

MINUTES

of the Sixth Meeting of the EQUAL Mainstreaming Policy Group

The Hilton Hotel, Dublin

17th February 2005

Joint Chairs: William Parnell Dept. of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Niall Crowley Equality Authority

Attendance: See Appendix 1.

1. **Agenda**

The draft agenda for the meeting was adopted. The Agenda provided for an update on the outcome of Round 2 call for proposals; mechanism for capturing the mainstreaming lessons from Round 1; review of terms of reference, representation and discussion on draft criteria for mainstream proposals; a presentation by FAS on how established bodies can organise for mainstreaming and consideration and discussion of summary proposals on hands for mainstream funding.

2. **Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising**

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

3. **Information from the Steering Committee**

The steering committee had begun the process of reviewing the mainstreaming strategy in the light of the start of Round 2 of EQUAL. The committee had discussed representation on the MPG and how this might be enhanced. It was agreed that the DPs may not be fully utilising their own inherent mainstreaming potential given their broad organisational make-up. A new formal mainstreaming funding mechanism was discussed and a formal application process was devised which would be disseminated for discussion at the MPG.

Further up-dates were provided on the status of mainstreaming proposals on hands which were discussed previously:

- **Westmeath DP Equality Mark** – Discussions were ongoing with FAS, the Equality Authority and the Managing Authority as to how best to disseminate and mainstream the product.

- **Equal at Work Job Rotation model** – following further discussions with the Department, the DP had decided to postpone pro tem the implementation of an extended job rotation model
- **TRED equality and diversity course** – The course has been accredited by NUI, Galway and strong interest has been expressed from HR managers and trainers in participating on the course

4. Outcome of Round 2 call for proposals- mainstreaming implications

Tommy Murray informed the Group that Round 1 of EQUAL would be coming to a close within the next six months. Nevertheless mainstreaming activity would continue. The EQUAL selection committee met on 1 December 2004 to make the selections for funding under Round 2. On the basis of consensus, a total of 22 DPs were selected for funding, three of which were Round 1 DPs (a total of 19 applications were received from Round 1 projects). The developmental stage under Round 2 would be completed by end-June 2005.

In terms of the selections and policy themes chosen, the selection committee were cognisant of the Monitoring Committee's decision to strengthen the adaptability Pillar (in particular lifelong learning) following the recommendation contained in the mid-term evaluation report. This is reflected in an increase in the number of DPs selected under that Pillar in Round 2. The MPG was circulated with papers giving a synopsis of DPs selected, including a matrix outlining particular target groups and policy targets for which the DPs would be relevant. This could form the basis of ongoing engagement between DPs and relevant members of the MPG in terms of future mainstreaming.

The Managing Authority gave an outline of the selection process and the agreed selection criteria following queries in that regard from certain members. The unsuccessful applicants would be encouraged to engage with the Round 2 DPs particularly in terms of future mainstreaming proposals and the new process being devised for accessing mainstreaming funding (see Item 6 below).

5. Capturing the mainstreaming lessons from Round 1

The Managing Authority has tasked the Technical Support Structure to develop a compendium of good practice as a mainstreaming product in order to capture the lessons from Round 1 in a tangible way. The TSS explained that the compendium would essentially be web-based and would, among other things, facilitate policymakers and others in accessing tools and good practice models developed and produced by the DPs.

Carole Sullivan proposed to the Managing Authority that the Equality Authority would carry out a short piece of research to review the process of mainstreaming under EQUAL. The Equality Authority would like a mainstreaming framework to be developed that would define potential mainstreaming processes and outcomes and identify how best to support mainstreaming. It would seek to support mainstreaming at Development Partnership, organisational, regional, national and EU levels. It would be based on the understanding in the Operational Programme, the experience to date

under EQUAL and good practice in other jurisdictions. Discussions would take place with the Managing Authority and the TSS as to how this might be progressed.

The Managing Authority gave an overview of the evaluation cycle for EQUAL. The mid-term evaluation was completed by end-2003 which was a regulatory requirement although, in reality, the Programme would not reach mid-term until the middle of 2005. Furthermore, at that stage, the mainstreaming strategy and the MPG were still at an early stage of development. Nevertheless opportunities would exist for members of the MPG to input to the forthcoming update of the mid-term evaluation to be completed by end-2005.

6. Moving mainstreaming forward

Since early January 2004, the Managing Authority explained that it had been working, together with the MPG steering Committee, on a proposal for adopting criteria for formally examining and reviewing proposals for mainstreaming under EQUAL going forward. The MPG previously agreed that the Steering Committee assesses all mainstreaming proposals received in the first instance, to determine whether the proposal contained sufficient focus, clarity and mainstreaming potential to be brought forward to the MPG proper. Proposals for mainstreaming were submitted for discussion and review by the Steering Group. If these were considered to have potential added value they would be developed into full-scale, costed action plans seeking financial support through the mainstreaming (Action 3) budget held by the Managing Authority.

