.8	5.5	0.3	2.3	13.7	16.9
Basic	3.0	2.4	7.6	14.1	3.0	8.	1.0	1.6	14.5	26.5
Competent	1.6	2.6	7.0	10.3	2.1	4.7	0.0	0.1	10.7	17.7
Total for age (%)	11.8	8.4	18.9	30.1	6.9	18.5	1.3	4.0	38.9	61.1
Total for age (no.)	111	79	178	283	65	174	12	38	366	574

Membership of Minority Group

Table 6 provides details of the minority group status of participants that reported under this heading. The largest minority group represented are those with refugee or leave to remain status i.e. 15.3% (n= 150). Approximately 15% (n=145) of participants are people with disabilities. The largest proportion of these (54.4%, n=79) have a physical disability.

Table 6: Participant Profile by Minority Group and Gender

Minority Group	No. males	% Males	No. females	% Females	Valid No. participants	% all valid participants
Physical disability	36	3.7	43	4.4	973	8.1
Mental Disability	8	0.8	8	0.8	973	1.6
Intellectual disability	17	1.7	12	1.2	973	3.0
Sensory disability	12	1.2	9	0.9	973	2.2
Current drug user	27	2.8	0	0.0	974	2.8
Former Drug user	32	3.3	1	0.1	974	3.4
Ex-offender	72	7.4	0	0.0	977	7.4
Economic migrant	2	0.2	3	0.3	980	0.5
Asylum seeker	2	0.2	6	0.6	980	0.8
Refugee/Leave to Remain	81	8.3	69	7.0	980	15.3
Traveller	11	1.1	7	0.7	973	1.8
Roma	1	0.1	11	1.1	973	1.2
Other ethnic minority group	81	8.3	48	4.9	973	13.3

Participant completion

The data indicates that 434 participants have ended their participation on a particular course, programme or other intervention offered by projects; however, details of the proportion of the interventions that were completed by participants are provided for 412 participants (see Table 7 below). A relatively low proportion of these participants (24.3%, n=100) are reported as having completed 100% of the intervention provided. Of the female participants 27.2% (n=66) completed 100% of the intervention provided, whereas 20.1% (n=34) of male participants completed the entire course of training / study.

Table 7: Proportion of interventions completed by those who have ended their participation on an intervention

%	less than 20%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-99%	100%	Total
Male	5.8	5.8	5.1	8.0	8.0	8.3	41.0
Female	6.3	10.4	4.4	11.7	10.2	16.0	59.0
Total	12.1	16.3	9.5	19.7	18.2	24.3	100

Of the remaining 312 that ended their participation before the intervention was complete data on the reason why they left is provided for 121 participants. In approximately half (n=59) these cases, participants left for personal reasons or because they were unable to commit to the course. Table 9 below lists the reported reasons for leaving the intervention or programme.

Table 9: Participants reported reasons for leaving.

Reason for leaving	No. participants
Personal reasons or change in personal circumstances	42
Unable to commit to the course or changed their mind	17
Moved to employment or self employment	13
Ill health or medical reasons	12
Course was unsuitable	10
Moved to another course or programme	5
Not stated or unknown	5
Change in work circumstances	4
Lack of care for dependents	2
Other reasons	11

Qualifications awarded

Of the 434 participants who have ended their participation in Equal, data is provided in respect of 91 of them on the qualifications attained. Data is recorded on the title of the award and the level at which the award is accredited within the national framework of qualifications. Table 10 provides details of the number of awards attained and the level at which those awards are accredited.

Table 10 Qualifications awarded to participants

National Framework of Qualifications equivalent award level	No of participants
Level 4	10
Level 5	11
Level 6	1
Level 7	1
Not applicable	68
Total	91

Expenditure

The latest monitoring returns indicate a total spend of €8.92m for 2006 (full year) of which the ESF provided €5.92m or 66.4%. Public match funding accounted for €2.33m or 26.1% of total spend and Private match funding for €0.67m or 7.5% of total spend.

The largest cost category across the 22 projects was Administration at €3.35m or 37.6% of Total Expenditure (a reduction from 42.8% at the time of the last report) although this percentage continues to fall as projects more fully engage in other core areas of activity such as training, participant's costs, transnational and mainstreaming/dissemination –

Expenditure continues to be highest in the Employability Pillar at €3.45m (9 projects) although Adaptability follows closely at €3.33m (6 projects). Expenditure also continues to be lowest under the Asylum Seeker pillar (€0.41m – 2 projects). Average total spend per Round 2 project for 2006 is €405,429 (ESF - €269,343).

The NSS continued to work closely with projects to identify capacities for further expenditure. Where such capacities were identified and where projects made written requests, and these were recommended by the NSS, the Managing Authority has approved, or is in the process of approving, specific additional allocations. The total ESF approved allocation to the 22 Round 2 projects is now €17,108,876 which is divided into annual allocations as follows:

2005	€3,921,388
2006	€6,791,823
2007	€6,395,665

The Managing Authority and NSS are continuing to monitor projects closely and to work with projects in managing their ESF allocations and will endeavour to identify specific issues in this area at the earliest possible dates should issues arise.

2.3 Mainstreaming activities at Programme Level

The Mainstream Policy Group (MPG) met twice during 2006 with a particular focus on developing an EQUAL submission in the context of the next round of ESF funding at national level.

In that regard a sub-group of the MPG was formed with a view to developing a broadly representative submission. The sub-group was chaired by the Equality Authority and also involved social partner organisations, state agencies and the NSS.

A proposal was submitted by the sub-group. Its title is 'A Measure to Enhance Delivery Mechanisms for Labour Market Programmes'. The aim of the proposal is to enhance the delivery mechanisms for labour market programmes to groups that experience inequality in the labour market and the objective is to develop a framework for effective delivery mechanisms within that context.

The paper was presented to the Managing Authority for the ESF in Ireland and consideration is being given to the possible inclusion of this proposal in the context of the next programming period.

