

Communications Action Plan

GB Equal Programme

2007 - 2008

This document sets out the publicity plan and mainstreaming activities of the GB Equal Programme for 2007 and 2008, including a strategy for end of programme publicity activities.

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Part 1: Mainstreaming the outcomes of the Equal Community Initiative in Great Britain.

1.1 Introduction

The strategy for mainstreaming the outcomes of the **Equal** Community Initiative in Great Britain sets out the definition of mainstreaming as applied to the ESF Community Initiative **Equal**. The strategy is driven by the vision that:

Equal Development Partnerships (DPs) will produce evidence-based solutions to questions emerging from the policy-making community. The policy-making community will be aware of the opportunities offered through working with the DPs, and demand for their ideas and findings will be high.

It is based around the **Equal** Community Initiative Plan (CIP) and the National Action Plans (NAP) for employment and social inclusion and has been devised with reference to the interim and final evaluations of **Equal** in Great Britain and in consultation with DPs and Thematic Networking Groups (TNGs) members.

The strategy makes a distinction between vertical' and 'horizontal' 'mainstreaming directions. Its leading principle is 'demand-led mainstreaming', which it seeks to achieve through the involvement of all **Equal** stakeholders (Managing Authority, National Support Structure, Thematic Networking Groups and Development Partnerships) in all stages of the mainstreaming process, including the planning and implementation of individual theme-by-theme strategies.

1.2 What is mainstreaming?

Development Partnerships funded under **Equal** carry out 'test-bed' activities, where innovative activities are tried and tested on a partnership basis, including cooperation with DPs in other European countries. A key aim of **Equal** is to feed lessons learned from individual DPs or group of DPs into the policy process at the local, national or European level – a process known as mainstreaming.

For the purposes of this strategy, mainstreaming is defined as:

the dissemination and transfer of outcomes from DPs which influence policy, the delivery of policy (including the delivery of services) or the take-up of new products and services at peer or higher levels (including local, regional, sectoral, national or transnational).

Mainstreaming has two aspects:

- *Vertical* – aimed at influencing national policy (the 'higher' level), with the role of intermediaries being important in the transference of key lessons.
- *Horizontal* – aimed at the DP, partners and other local or regional agencies (the 'peer'-level) with similar interests, and commonly focusing on practical lessons.

Mainstreaming is not the same as dissemination. Mainstreaming refers to the actual use of DP findings in the adoption of new practice and the formulation of policy, whereas dissemination relates to publicising lessons by means of reports, events and thematic papers.

1.3 Role of Thematic Networking Groups

Thematic Networking Groups (TNGs) continue to provide a bridge between practitioners, the DPs and the policy-makers to share information and best practice and to work together to make sure the outputs from DPs are relevant to, and influence, current or future policy. The TNGs allow policy makers to benefit from the lessons learned through Equal. They also provide a forum to discuss policy developments and to network with other DPs. This helps DPs relate their work back to key policy issues and improve mainstreaming opportunities.

Development Partnerships make their own efforts to target policy makers. Many have policy makers or people with influence in their partnership, for example from the Equal Opportunities Commission, local or national Learning and Skills Councils, the DTI's Small Business Service and the Prison Service. However, to make sure that there is co-ordinated and focused dialogue between DPs and policy representatives, national Thematic Networking Groups and European Thematic Groups have been established.

1.4 Action 3

Within **Equal** networking, dissemination and mainstreaming activities are discrete activities, funded under Action 3 of the Programme.

Action 3 funding is available for the dissemination and mainstreaming of the innovative methodologies, materials and lessons learned from DPs' Action 2 activities.

Action 3 runs until 31 December 2007. There are also 4 Mainstreaming Partnership Agreements that did not deliver Action 2 activity.

Part 2: Publicising the programme

2.1 Introduction

Publicity and promotional activities have been on-going since the launch of the programme in 2001. These have been further enhanced in Round 2 as great effort has been made to increase the visibility of **Equal**. This has benefited the mainstreaming potential of DPs and increased the contributions of key stakeholders. The new activities have included:

- Production of the **Equal** e-zine - introducing policy updates targeted at the **Equal** community and co-ordinating responses to emerging policy questions. This has been a regular publication since early 2006.
- Launching a fresh look and new materials to promote **Equal**.
- Targeted training for DPs on publicity and public/media relations.
- The launch of **Equal Works** - an online repository of **Equal** outputs and outcomes from both rounds of the programme.