As a fundamental principle, mainstreaming proposals should build on activities developed or piloted by Development Partnerships under the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme. In order for proposals to be effective in influencing mainstream policy and practise, they should build on demonstrable outcomes, practise and analysis from EQUAL.

The new strategy provided that mainstreaming proposals would be made by “EQUAL Mainstreaming Networks”, which must include an existing Development Partnership (DP), DP partner(s), or a combination of existing DPs or DP partners. The Network would ideally also include one or more of the mainstream target organisations. This engagement process was central to extracting and applying the learning. Partners or organisations, which were not involved in piloting the activity under EQUAL, could be involved as partners in the mainstreaming proposal if their participation adds to the potential to achieve solid mainstreaming outcomes from the Programme. The proposal was put before the MPG for its consideration.

It was agreed that the proposed mechanism would introduce greater flexibility than before in that proposals could be made by EQUAL projects or groups of EQUAL projects or a combination of existing DPs or DP partners to be enjoined in a Mainstreaming Network which could include organisations and other experts outside of EQUAL. There would also be scope for unsuccessful Round 2 applicants to become involved. Group members were asked to provide any written comments within two weeks.

7. How established Bodies can organise for mainstreaming

Shira Mehlman (FAS) gave a presentation on how mainstream organisations, such as FAS, could prepare and organise themselves to interact with Programmes such as EQUAL in terms of mainstreaming. FAS was represented in a significant number of DPs and it was important to adopt a more strategic and corporate response to their work and findings which would be relevant to the broader FAS remit. Shira had established a special internal group to initially collect and coordinate information concerning the activities of the relevant DPs. In essence, it was important to advise the DPs in terms of policies and priority issues in order to facilitate later mainstreaming processes.

Familiarity of the organisational culture by the projects would also be an important approach and a clarity around what particular aspects of policy and/or practice needed to be changed or developed. Mainstreaming must also be built in from the beginning and not merely bolted on at the end. The DPs should also take into account that mainstreaming involves the transfer of the lessons and not necessarily the project. The mainstream organisations themselves, on the other hand, needed to be open and want to create innovation.

FAS had also facilitated contacts between other organisations and the relevant DPs on certain issues, for example, work life balance tools, and acted as an advocate in that regard.

In summary, the salient points were:

Mainstream organisation

- Gather the information on the various projects (accessed through the MPG deliberations, conferences, launches, product development, collective and one to one meetings)
- Determine added value to policy and organisation
- Ensure targeting by the DP of relevant individual(s) in the organisation
- Support a capacity to mainstream by acting as conduit/advocate and support to relevant function(s) and regions, in the case of FAS
- Ensure central contact point for DPs
- Be open to innovation and integration of good ideas

Development Partnerships

- Develop a clear understanding of what changes need to be made
- Recognise that investment is in the learning and not, necessarily, the project
- Provide analysis and evidence of what works
- Be cognisant of mainstream organisation's perspective/time and resources and competing priorities

Role for the MPG

- DPs may use the MPG to present their projects
- Provision of advice and guidance to DPs on how to pursue mainstreaming from an inter-Departmental/Agency perspective
- Assisting mainstream organisations in innovation in mainstreaming

- Bridging the gap between Round 1 and Round 2 in terms of new learning
 - Facilitate inputs from EQUAL to related activities, e.g. NESF, inter-Governmental Committees, Partnership Agreements etc.
 - Facilitate local mainstreaming in terms of CDB action plans, local authorities, other Programmes such as Rapid and Clár.
8. The Group discussed the various aspects of mainstreaming referred to in the presentation which most members considered to deliver a good methodology for engaging with the mainstreaming aspects of EQUAL. The Group appreciated the difficulties in changing existing policies and practices. It was agreed that good mainstreaming work was being carried out at project and local levels but that bridging the gap between local and national mainstreaming was a difficult challenge because it involved in some cases cultural and organisational change and an openness to innovation and creativity. The Managing Authority and the TSS considered that perhaps the constituent organisations of the DPs, which represented the social partners and Statutory Agencies, could be more influential in pursuing the EQUAL mainstreaming strategy within their respective organisations. Members of the MPG could also use their influence in that regard. Potentially, it should be possible for the social partners, at least, to act as advocates for EQUAL in the context of social partnership negotiations and partnership agreements.
9. In terms of mainstreaming in the private sector, Patricia Callan considered that companies would only engage with the DPs provided real and tangible mainstreaming outcomes and effects could be demonstrated which were of added value to employees and to the company. It was noted that in Round 2, there would be a greater involvement by employers directly and entrepreneurship and lifelong learning were significant themes. The Chair indicated that the Managing Authority would facilitate further engagement between DPs and organisations and policymakers. Accordingly, the Chair requested the members to consider whether the representation on the Group needed to be enhanced further by the involvement in the Group of other specific policy areas within Departments and Agencies. The Managing Authority would also consider how to increase the public profile of the Programme particularly in relation to mainstreaming outcomes. The Chair also suggested that it would be useful to invite DPs to present proposals to the Group for discussion.