As with the other key principles of EQUAL, the NSS provided ongoing support to Round 2 DPs during 2006 in terms of the development of mainstreaming strategies as part of their planned activity. A strong emphasis was placed on the relationship between mainstreaming and the other principles of the programme, in addition to supporting projects to reflect and relate their activity to current policy and practice concerns, whilst involving and engaging with relevant organisations in this regard.

Projects were requested to develop a logical framework type approach in terms of their mainstreaming planning. The focus here was on the identification and differentiation between project outcomes, outputs and impacts.

Some Round 2 projects have set up "national mainstreaming groups". These groups involve key personnel in relevant organisations who review on an ongoing basis the work being developed by projects from a "mainstream perspective". Examples of this include the Your're Equal project and the Equal Youth projects.

The NSS also developed a Mainstream Matrix tool with a view to assisting project promoters in identifying priorities for mainstreaming purposes and project officers have been working with individual projects towards this end.

2.4 EQUAL Principles

Partnership

In terms of developing and consolidating partnership working within DPs, specific guidance and support was provided in relation to the following areas:

- Identification and engagement of relevant partners;
- Developing the organisational structure of the partnership including decision making and management structures, roles and responsibilities of partners;
- Building the commitment of partners in terms of mainstreaming.

The partnership approach has been consistently identified in evaluations from Round 1 EQUAL projects as a significant factor in achieving successful outcomes when testing responses to issues of discrimination and inequality in the labour market. However, despite project level, national level and Commission level evaluations, it is not clear if there is something in particular about the composition, structure and operation or practice of partnership in EQUAL that supports the achievement of these outcomes. In order to address these issues, the NSS is undertaking a study of partnership in EQUAL.

An interim report documenting the issues that emerged from an initial questionnaire issued to Round 2 EQUAL projects is available for download at www.equal-ci.ie/news

In brief, some of the key issues highlighted were

- The significance of collective DP commitment, organisational level commitment, and the nomination or appointment of key personnel to the effective operation of partnership;
- The importance attached to adequately resourcing the partnership: the availability of a ringfenced budget; effectively developing the capacity of the partners to work together as a cohesive collective; and the necessity of a dedicated planning and development phase at the outset.
- Respondents highlighted the fact that EQUAL requires and supports the adoption of a strategic approach as a significant difference between the operation of partnership in Equal and previous partnership arrangements entered into.

The issues highlighted in the interim report will be explored further in individual interviews / case studies with a small number of partnerships. A full report of the findings will be available in September 2007.

Empowerment

The EQUAL CIP in Ireland aspires to a “facilitated” approach to empowerment, involving not just those targeted for assistance but also the partners and organisations involved in DPs. Thus empowerment is seen to be intrinsically linked to other key principles, most significantly partnership and innovation. In this context embedding the principles of empowerment was a critical part of the partnership building process in Action 1. DPs were advised to develop a code of conduct that would embody the principle of empowerment in terms of decision-making and power sharing arrangements within the DP. DPs were also asked to detail in their action planning materials the mechanisms and resources that would be utilised by them in terms of supporting empowerment. During Action 1 the NSS reviewed and provided feedback to DPs in terms of how they were addressing this issue, through site visits and email and phone contact.

Transnationality

A dedicated transnational co-ordinator was nominated within the staff of the NSS to support Round II DPs in the identification and development of transnational partnerships. The transnational co-ordinator was involved at a European level in the transnational co-ordination group set up to manage the process during and after Action 1.

Specific activity in relation to this principle included:

- RIFE input, translation and updating by the NSS;
- Presentation on Transnationality at Induction Event 2005;
- Ongoing Email and phone support to projects;
- Liaison with Transnational co-ordinators in other member states;
- EQUAL on-line Newsletter focusing on Transnationality;
- Review and validation of proposed TCAs.

Innovation

The assessment and selection process for Round 2 of the programme focused on how applicants responded to the key principles of EQUAL. Given the fact that the projects selected for Round 2 had demonstrated a level of innovation within the project applications, the role of the NSS in this regard was to support and sometimes challenge DPs in terms of their understanding of innovation and how it manifested itself in their proposed activity. Feedback from the EQUAL Selection Committee was provided to projects as part of the ongoing engagement by the NSS with DPs in the review of their action planning materials. This review work focused on the following areas:

- Innovation in relation to the needs of the target group(s);
- In relation to current practice;
- In relation to current policy.

In this context specific emphasis was placed on reviewing and providing feedback to projects on the development of concrete mainstreaming strategies as part of their action plan.

Gender Equality

All Round 2 projects were required to address gender mainstreaming in their Action Plans, and Development Partnership Agreements. DPs were asked to identify the barriers to access and participation that might arise on the basis of gender, disability, age and other identifiers. Having identified these, DPs were asked to be explicit about what they would do to overcome such barriers and to provide for same. Issues such as childcare and transport have been identified in relation to gender mainstreaming and project promoters have requested budgets to overcome these barriers. Ireland is one of 7 Member States participating in a Community of Practice in relation to Gender Mainstreaming. The aim of the CoP is to promote the application of GM to support good governance in ESF programmes in all Member States.

2.5 Conditions of implementation and difficulties encountered

No administrative or legal changes or difficulties were encountered during the course of 2006 and there were no unexpected delays in the implementation of the Programme.

2.6 Any other information

Online Newsletter

There were three issues of the EQUAL on-line Newsletter published during 2006. The Spring 2006 issue of the newsletter focused on Thematic Networking featuring inputs on the various activities of the four networks along with individual articles written by projects. In the Autumn and Winter editions of the newsletter the focus was on notable achievements at project level.

Joint NSS Meetings

In the UK there is one Managing Authority but the EQUAL funding is administered on a regional basis. Consequently, there are separate National Support Structures in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Joint NSS meetings are held at regular intervals to plan and update progress and to share

ideas. From the outset, the Managing Authority and NSS in the Republic of Ireland have been invited to participate, where practicable, in these meetings.

A further Joint NSS meeting was held on 5th September 2006 and, on this occasion, was hosted by us in the Guinness Storehouse, Dublin. Representatives from the UK and Irish Managing Authority and Support Structures attended.

