

**Minutes**  
**of the Seventh Meeting**  
**of the**  
**EQUAL Mainstreaming Policy Group**

**Mont Clare Hotel, Dublin**

**28<sup>th</sup> February 2006**

Joint Chairs: Vincent Landers                      Dept. Enterprise, Trade and Employment  
                    Niall Crowley                                      Equality Authority

Attendance: See Appendix 1

**Agenda** ( see appendix 2)

**Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted

**Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted. There were no matters arising.

**Mainstreaming – 2007-2013 ESF Programme**

Mr Landers gave a comprehensive presentation on the ongoing work on preparation for the 2007- 2013 period of Structural Funding for Ireland. He addressed the following:

**(i) The National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF)**

Mr. Landers said that the NSRF will be a legal agreement between Ireland and the European Commission setting out how, in general, the Structural Funds allocated to Ireland will be applied during the period 2007-2013.

He mentioned that the Department of Finance started negotiations last year in relation to the NSRF. The Department of Finance is the lead Department in relation to structural funds and, in this context, a meeting between Ireland and the Commission

took place in January. The Commission produced an annotated agenda in terms of what Ireland might include in the NSRF. A draft text is awaited from the Department of Finance in order to take this process forward.

The Department of Education is a key player in relation to the human capital investment aspects of the NSRF but they have not provided text yet in this regard. The Commission is keen on educational measures being included.

## **(ii) Priorities for ESF in 2007 –2013**

Mr. Landers went on to speak about the future ESF Programme 2007-2013. He indicated that the ESF Operational Programme next time around will be co-financed only. The total Programme Funding will be approx. €400 million. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment will act as the Managing Authority for the Programme. He further mentioned that, two priority areas have been identified for Ireland which will receive ESF support under the next ESF Programme. The two priority areas which have been identified are Participation and Activation of the Labour Force and Education and Training to increase the adaptability of the work force.

### **Participation and Activation of the Labour Force**

This priority area will focus on groups who are inactive in the workforce, such as, females, older workers and part-time workers.

### **Education and Training**

This priority area will focus on improving the adaptability of the workforce under four key areas:

- Life Long Learning
- Industrial Re-structuring
- Upskilling and Productivity
- Education

## **(iii) The National Reform Programme for Ireland**

Mr. Landers indicated that Ireland's National Reform Programme addresses, amongst others, the key labour market policies that will contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Agenda. It states that 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: the underlying population increase; increased participation by the unemployed and other groups outside the labour force, and migration.
- Maintaining a strong focus on education and training, including lifelong learning and training for those in employment to ensure the development of a high skilled, adaptable workforce.

These will be reflected in the Government's strategic policy and implementation programmes for human resource development.

**(iv) ESF Programme for Next Round**

Mr. Landers informed the members of the MPG that the ESF Unit in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has responsibility for drafting the next ESF Programme. There will be one dedicated ESF Programme in the next round.

Timeframe for drafting of the programme text.

A consultation letter would be issued in the coming weeks to the members of the EHRDOP Monitoring Committee seeking input/submissions. The members would be given 2/4 weeks to reply. The draft programme has to be finalised by July 2006 for presentation to the Government.

He also indicated that there would be no EQUAL programme in the next round of Structural Funding. However, there is an important opportunity for the EQUAL learning to be incorporated into the next Programme. He suggested that a sub-group of the MPG could be set up to discuss mainstreaming/innovation and produce a paper in this context for submission to the ESF Unit. His suggestion was well received. He asked Niall Crowley if he would agree to chair the sub-group. Niall Crowley agreed and said that on receipt of the consultation letter he would convene a sub-group to draft a paper that would be rooted in the EQUAL experience. The paper would be sent out to all the members of the MPG for comment before it is formally submitted to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on behalf of the MPG. He asked members of the MPG who are interested in forming the sub-group to contact him.

Mr. Landers mentioned that the paper being put forward will have to be strong and well structured.

