

SECTION 5

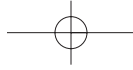
DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING ON YOUR EQUAL PROJECT

5.1 Why it is Good Practice to Document and Report your DP Activity

Documenting and reporting on the process, outputs, results and impacts of EQUAL projects is an important input into capturing and identifying the lessons for policy and practice arising from EQUAL at national and EU levels. By their nature, innovatory projects are learning environments and the fundamental objective of documenting these projects is to ensure that the learning is recorded and made available for dissemination to a wider audience. In this regard it is of note that dissemination is one of the six key principles of EQUAL. Documenting and disseminating information on EQUAL projects helps to ensure that the learning generated is transferred to organisations and personnel outside of the immediate project. This, in turn, helps EQUAL projects inform and influence mainstream policy and practice and thus to achieve the overall aim of EQUAL – *combating all forms of exclusion, discrimination and inequalities in the labour market.*

If Development Partnerships and their projects are to contribute to securing this aim, they must produce relevant, timely and high quality documentation. Project reports should tell the story of the project - from its inception to its completion (see notes on Project Annual Reports below). They must state clearly:

- ⊙ the issues the project sought to address;
- ⊙ why and how these issues were identified;
- ⊙ what the project did to address them;



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- ⊙ the process through which the response was implemented; and,
- ⊙ the level of success achieved.

Project reports should also identify the factors that contributed to or hindered the success of the project. Documenting and reporting on EQUAL projects, therefore, is not a retrospective view of the project. It is an ongoing process, both informed by and, in turn, reflecting a process of ongoing review and assessment of the performance of the project.

This section of your manual will look further at the functions and rationale for documenting and reporting your project and will provide a practical guide to the types of reporting milestones your project will have to meet during Actions 1, 2 and 3 of EQUAL.

5.2 The Function of Reporting and Documenting under EQUAL

The reports produced by EQUAL projects serve a number of important functions. These include the following:

- ⊙ Regular reporting on progress can assist project managers and Development Partnership personnel to monitor and assess progress and achievements;
- ⊙ Reporting enables the NSS to overview the progress of individual projects, groups of projects within particular priority themes, and progress across the initiative as a whole. This, in turn, enables the NSS, in consultation with the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee, to identify remedial actions at individual project, priority theme, and programme levels;



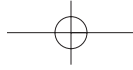
- ⊙ Project reports form part of the necessary documentation to draw down ESF payments;
- ⊙ Relevant and high quality documentation that is widely disseminated contributes to the achievement of the dissemination / mainstreaming principle of EQUAL; and finally,
- ⊙ Project reports are a crucial source of information for any evaluations of EQUAL that originate at local, national or EU levels.

5.3 Reporting Requirements under Action I

Action I is the planning and development phase of the programme. Action I will start on the 1st January 2005 and can extend to the 30th June 2005. However, it will be possible for a project to move into operational phase at any time prior to 30th June 2005 once the DP has met all of the Action I requirements to a sufficient standard (as determined by the NSS in consultation with the Managing Authority).

The contract you will receive from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is valid for the entire life cycle of your project, as long as you provide the necessary Action I documentation and subsequently comply with the reporting requirements throughout the life of the project. The core documentation required for Action I as follows:

- ⊙ Action Plan for 2005 – 2007;
- ⊙ Non-financial tables;
- ⊙ Financial plan 2005 – 2007;
- ⊙ Development Partnership Agreement;
- ⊙ Transnational Co-operation.



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Templates for the Action Plan, Financial Plan and the Development Partnership Agreement are provided in the accompanying CD as previously referenced.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Please note that you will be required to produce drafts of the various required documentation during Action 1 that will form the basis for discussion between the DP and the National Support Structure.

5.4 Reporting Under Actions 2 and 3

Actions 2 and 3 of the programme run concurrently. Having successfully completed Action 1, EQUAL projects move directly into the implementation (Action 2) and mainstreaming/dissemination/networking (Action 3) phases of the programme. Activity under Actions 2 and 3 may continue until 31st December 2007.