Although, as with many Member States, the administration of EQUAL is different between Ireland and the UK, there are many issues of common interest and concern and these appeared throughout the agenda. Included in the routine updates from each of the UK regions, the following items were discussed:

1. Difficulties experienced and requirement of meeting N+2 (drawdown of EQUAL annual funding from the EU Commission which is based on Programme expenditure to date).
2. Plans for "Repository of Good Practice". This is already in place in Ireland in the form of the Ideasbank.
3. Draft plans for the Operational Programme for the next round of ESF funding.
4. Plans to highlight the successes of EQUAL as the Programme draws to a close in 2007.

National Thematic Developments

The most significant development in this regard concerns the thematic network on the Inclusive Workplace: Accommodating Equality and Diversity in the Workplace.

During 2006 the network undertook a mapping exercise to identify common issues and, as a result of this exercise, the network agreed to focus its efforts on the following:

1. Learning emerging from the effective implementation of new approaches to recruitment and progression that benefit those who are typically excluded from the workplace; and
2. Learning from the processes through which the projects have engaged with employers in order to secure their buy-in.

The network has issued a tender for a consultant to assist in gathering appropriate content for the publication. It is envisaged that the publication, and

supporting DVD, will be available in June 2007 with a view to supporting the network's ongoing engagement with its mainstream target audience, which includes the National Workplace Strategy High Level Implementation Group, FÁS Services to Business, employer and employee organisations.

European Thematic Developments

During 2006, the Commission launched a restricted call for proposals for the setting up of communications and learning platforms for mainstreaming lessons learnt from EQUAL and invited the Member States to apply for funding with a view to *“sharing experience and results ... and transferring the results into policy and practice”*. Five different types of 'platform' were envisaged as follows:

- Exchange events;
- Peer reviews;
- Learning seminars;
- Networks / Communities of practice; and
- Policy fora.

Ireland was involved in applications for two such platforms (leading the Community of Practice on Quality Programme Management and participating in the Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming)

3. FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION AND DATA

3.1 Funding Received and Declared

Following certification by the ESF Paying Authority, a total of €5,734,925 ESF was claimed from the Commission in October 2006⁵.

The claim covered the following:

- 2004 Action 2 and 3 Final Claim (Round 1)
- 2005 Action 2 and 3 Final Claim (Round 1)
- 2005 Final Claim (Round 2)
- 2005 Technical Assistance expenditure
- 2006 Final Claim (Round 2)

No other claims as certified by the Paying Authority were made to the Commission during 2006.

The following Table details the Total ESF Expenditure declared in 2006 by Pillar (Priority):

Pillar (Priority)	Total ESF Expenditure declared in 2006
Employability	2,165,982.17
Entrepreneurship	490,415.69
Adaptability (E)	1,330,717.45
Adaptability (F)	225,190.47
Equal Opportunities	1,069,999.28
Asylum Seekers	111,056.63
Technical Assistance	341,563.46
Overall Total	5,734,925.15

⁵ The claim was received by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in December 2006

The Table below details the cumulative actually certified and declared ESF expenditure from the beginning of the Programme and includes interim DP claims in respect of 2006 by Pillar (Priority).

Pillar (Priority)	Cumulative ESF Expenditure declared to the end of 2006
Employability	8,499,736.27
Entrepreneurship	1,954,245.10
Adaptability (E)	4,499,103.45
Adaptability (F)	225,190.47
Equal Opportunities	2,598,425.80
Asylum Seekers	865,582.92
Technical Assistance	1,429,269.23
Overall Total	20,071,553.24

Appendix 3 provides an extract from the SFC Claims System (operated through the Department of Finance) detailing total eligible actually paid and certified expenditure within the year 2006 (ESF and matching).

3.2 Expenditure patterns by Pillar and Action

Round 2

Total expenditure (ESF and Matching) by EQUAL DPs between 1 January and 31 December 2006 was €8,919,432.68⁶.

The percentage spread of expenditure by pillar in 2006 was as follows:

- Employability (9 projects) 39%
- Entrepreneurship (3 projects) 10%
- Adaptability (6 projects) 37%
- Equal Opportunities (2 projects) 9%
- Asylum Seekers (2 project) 5%

⁶ These figures are provisional and based on the, as yet, un-audited monitoring returns.

The percentage spread of costs over the major budget headings for the period 1 January to 31 December 2006 are outlined below:

Round 2
Costs by Expenditure Type, 2006

		% of total
Trainer Costs:	€1,659,652.90	18.60
Participant Costs:	€1,163,795.68	13.00
Administration Costs:	€3,349,818.58	37.60
Operating Overheads:	€ 885,999.97	9.90
Transnational:	€ 585,258.23	6.60
Other:	€ 402,204.86	4.50
Mainstreaming	€ 872,702.46	9.80
TOTAL	€ 8,919,432.68	100.00

3.2 Comparison between effective financial execution and financial forecasts (N+2)

The EQUAL Financial Plan has been profiled across all Member States for the period 2000 to 2006. Nevertheless the Programme did not commence until 15 November 2001 across all Member States when a short (six months) developmental phase was introduced - Action 1. This Phase was completed on 15 May 2002 when project activity proper commenced (Action 2). Therefore, there exists currently a dysfunction between the original financial perspectives and actuality in terms of Programme activity and expenditure. .

3.3N+ 2 Rule

The most recent claim by Ireland has achieved the N+2 requirements for 2006.

3.4 Standard categorisation

APPENDIX 4 indicates the standard categorisation of the fields of intervention at the level of each measure (annex IV.3 of regulation N° 438/2001).

4 QUALITY AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

In accordance with Section 37(2)(d) of Regulation 1260/1999, the steps taken by the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee to ensure the quality and effectiveness of implementation are required to be made available in the Annual Implementation Report.