## **(v) National Development Plan (NDP)**

The Government has decided that there will be a National Development Plan for the period 2007-2013 but that it will not include EU co-financed activity. The ex-ante evaluation of the NDP is being conducted by the ESRI and is expected to be completed by the end of March

### **Thematic Networking**

Tony Tyrrell made a presentation on Thematic Networking in relation to EQUAL Round 2. He indicated that an issues based approach was adopted in relation to Round 2. The following four networks were established based on the NSS assessment of project activity:

- Inclusive workplace – Accommodating Equality and Diversity
- Accommodating Equality and Diversity in Intergated Services Provision
- Lifelong Learning
- Entrepreneurship

Tony Tyrrell mentioned that the NSS has organised a thematic networking meeting for 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2006. The purpose of the meeting is to develop action plans for each of these four groups based on agreed common themes and the proposed development of a product to be delivered by the end of 2006.

### **Ideas Bank**

Ciara Monaghan made a presentation in relation to the Ideas Bank which the NSS developed and have set up on the EQUAL website. She explained that the Ideas Bank was developed to act as a “Virtual Innovation Centre”, a space where research, innovative tools and practices are housed. The centre provides policymakers and practitioners with a range of workable options in terms of responding to real challenges in developing HR practice to accommodate a diverse workforce or gaining an understanding of how to develop and formalize real interagency co-operation.

She further explained that the Ideas Bank is broken up on the basis of five key policy themes which reflect the focus, direction and relevance of EQUAL project work over the last three years:

- Equality and Diversity
- Migrant Workers
- Entrepreneurship
- Work-Life Balance
- Life Long Learning

The ideas bank promotes the legacy of EQUAL. It focuses on products rather than project activity.

The Managing Authority and NSS are currently planning a launch event to promote the Ideas Bank.

Further information regarding these presentations can be obtained from the MPG page of the EQUAL websites: [www.equal-ci.ie/news/mpg.html](http://www.equal-ci.ie/news/mpg.html)

Further information regarding the Ideas Bank can be obtained from the website: <http://www.ideasbank-equal.info/>

ICTU congratulated the NSS on their development of a great web based innovation and suggested that links to other papers and publications could enhance its usefulness.

IBEC, supported by other members, raised a question about where the Ideas Bank will be housed in the future and who will maintain the EQUAL website after EQUAL ceases to exist.

Ciara Monaghan informed the members that the Ideas Bank has been spoken about in a number of different arenas, including with the Commission and with colleagues in the UK. The Commission is proposing to establish a general Ideas Bank and is hoping that it will be populated by the Member States.

### **Mainstreaming from Round 1**

Mr. Landers informed the members that the Managing Authority have two proposals for mainstreaming on hands, one from SONAS and the other from EQUAL North East. Both of the applications were considered in a favourable light both by the Managing Authority and the Mainstreaming Steering Group. The mainstreaming application form has now been sent to SONAS for completion. EQUAL North East has completed the form but the Managing Authority is awaiting further information for the purpose of drafting a contract.

#### **SONAS**

The objective of the SONAS proposal is to disseminate the best practice developed by SONAS DP with a view to enhancing services to asylum seekers through the building of a “Community of Practice” or Learning Network based on collaboration between statutory and non-governmental bodies with experience of working with the target group.

#### **EQUAL North East**

The proposal concerns the transfer of the Enhanced Re-Integration Foundation Programme Model developed in the EQUAL North East pilot project and establish it in a mainstream Training Services setting.

The model is a new approach to cater for multi dimensional personal development and training needs of the long-term unemployed.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Landers, informed the members that the final date for DP activities will be the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007 to enable the Managing Authority and the Paying Authority, etc. to carry out full due diligence in preparing the final EQUAL claim for transmission to the EU CION.

In relation to mainstreaming the best practice from EQUAL he indicated that the work of Mainstreaming Sub-Committee would hopefully be of assistance in the drafting of the next ESF Operational Programme.

**AOB**

Mr. Landers suggest that the next MPG Meeting should be held early in the summer.