Publicity Strategy

Updated in October 2006

This annex updates the publicity strategy for **Equal** as outlined in Annex 1 of the Technical Assistance Strategy (paper Equal MC/2001/09). While the basis of the strategy remains unchanged, an additional chapter on media relations has been included to reflect the desire to capitalise on and further promote the emerging outcomes of **Equal**. The Communications Action Plan will focus on key publicity activities that focus on end of programme findings. **Equal** has the potential to leave key messages that are sustainable and can inform the future delivery of the new Structural Funds and other programmes.

2.2 Background

The initial information and publicity strategy for **Equal** in Great Britain took on board the requirements of Regulation (EC) No. 1159/2000 adopted on 30 May 2000 on publicity measures to be taken by the Member States over the period 2000-2006.

The aims of the strategy are to:

- raise awareness about the specific contribution of **Equal** at national, regional and local levels;
- to promote greater understanding of the scope and objectives of **Equal**
- make the general public aware of the role played by the European Union;

- make potential beneficiaries and relevant organisations aware of the opportunities afforded by **Equal**; and
- ensure that Development Partnerships (DPs) are aware of their obligations to publicise **Equal**.
- publicise results that link into future funding programmes.

The objectives of the strategy are to:

- make sure that key guidance and other promotional products continue to obtain the Crystal Mark of the Plain English Campaign;
- make available publicity materials on the internet;
- provide core **Equal** and ESF messages for those involved in the delivery of **Equal**;
- present a positive image which illustrates the benefits of **Equal**;
- develop an effective dissemination strategy to take forward good practice and results of **Equal** activities;
- provide **Equal** Development Partnerships with mainstreaming training to help them plan strategically, to disseminate messages of good practice and lessons learned.
- promote GB participation in European-level thematic work; and
- clarify and reinforce the relationship between **Equal** and ESF Objective 3.

2.3 Target Audiences

The strategy's objectives will be achieved by targeting specific audiences with a variety of different measures. The following list represents the key groups to be targeted:

- national and specialist media;
- private sector – especially SMEs, but also general promotion of the benefits of **Equal** for businesses;
- local authorities;
- education sector – Further Education and Higher Education;
- voluntary and community sector – a priority will be making voluntary organisations aware of the importance of their role in **Equal**;
- partners/providers – the people and organisations who are formally involved in the implementation of the programme;
- general public – targeted by publicity material which raises awareness of **Equal** and ESF in general;
- government departments – to ensure that they are aware of the potential benefits from links with **Equal**;

- Government Offices in the English regions – to make them aware of potential links between **Equal** and mainstream ESF and other regional initiatives;
- Jobcentre Plus, Learning & Skills Councils, Regional Development Agencies and Local Strategic Partnerships;
- representatives from European networks and associations

These target audiences have been selected to reflect the aims of the programme and also to reach beyond those immediately involved in **Equal** and ESF to raise awareness among a wider constituency.

2.4 Delivery

The European Social Fund Division's **Equal** team will have overall responsibility for the monitoring and co-ordination of publicity measures at a national level, with assistance from the **Equal** national support structure.

The Equal GB Support Unit will be responsible for delivering the publicity strategy.

They will work closely and in consultation with ESF Division, the European

Commission, the Scotland and Wales Support Units, national and regional partners, other relevant organisations and DPs.

All DPs will be issued with comprehensive and clear guidance so that they can fulfil their own publicity requirements. In 2006, DPs have been supported in fulfilling their publicity requirements, by the provision of common publicity materials and a new and comprehensive set of guidance materials on publicity and dissemination.

The European Social Fund Division's **Equal** team and the GB Equal Support Unit are working with supporting organisations including Tribal PLC, the Centre for Social and Economic Inclusion and Government Offices in the Regions to provide support to DPs' own publicity and dissemination efforts. The on-line repository, "**Equal Works**", launched in March 2005 continues to grow and showcases Round 1 and Round 2 results.