4.1 Measures taken with regard to monitoring, control and evaluation

Visits to projects under EU Regulation 438/2001 – on site monitoring/control preliminary checks - have continued. At 22 March 2007 all Round 2 projects have received at least two visits each (with the exception of one project where the second visit is pending). Three projects had been identified as having particular difficulties and these have now been the subjects of joint follow up Article 4 visits from the Managing Authority/NSS. Follow up queries were raised and these are either being or have already been discharged.

The NSS continued to work closely with projects to identify capacities for further expenditure. Where such capacities were identified and where projects made written requests, and these were recommended by the NSS, the Managing Authority has approved, or is in the process of approving, specific additional allocations. The total ESF approved allocation to the 22 Round 2 projects is now €17,108,876, which is divided into annual allocations as follows:

2005	€3,921,388
2006	€6,791,823
2007	€6,395,665

The Managing Authority and NSS are continuing to monitor projects closely and to work with projects in managing their ESF allocations and will endeavour to identify specific issues in this area at the earliest possible dates should issues arise.

4.1.1 Data Collection and Monitoring

The general timeliness and quality of DP Monitoring Returns improved significantly in 2006. There were no significant issues and attention is currently focused on securing speedy closure for 2007.

The Managing Authority is part of the common electronic system of data collection set up by the Commission for the specific management of the EQUAL Initiative called: "EQUAL Common Database" (ECDB). This system facilitates the transnational work of the projects, allows the co-ordination of the programmes at European level and assists monitoring and evaluation.

The National Support Structure in conjunction with the Managing Authority primarily performs the data collection function. The NSS collects the physical data from the DPs and transfers the data concerning the DPs as well as those collected at the level of the programme, to the ECDB.

4.1.2 Quality Management

The Managing Authority and the NSS continued to meet on a regular basis in 2006. These meetings focus on strategic and planning issues as well as issues arising in relation to individual projects, including match funding issues, late returns, non compliance and payments.

For each meeting the NSS prepares a sheet detailing the state of play for each project in relation to the significant phases of the programme. For its part, the Managing Authority provides updates as required of commitments and payment schedules. These schedules provide the NSS with some of the details necessary to determine readiness for subsequent payment in respect of each project. The management meetings provide the opportunity for the Financial Resource Officer to formally update all concerned in relation to issues arising at Article 4 visits.

The NSS continues to monitor and report on progress based on the bespoke system set up for EQUAL that is similar to the PCM approach. Projects are supported at various levels that include: financial management; partnership formation; transnational engagement; dissemination; inter-project communication and thematic networking; mainstreaming and policy engagement. The support function is carried out by a dedicated support team that comprises, accountancy, evaluation, research, social policy and other skills and competencies. The underlying approach is to simplify financial and administrative arrangements while ensuring a robust approach with a view to facilitating the implementation of action plans and the achievement of strategic mainstreaming and other objectives. National and EU level evaluations that have included project surveys have commented very favourably on the level and type of support provided.

4.1.3 Monitoring Committee

Three meetings of the Monitoring Committee took place during 2006
The Monitoring Committee primarily addressed the following topics:

- Financial and Activity Progress Report
- EQUAL Round 2 Developments
- Mainstreaming activities at National/European level
- Update of Evaluation of EQUAL
- North/South Developments
- Written Procedure Review

During the November 2006 MC meeting the decision was taken to transfer funds between a number of pillars based on predicted underspends at that time.

4.1.4 Evaluation

The General Structural Fund Regulation (EC) no. 1260/1999, Article. 34 and 42 provides that the Member States will be responsible, in cooperation with the Commission, for the organisation of the Mid-Term Evaluation and an up-date of the Mid-Term Evaluation of all Operational Programmes (OPs) and Community Initiatives and for the submission of such evaluations to the European Commission before the end of 2003 and 2005 respectively. In addition, the EQUAL Heads of Mission decided that two Interim evaluation Reports should be produced, the first one in 2002 and the second one in 2004. In order to manage this process a technical Evaluation Steering Committee was established.

For practical reasons and in view of the short timescale involved between the production of the Mid-term Evaluation Report (end-2003) and the update of that Report (end-September 2005), the Managing Authority decided to forego the production of a second Interim evaluation Report. Alternatively, arrangements were made towards the end of 2004 to prepare for a new tendering process in respect of the Update of the Mid-term Evaluation.

The Update of the Mid-Term Evaluation Report was considered by the Evaluation Steering Committee in September 2005. The final draft was forwarded to the European Commission in November 2005 and has since been published.

The report noted that the EQUAL Programme has operated effectively over its life to date. It highlighted the fact that EQUAL has responded to national market policy developments and socio-economic changes in Ireland. In this way EQUAL provides a potentially important resource for developing innovative interventions to reinforce policy and drive it forward.

One of the recommendations contained in the Report is that programme implementers should consider how the ongoing learning from EQUAL and the EQUAL principles can be incorporated into the programme structure of any new labour market initiatives particularly in the context of the new round of structural funding. This recommendation has since been acted on in the context of the

preparatory work for the new programming period and as referenced above in terms of the paper developed on behalf of the Mainstream Policy Group.

4.1.5 Sharing of data on DP features and results at EU level

All information in relation to EQUAL DPs in Ireland is current on the ECDB.

In addition, Ireland provided information towards the development of the European Commission's database of EQUAL product. The Commission's site also has a link to the Ideasbank, the Irish on-line repository of product from EQUAL.

Ireland also provided information towards a case study of mainstreaming in Ireland as part of the Commission's Member State in focus series.

4.1.6 Financial Control arrangements

Commission Regulation No. 438/2001 sets out detailed arrangements for the minimum level of financial control throughout the EU for the financial management of the Structural Funds including the ESF and is an integral element of the ESF's policy of sound and efficient management by the year 2000 (SEM 2000) which came into effect in 1997. The Department of Finance Circular 34/2001 sets out the financial management and control procedures generally required for the Structural Funds while the ESF Paying Authority Circular ESF/PA/1-2001 refers specifically to requirements in respect of the European Social Fund.