10. Consideration and discussion of summary proposals on hands for mainstream funding

Two proposals for mainstreaming funding were submitted by through the MPG steering committee.

Westmeath Equal DP-Equality Healthcheck: The Group felt that deeper discussions should be held with key stakeholders, SFA, IBEC, ICTU and FAS). The involvement of the SFA in further testing/piloting the product could also enhance its mainstreaming potential. Questions arose as to the complementarity of the product with the FAS excellence through people award process and the need to avoid duplication in that regard. The MPG steering Group would continue explorations with the DP before any decision was made to provide additional funding.

Equal at Work DP- development of competency based recruitment model: The MPG considered that the proposal could be supported provided key equality issues were explored. The objective should be on the expansion of the competency based recruitment model.

The Chair indicated that additional proposals were under consideration by the Steering Group and these would be examined on the basis of the new mainstreaming assessment model and criteria as discussed.

11. AOB

The next meeting would be held before the end of the Summer 2005.

T. Murray
EQUAL Managing Authority

Appendix 1 – Attendance List

Name			Organisation	Attendance
Mr	David	Barry	Employment and Training Strategy Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2	Apologies Received
Mr	John	Daly	Employment and Training Strategy Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2	√
Mr	Leonard	Burke	Department of Social and Family Affairs, Block 2, Plassy Technical Park, Castletroy, Limerick	Apologies Received
Ms	Patricia	Callan	Small Firms Association, 84/86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2	√
Mr	Peter	Flood	IBEC, 84/86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2	√
Ms	Sarah	Craig	National Economic and Social Forum, 16 Parnell Square, Dublin 1	√
Mr	Niall	Crowley	Equality Authority, 2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2	√
Mr	Padraig	Cullinane	Labour Market Policy, 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	√
Ms	Brona	Deegan	EQUAL Managing Authority	√
Ms	Olivia	Keyes	EQUAL Managing Authority	√
Ms	Kathleen	Glackin	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2	√
Ms	Edna	Jordan	National Centre for Partnership and Performance, 16 Parnell Square, Dublin 1	Apologies Received
Ms	Dolores	Keating	South and East Assembly, Assembly House, O'Connell Street, Waterford	√
Mr	Michael	McCauley	Border, Midlands and West Assembly, The Square, Ballaghaderren, Co. Roscommon	Apologies Received
Ms	Clodagh	McDonnell	Dept of Social and Family Affairs	√
Ms	Shira	Mehlman	FAS, Head Office, 27/33 Upper Baggot Street, Dublin 4	√
Ms	Mary	Donnelly	FAS, Head Office, 27/33 Upper Baggot Street, Dublin 4	√

Ms	Ciara	Monaghan	EQUAL TSS	√
Ms	Sinead	Jackson	EQUAL TSS	√
Mr	Tommy	Murray	EQUAL National Coordinator Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2	√
Mr	John	O'Callaghan	Equality Division, Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	√
Mr	Jack	O'Connor	Special EU Programmes Body, European Union House, Monaghan	Apologies Received
Mr	William	Parnell	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2	√
Mr	Paul	Doyle	Dept of Education and Science EU Structural Funds	Apologies Received
Ms	Audrey	Hagerty	Dept of Education and Science EU Structural Funds	√
Ms	Carole	Sullivan	Equality Authority, 2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2	√
Mr	Tony	Tyrrell	EQUAL Technical Support Structure (TSS) Work Research Co-operative, Social and Economic Consultants, 4 Lower Ormond Quay, Dublin 1	√
Mr	Frank	Vaughan	ICTU, 31/32 Parnell Square, Dublin 1	√
Ms	Marion	Wilkinson	National Disability Authority, 25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4	Apologies Received
Mr	Laurence	Bond	Equality Authority	√
Ms	Julia	Long	NDP/CSF Gender Equality Unit/D Justice, equality and Law Reform	Apologies Received