Throughout the life of the project, EQUAL projects must report on both Action 2 and Action 3 type activities on a quarterly and annual basis. For example, you will be required to report on expenditure, participant recruitment, progression and exit as well as on other activities and strategies deployed.

5.4.1 Quarterly Reporting Requirements

The first set of Monitoring Returns will cover the Action 1 period (up to a maximum of six months from 1st January 2005 but potentially less). The second set of returns will cover the period from the end of Action 1 activity to end September 2005. All subsequent sets of Monitoring Returns will cover quarterly activity i.e. October to December 2005, January to March 2006 and so on. Returns must be made to the NSS before the end of the month following the quarter end. So, for example, the return for October to December 2005 must be submitted by end-January 2006 and so on.



All relevant forms are available to you on the CD that accompanies this manual.

On a quarterly basis you will be required to produce the following:

- ⊙ Quarterly Monitoring Report;
- ⊙ Quarterly Financial Report;
- ⊙ Participant Start and Completion Details (registering start-up and exit for each participant detailing various demographic and other participant characteristic).

The Quarterly Monitoring Report (currently under review) requires you to report on a range of issues including:

- ⊙ Staffing levels;
- ⊙ Activities engaged in over the reporting period;
- ⊙ Numbers and characteristics of people benefiting from the project;
- ⊙ Transnational activity;
- ⊙ Achievements;
- ⊙ Events etc.

USEFUL TIP:

You can use the Quarterly Monitoring Report report to feed into your project's internal reporting system and you can accumulate and edit quarterly reports to produce much of the body of your project's Annual Report.

The Financial Quarterly Report accompanies the Quarterly Monitoring Report. The financial report provides an indication of the project's rate of expenditure on a quarterly basis across a wide range of headings (e.g. participant allowances, rent,

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salaries, transnational visits etc.). It is essential that these returns are completed in full and on time as they form part of the feedback to the EQUAL Monitoring Committee. Late submissions may also impact on the project's ability to draw down funding.

Where relevant, Participant Start and Completion details should be returned on a quarterly basis. Participants are defined as those in respect of whom there is an on-going input by the project. This is typically, but not exclusively, a training or education input. The purpose of the participant start and completion forms is to monitor the type of people benefiting under EQUAL.

We are currently devising a system to facilitate the return of participant related data. This will be provided to you prior to your entry to the operational phase of the program.

WHO IS AN EQUAL PARTICIPANT?

A participant is defined as a person who engages with the project on a consistent and long-term basis. The type of engagement with the project could include training, mediation, counselling etc. People who attend a training course for one day are not considered to be participants because they are not receiving an ongoing or consistent intervention.

5.4.2 Annual Reporting Requirements

On an annual basis you are required to provide:

- ⦿ Annual Report – *(report on project activity within a given year).*
- ⦿ Final Claim *(end of year financial Claim).*

Annual Reports:

At the end of each year of operation, Development Partnerships are required to produce a detailed report on the implementation and impact of their project. The final report should be provided to NSS by the end of March of the subsequent year.

ANNUAL REPORT – KEY TIP 1:

When producing the annual report or indeed any report – you must use the official logos.

ANNUAL REPORT – KEY TIP 2:

If you are contracting an external person or organisation to undertake this piece of work, tendering rules apply.

Final Claims (financial):

At the end of each year, projects will be expected to present a set of audited accounts compiled by a third party auditor along with a report on expenditure (ESF & MF) for the year in question. This suite of documents must be presented to the NSS in order to process outstanding claims and to trigger ESF payments in the following year.

The following set of documentation is required for the final claim:

1. Set of Audited Accounts completed by external auditor.
2. ESF specific audit cert.
3. Income and Expenditure excel spreadsheet.
4. EC2 – ESF final Claim form.
5. Form B1.