Circular ESF/PA/1-2001 sets out the financial management and control procedures for the European Social Fund (ESF) 2000 – 2006. This covers the procedures for certification and verification of expenditure at the various management levels in the "cascade" i.e. ESF Paying Authority, EQUAL Managing Authority, the National Support Structure and the Development Partnerships (i.e. final beneficiaries). Expenditure must be certified at each level of the cascade before it can proceed to the next level. Only certified expenditure will be included in the claim for ESF from the Commission. **Appendix 5** illustrates the cascade verification and certification process.

In this regard, Development Partnerships (DPs) are required to certify by way of a FORM B1 that a number of conditions have been met with regard to financial control. The Form is to be certified at Project Manager level and countersigned by the designated Financial Officer and submitted to the NSS as part of both the Interim and Final Claim documentation.

In the context of the management and control procedures that are in place, the Managing Authority is satisfied that the funds have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management.

The Financial Control and the Internal Audit Units at the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment conducted an exhaustive audit of EQUAL that began in 2005 and ran into 2006. Some of the consequences of that audit from a project perspective are described in Section 2.2 below.

The auditors were satisfied with the publicity, documentation management, claim management, Article 4 and other aspects of the services provided by WRC Social and Economic Consultants acting as the NSS to the EQUAL programme.

The one issue that arose refers to the chain of command and consequent action on foot of anomalies that the notices and reports during the performance of its monitoring and Article 4 functions. That issue is the subject of discussion between the NSS and the Managing Authority.

Visits to projects under EU Regulation 438/2001 – on site monitoring/control preliminary checks have continued.

The majority of Round 2 projects have robust financial management systems and those that initially had weaker systems appear to have improved significantly. There is a small minority of projects that failed to have their 2005 final claim finalised in time for the 2006 N+2 requirement. These projects have received clarification letters and are receiving follow up article 4 visits.

4.2 Significant problems encountered

Although some issues have emerged from Round 1 Closure as described in Paragraph 1.3 there were no significant problems encountered in the implementation of the programme.

4.3 Publicity

All Development Partnerships were advised on an ongoing basis that, specifically, the Regulation requires those in receipt of European Social Fund monies to use the following on all documentation (actual and/or virtual) produced by the Development Partnership:

- official logo of the EU
- EQUAL logo
- the following official legend

“European Social Fund: helping to develop employment by promoting employability, the business spirit and equal opportunities and investing in human resources”

These requirements apply to all other materials they produce, for example, job advertisements, name plaques, flags/emblems and CD Roms. Where a project incurs expenditure relating to advertising, publicity or other dissemination activities and does not observe these requirements, that expenditure will be deemed ineligible for European Social Fund support.

The EQUAL Websites

Official EQUAL Site – www.equal-ci.ie

Work was undertaken during 2006 in relation to the updating of materials on the official EQUAL site. This has involved updating the home page and events sections of the site with current and relevant information, along with updating the project profiles section and the uploading of revised claims forms. The revised home page provides links to the 50th anniversary site and the European Year for Equal Opportunities sites.

The level of usage of the EQUAL during 2006 is set out below:

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits
Jan 2006	1731	3657	11173	34674
Feb 2006	1980	4502	12979	37819
Mar 2006	2437	7391	16938	47319
Apr 2006	2269	4426	11919	39734
May 2006	2365	4501	10676	41357
Jun 2006	2460	4655	10833	33172
Jul 2006	1933	4605	11275	32013
Aug 2006	2082	4535	12516	40427
Sep 2006	2183	4591	10893	39501
Oct 2006	2436	5178	12943	42993
Nov 2006	2699	5685	13800	46215
Dec 2006	2206	7146	13281	32350
Total	26781	60872	149226	467574

The statistics available for the EQUAL site also provide an indication as to the countries of origin of users who accessed it and the data suggests the heaviest rate of use is from Ireland, UK, Germany, Poland and Italy. The most regularly accessed pages of the site include the news and project sections of the site.

Ideasbank - www.ideasbank-equal.info

The ideasbank site is an important element in the ongoing dissemination of EQUAL innovations. The Ideasbank has encountered 29,538 requests for downloading of material from the site between January 2006 and 12th march 2007.

The list below provides a breakdown of the monthly requests for documents (downloads) between August 2006 and February 2007:

Aug 2006: 1885
Sep 2006: 1817
Oct 2006: 3997
Nov 2006: 1913
Dec 2006: 2113
Jan 2007: 2611
Feb 2007: 2166

It is also worth noting that the greatest numbers of requests for documentation related to the products developed by EQUAL Projects in relation to migrant workers, disability, entrepreneurship, work life balance and interagency co-operation. Finally, the site was accessed by individuals from a wide range of countries including hits from: Ireland (12,405); UK (3,256); Netherlands (2,695); Greece (1,903); Poland (948), Australia (749), France (635) and Italy (588).

5.1 and 5.2 Steps taken to ensure compatibility with Community policies and to ensure coordination of all Community structural assistance

The EQUAL Community Initiative embodies a significant commitment to the concept of mainstreaming. The European Commission guidelines to the Member States state that successful innovation should be disseminated widely in order to achieve the maximum impact on policy. In the first instance, the mainstreaming potential of applications comprised a significant element of the selection process, specifically regarding the extent to which the proposed activities were likely to provide learning in the context of the Employment Strategy and, in particular, its intersection with the broader equality agenda. The initiative also commits to the development of a mainstreaming strategy in co-operation with the Northern Ireland EQUAL Managing Authority and the Joint Special EU Programmes Body.

Part of this process is to ensure coordination of EQUAL with all Community structural assistance. For example, there is a strong existing inter-relationship between EQUAL and the mainstream Employment and Human Resources Operational Programme (EHRDOP) on a number of levels as follows:

- The Managing Authority for EQUAL is part of the ESF Section which manages the EHRDOP and is, in turn, part of the Labour Force Development Division within the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment that is responsible for the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) and Departmental coordination of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPSincl.). Therefore, the management and administrative proximity between EQUAL and the EHRDOP and the NEAP is a potential strength;
- There is significant overlap between the membership of the EHRD OP and the EQUAL Monitoring Committees;
- There is significant overlap in project promoters under EQUAL and Providers under the EHRDOP (e.g. FÁS, VECs) as well as project promoters under EQUAL and members of the Monitoring Committee (e.g. Social Partners).