### Appendix 1

<b>Title</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Second Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Mr	Laurence	Bond	Equality Authority, 2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2	Apologies received
Mr	Leonard	Burke	Department of Social and Family Affairs	Declan O'Connor
Ms	Patricia	Callan	IBEC, 84/86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2	√
Mr	Brian	Carroll	NDP-CSF Evaluation Unit, Department of Finance	Apologies received
Ms	Kathleen	Connolly	NDP Gender Equality Unit, Dept of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, Floor 2, Bishop's Square, Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2	√
Mr	Niall	Crowley	Equality Authority, 2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2	√
Ms	Mary	Donnelly	FAS, 27/33 Upper Baggot Street, Dublin 4	
Mr	Paul	Doyle	EU Structural Funds Unit, Dept of Education and Science, Marlborough St, Dublin 1	
Mr	Peter	Flood	IBEC, 84/86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2	
Ms	Caoimhe	Gavin	Chambers of Commerce of Ireland, 17 Merrion Square, Dublin 2	Jessica Dempsey
Mr	Ken	Gorman	Employment and Training Strategy Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2	√
Ms	Audrey	Hagerty	EU Structural Funds Unit, Dept of Education and Science, Marlborough St, Dublin 1	
Mr	Stephen	Hanna	Office for Social Inclusion, Department of Social and Family Affairs	√
Mr	Shaun	Henry	The Special EU Programmes Body, 6 Cromac Place, BELFAST, BT34 3PY	

Ms	Sinead	Jackson	EQUAL Technical Support Structure, Work Research Co-operative Social and Economic Consultants, Strand House, 22 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1	√
Ms	Dolores	Keating	South and East Regional Assembly, Assembly House, O'Connell Street, Waterford	√
Ms	Olivia	Keyes	EQUAL Managing Authority, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2	√
Mr	Vincent	Landers	EQUAL Managing Authority, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2	√
Ms	Julia	Long	NDP Gender Equality Unit, Dept of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, Floor 2, Bishop's Square, Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2	√
Ms	Catherine	Maguire	IBEC, 84/86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2	√
Mr	Michael	McCauley	Border, Midlands and West Regional Assembly, The Square, Ballaghaderren, Co. Roscommon	
Ms	Clodagh	McDonnell	Department of Social and Family Affairs	
Ms	Shira	Mehlman	FAS, 27/33 Upper Baggot Street, Dublin 4	Apologies received
Ms	Ciara	Monaghan	EQUAL Technical Support Structure, Work Research Co-operative Social and Economic Consultants, Strand House, 22 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1	√
Ms	Pauline	Moreau	Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform	Apologies received
Ms	Mary	Moriarty	EQUAL Managing Authority, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2	√
Ms	Deirdre	O'Higgins	Employment and Training Strategy Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2	Apologies received
Mr	Brendan	O'Leary	Policy Unit on Employment Services, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2	Apologies received

Ms	Carole	Sullivan	Equality Authority, 2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2	√
Mr	Tony	Tyrrell	EQUAL Technical Support Structure, Work Research Co-operative Social and Economic Consultants, Strand House, 22 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1	√
Mr	Frank	Vaughan	ICTU, 31/32 Parnell Square, Dublin 1	√
Mr	Gerard	Walker	National Economic and Social Forum, 16 Parnell Square, Dublin 1	
Ms	Marion	Wilkinson	National Disability Authority, 25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4	Apologies received

## **Appendix 2**

### **EQUAL Mainstreaming Policy Group Meeting**

**Location: Mont Clare Hotel**

**Date: Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006**

**Time: Commencing at 9.30 a.m.**

### **Agenda**

- 1.** Adoption of Agenda
- 2.** Adoption of minutes of the last meeting
- 3.** Mainstreaming – 2007-2013 ESF Programme  
– Current Round Applications
- 4.** Thematic Networking
- 5.** Ideas Bank – Presentation and Discussion
- 6.** AOB  
Landers suggested that the next MPG Meeting should be held in early summer.