Another formal level of co-ordination and complementarity between EQUAL and other programmes, in particular Interreg 2, the Peace Programme and LEADER+, relates to the North/South axis where a North/South steering group meets from time to time under the direction of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

The EQUAL Managing Authority also sits on the Selection Committee for the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and a liaison officer from the Department of

Justice, Equality and Law Reform who administer the ERF in Ireland is a member of the EQUAL Monitoring Committee.

Many of the constituent DP organisations are also involved in various other programmes including the Territorial Employment Pacts and Leader which bring provides a localised level of coordination. The Pacts themselves must also adhere to actions within the scope of the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy.

Area Based Partnership Companies have taken the role of Designated Partner in a significant number of DPs ensuring the potential for synergies with the social exclusion aspects of the Regional Programmes supported under the NDP. In addition there are Leader Companies, VECs, third Level Institutions involved bringing levels of co-ordination and interaction to other EU and national efforts.

All Development Partnerships are required to list and identify the sources of all-matching funding prior to approval and to make a declaration to the effect that no double funding is involved. Project managers are provided with guidance in this regard through Financial Workshops and the *EQUAL Project Planning and Operations Manual*. Furthermore, the issue of double funding is subject to scrutiny through systematic Article 4 checks that are carried out by the National Support Structure working in association with the Managing Authority. Double funding is also an item of concern to the ESF Financial Control Unit which carried out a 100% audit EQUAL projects throughout 2005.

Synergy is achieved at a number of levels. In the first instance the EQUAL Selection Committee, being a sub-set of the Monitoring Committee, is made up of various interests including employment and trade union representative bodies, government departments and state agencies. One of the key criteria as part of the selection process is Innovation. In its assessment of applications for funding, the National Support Structure comments specifically on the added value and innovatory aspects of proposals and these comments and observations are subject to further scrutiny and additional perspective through the work of the members of the Selection Committee itself. In that regard the issue of synergy, potential duplication and overlap is covered from a variety of vantage points. The on-going work of the National Support Structure and the work of the Monitoring and Mainstreaming Committees also ensure that the focus of EQUAL projects is on innovation.

5.2.1 Contribution to the National Reform Programme 2005-2008 (NRP)

The CIP provides that policymakers and particularly those responsible for respective National Action Plans should be involved in a form of developmental dialogue with EQUAL, ensuring that innovation impacts on national policies.

The National Reform Programme 2005-2008 (NRP) is focused on:

- Sustaining a high level of employment and low unemployment
- Ensuring an adequate supply of labour to meet the needs of the economy
- Maintaining a strong focus on education and training, including lifelong learning, to ensure the development of a high skilled, adaptable workforce.

In the context of the NRP Progress Report 2006, EQUAL is amongst a number of measures aimed at tackling discrimination and exclusion in connection with the labour market. The current round of EQUAL projects will also potentially have contributions to make in relation to the promotion of gender equality, the transformation of undeclared work into regular employment and increasing the labour supply and promoting active ageing.

EQUAL can likewise contribute to Ireland's response to two of the specific proposals made by the Commission in the context of the NRP Progress Report 2006 i.e.

- Accelerating progress in increasing labour market participation
- Placing a particular emphasis on support to older and low-skilled workers

Finally, the EQUAL process will add value to the debate concerning better governance and achieving effective partnership in the delivery of quality services particularly given the principles of the Programme and the analysis and dissemination of the DPs' activities in the context of the evolution of policy in the medium to long term.

In an Irish context, the aims and objectives of EQUAL also serve to complement the broad thrust of our equality legislation, the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and 2004 and the Equal Status Act, 2000.

5.2.2 Poverty & Social Exclusion

Ireland is continuing to develop a clear and coherent strategic focus with regard to addressing poverty and social exclusion. Successive Government Programmes have committed to pursuing policies that reduce poverty and social exclusion, build an inclusive society, reduce marginalisation and strengthen recognition of citizenship obligations. In those contexts, measures are in place to develop the process of poverty proofing as a means of mainstreaming poverty issues and to strengthen the institutional arrangements which are in place to support the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and to create an awareness and understanding of inequality, gender inequality, and rural issues. The Themes of the CIP are and will continue to make important contributions to poverty proofing and social inclusion particularly in the context of the EQUAL Mainstreaming Policy Group and the contribution of the thematic networking groups in that regard. EQUAL is specifically mentioned as part of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPS incl) process in the context of increasing the labour market participation levels and job progression rates among women and marginalised and excluded groups, as a key means of promoting their social inclusion.

The Irish Authorities have placed a significant emphasis on the broader equality agenda in the orientation of the EQUAL Programme, the DP action plans and in the operational involvement of the Equality Authority in the mainstreaming process. In the context of DP selections social exclusion, poverty, rural peripherality and other related issues are prominent in the stated strategies and actions proposed by a significant number of the DPs under Actions 2 and 3.

5.2.3 Award of Public Contracts

The procedures in relation to the award of the public contract to Fitzpatrick Associates in respect of the Update of the Mid-Term Evaluation were conducted in accordance with EU and National Public Procurement Rules.

5.2.4 Environmental Protection

The necessary steps are taken to ensure compliance with environmental protection rules and regulations.

5.2.5 Gender Equality & Gender Mainstreaming

Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are significant explicit concerns in an Irish context and have been highlighted at national level under the NDP through gender proofing, awareness training and specific interventions such as Equal Opportunities Measures, now part-funded through the ESF under the Employment and Human Resource Development Operational Programme.

These issues were given equal weight in the EQUAL Programme and in the process supporting its continued roll-out during 2006 Throughout all actions, DPs will be expected to be explicit about their commitment to broad equality issues and to precisely state the steps being taken to give effect to that commitment both within the structure of the DP itself but also vis-à-vis the engagement of the DPs with respective target groups.

There is also a specific gender equality representation on the Mainstreaming Policy Group that was established during 2002.

5.2.6 CONFORMITY WITH COMPETITION RULES

As far as State aid is concerned, many training measures are not caught by State aid Rules in that most training forms part of the tasks normally carried out by the State and benefits people and workers in the general labour market and does not favour certain undertakings or the production of certain goods within the meaning of Article 92(1) of the Treaty. Such examples are:

- Schooling and initial training (apprenticeships and day release schemes);
- Training or re-training of unemployed people, including traineeships in enterprises;
- Measures directly targeted at workers or at certain categories of worker affording them the opportunity of receiving training unconnected with the firm or industry in which they work.

Therefore, activities under the EQUAL Themes which relate to the unemployed or students or involve the provision of public service goods in the form of basic or general education or training for students or the unemployed are considered to be outside the definition of aid and are, thus, exempt from the notification requirements. Nevertheless, in the event of changes to existing measures or of new measures being put forward within the CIP, these will be notified, where relevant, by the Managing Authority to the Commission where required under the notification rules in force.

APPENDIX 1

EQUAL Development Partnerships Round 1

Project Title	Contact Name	E-mail
Westmeath EQUAL	Joe Potter	westcd@iol.ie
Laois Rural Employment		
Blanchardstown EQUAL	Terry McCabe	tmccabe@bap.ie
Clare – TRASNA		
RosEQUAL	Noel Connolly	rosequalptnship@eircom.net
Kildare / Wicklow	Michael O'Brien	mobrien@wicklowleader.ie
EQUAL North East	Geraldine Caldwell	Geraldine.Caldwell@ne.fas.ie
Rural Options	Jennifer Smyth	Jennifer@blackwater-resources.com
WIDE	Mick Rafferty	info@cta.ie
Access Ability	Terry Fahy	terry.fahy@gandonenterprises.ie
Equal at Work	Philip O'Connor	poconnor@dublinpact.ie
EQUAL Ireland	Eddie Higgins	info@equalireland.com
DAWN	John Dunne	John.dunne@chambersireland.ie
TRED	Nora Byrne	nora@calmar.ie
INTERACT II	Heidi Lougheed	Heidi.lougheed@ibec.ie
SWELL	Tess Murphy	longfordwomenslink@eircom.net
CASE	Joe Lowe	
Traveller Economy Sectoral Partnership	Brid O'Brien	te@pavee.iol.ie
Equality Network		
National Flexi-work Partnership	Margaret Fine Davis	mfdavis@tcd.ie
SONAS	Noreen Keegan Kavanagh	sonasireland@eircom.net

APPENDIX 2

EQUAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS ROUND 2

Project Title	Contact Name	E-mail
DP9	Caroline Lambden	Equaldp9@eircom.net
You're EQUAL	Tommy Brogan	tommyequal@eircom.net
Carlow Equal Employment Partnership	Annette Graham	Annette@carlowequal.ie
WAM (Willing Able Mentoring) Programme	Pauline Ryder	Pauline.ryder@ahead.ie
LEAP – Legal Education for All Project	Elizabeth Davidson	leapequal@eircom.net
KWCD Employer Exchange	Carol French	carolfrench@kwcdles.ie
E4 – Education 4 Employment	Mary Gaffney	mgaffney@crc.ie
Tallaght Equal Assists (TEA)	Eleanor O'Brien	Eleanor.obrien@tallpart.com
Equal Youth	Máirin Kenny	kennym@bmunjob.ie
Longford Equal DP	Tess Murphy	longfordwomenslink@eircom.net
Point2enterprise	Elaine McGrath	emacgrath@paulpartnership.ie
EMERGE	Noreen Keegan Kavanagh	Noreen@equalemerge.ie
Clare Lifelong Learning Network	Seamus Bane	coord@clarelearningnetwork.org
EQUAL Ireland Lifelong Learning	Eddie Higgins	info@equalireland.com
M.I.T.E. – Meath Investment in Training and Employment	Niall Mulligan	nmulligan@meathleader.ie
Senior Select Retain and Retrain	Michael Quilligan	mquilligan@partas.ie
Equal at Work 2	Philip O'Connor	poconnor@dublinpact.ie
“e-Quality Through e-Work”	Fiona Brennan	Fiona.brennan@sspship.ie
Finding Balance	Breege Doherty	BreegeT.Doherty@mailb.hse.ie
LIFT (Leadership Initiative – Females in Trade Unions)	Danyanne Quemper	Danyanne.quemper@ictu.ie
Transition Supports Project	Itayi Viriri	Itayi.viriri@parnell.cdvec.ie
Roma Cultural Mediation Project	Mayte Calvo Martin	mayte@accessireland.ie

APPENDIX 3

**Annual Implementation Report – Year 2006
Expenditure certified and claimed**

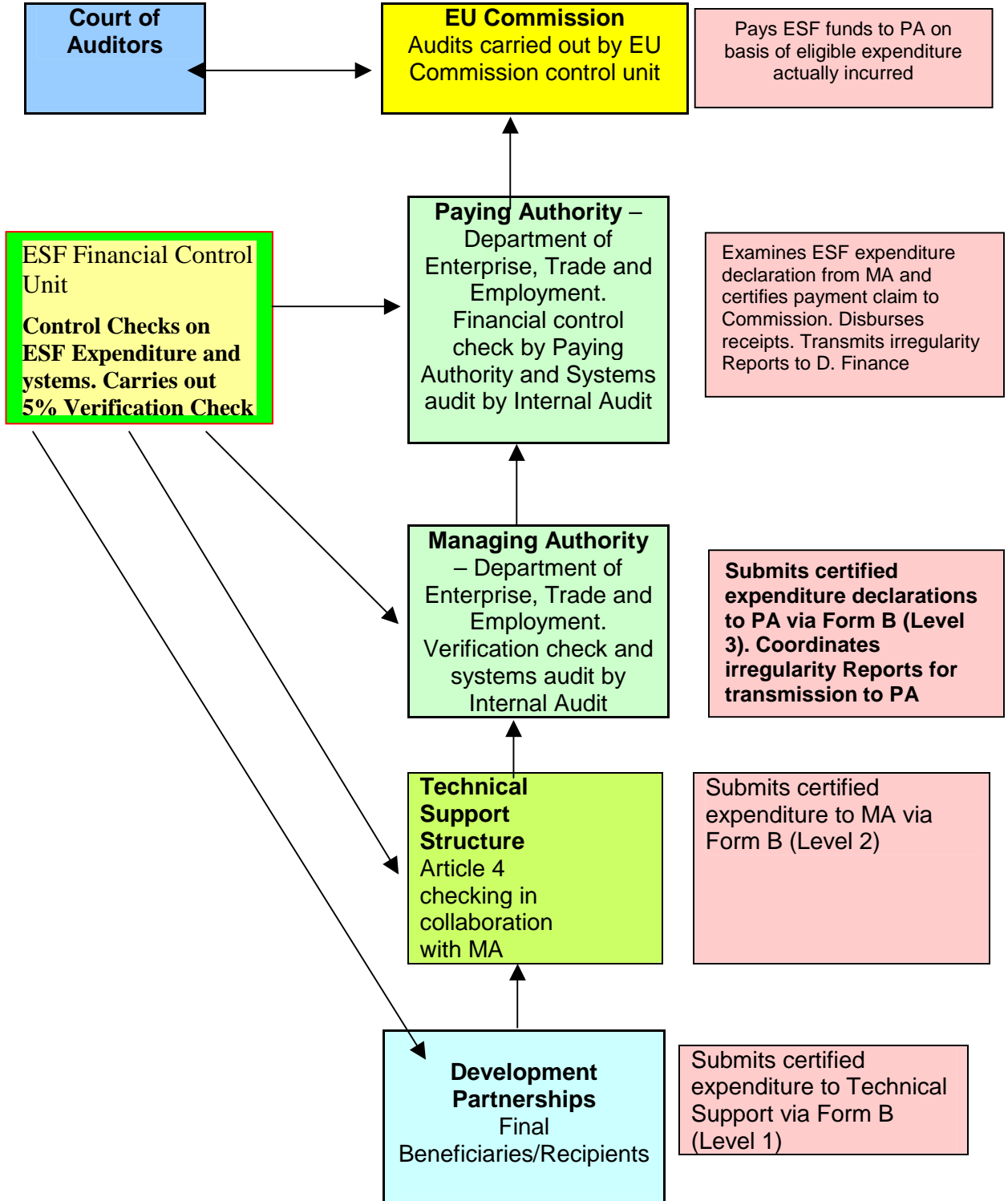
Measure	Field of Intervention	Total over all Years	Total eligible Actually Paid and Certified Expenditure within Year 2006	% of Eligible Cost
Measure 1.1 Employability	21,22,23	€ 17,245,589.00	€ 3,264,423.96	18.93%
Measure 2.1 Entrepreneurship	22,24	€ 4,599,821.00	€ 712,099.79	15.48%
Measure 3.1 Adaptability 1	21,22,24	€ 8,544,220.00	€ 2,167,206.87	25.36%
Measure 3.2 Adaptability 2	21,22,24	€ 4,109,019.00	€ 346,707.60	8.44%
Measure 4.1 Equal Opportunities	21,24,25	€ 5,519,784.00	€ 1,978,271.23	35.84%
Measure 5.1 Asylum Seekers	21,22,23	€ 2,299,909.00	€ 188,288.14	8.19%
Measure 6.1 Technical Assistance	411	€ 2,069,918.00	€ 394,493.90	19.06%
Measure 6.2 Technical Assistance	411	€ 1,379,946.00	€ 165,290.02	11.98%
Measure 6.3 Technical Assistance	412,413,415	€ 2,069,918.00	€ 123,343.00	5.96%
Total		€ 47,838,124.00	€ 9,340,124.51	19.52%

Appendix 4

CIP Measure Intervention Field Codes

	Measure Ref Code	Intervention Field Code
EMPLOYABILITY	1	
(Re)-Integration into the labour market		21 (10%), 22 (13%), 23 (22%)
ENTREPRENEURSHIP	2	
Business Creation		22(3%), 24 (7%)
ADAPTABILITY	3	
Lifelong learning	(i)	21 (2%), 22 (2%), 24 (6%)
Adaptability to change and new communications technologies	(ii)	21 (2%), 22 (2%), 24 (6%)
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	4	
Reconciliation of family and professional life		21 (3%), 24 (3%), 25 (6%)
ASYLUM SEEKERS	5	
Asylum seekers		21 (1%), 22 (2%), 23 (2%)
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	6	
Technical Assistance	(i), (ii), (iii)	411 (3%), 412 (2%) 413/ 415 (3%)

APPENDIX 5 Financial Management and Control Arrangements for draw-down of ESF Funds



APPENDIX 6

Acronyms

CIP	Community Initiative Programme
DPA	Development Partnership Agreements
DPs	Development Partnerships
ECDB	EQUAL Common Database
EEA	European Economic Area
EES	European Employment Strategy
EHRDOP	Employment and Human Resource Development Operational Programme
ELIA	EQUAL Local Input Application
ERF	European Refugee Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESRI	Economic Social Research Institute
ETCIM	EQUAL Transnational Co-operation Internet Module
EU	European Union
FCU	Financial Control Unit
FRO	Financial Resource Officer
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IAU	Internal Audit Unit
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LTU	Long Term Unemployed
MA	Managing Authority
MPG	Mainstreaming Policy Group
MS	Member States
NAPS incl	National Action Plan for Social Inclusion
NDP	National Development Plan
NEAP	National Employment Action Plan
NRP	National Reform Programme
NSS	National Support Structure
NUTS	Nomenclature des Unites Territoriales pour Statistiques
OP	Operational Programme
RIFE	Remote Input for EQUAL
SEUPB	Special EU Programmes Body
TCA	Transnational Co-operation Agreements
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
WLBN DP	Work Life Balance Network Development Partnership