2.5 Activities

Appendix 1 of the TA Strategy's Publicity Strategy gives details of the main plan of activities for the strategy. It includes activities that have already been implemented in the period up to 2006.

2.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of the implementation of the GB **Equal** Publicity Strategy will be essential in its effective delivery. This will be undertaken by the National Support Structure and key evaluation procedures will include:

- monitoring publicity and information activity through feedback mechanisms and a customer satisfaction survey.
- an ongoing interaction with, and consideration of, public views through forums on the website;
- regular discussions with involved parties, in particular, beneficiary organisations; and
- the inclusion of a section on publicity and information activities within the **Equal** Annual Implementation Report.

Part 3: End of Programme Publicity Priorities

3.1 Introduction

It is important to continue to raise the profile of **Equal** at all levels. This will ensure all networking, mainstreaming and dissemination activities at programme level are coordinated to enable the successes across all themes and leading principles effectively to be fed into to emerging European, national, regional and local priorities linked to Equal. For example two key agenda's that Equal can link into are the establishment of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) and the new Structural Funds Programmes (2007 – 2013).

By having a defined framework for communications and publicity activities the sustainable outcomes of the programme can be maximised. This will also benefit the mainstreaming successes of Development Partnership's themselves. **Equal** can leave key messages that can influence the future delivery of the new Structural Funds, other funding streams and other Government priorities.

Equal has been a significant pilot project that has brought together both EU and UK Government aims of tackling all forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market both for those in work and those seeking work. It has continued to contribute to the Government's objective of high and stable levels of employment.

3.2 Why end of programme communications and publicity matter?

- To gather a comprehensive picture of the processes and experiences of **Equal** DP's with a view to leaving a detailed profile of what worked, or did not work and why.
- To identify key issues that will help the policy priorities of Government Departments (inc National LSC and Jobcentre Plus), regional authorities and the European Commission, particularly in terms of programme management and the administration of future funding.

The Equal programme closes in December 2007 and it is important that all programme level mainstreaming and communications to the end of the programme are enhanced and built on to enable clear links to be made to emerging policies.

To enable programme level mainstreaming during this period to be driven by a 'demand-led' approach it is important to understand what the identified 'demands' are and how lessons from Equal can be transferred. Using the priorities identified in the Draft National Strategic Reference Framework for ESF in England 2007-2013 a matrix has been drawn up highlighting how Equal can provide evidence for key priorities identified. A similar matrix can be created for other priorities at European, national, regional and local level. This matrix is in Annex 1.

How are we going to do it?

The GB **Equal** Support Unit will be responsible for delivering all communications and publicity activities up to December 2008. They will work closely and in consultation with ESF Division, the European Commission, the Scotland and Wales support structures, national and regional partners, other relevant organisations and DPs.

3.3 Getting Started

The primary vehicle for dissemination and mainstreaming in **Equal** is the Action 3 phase of the programme, through which Development Partnerships can draw additional funding (amounting to around 20% of their Action 2 funding).

The **Equal** Support Unit supports the activity of DPs by supporting national Thematic Networking Groups and European Thematic Groups and by publicising the programme.

Existing planned activities include:

- Deliver further TNG meetings, with follow up meetings as required.
- Deliver a series of practical: 'HOW TO' mainstreaming event for DPs (October and November 2006) in association with CESI.
- Production of the Equal Newsletter
- Produce E-zine
- Online outcomes / repository – **Equal Works**, continue to work with Tribal to increase the content of the site.
- To –provide regular contributions to ESF News, and other trade press as required.

- Co-ordinate visibility for events and initiatives organised by others (Employment Week, European Year of Equal Opportunities, Welfare to Work, other national and European events).
- Networking with TNG members and other Government Departments
- The **Equal** Website
- Guidance Notes (Mainstreaming, Innovation, Partnership and Equal Opportunities).
- Other publicity products as required.

New activities to be delivered include:

- End of programme event 'Equal Works 2007' that focuses on what works and Leaving a Legacy. *(A two-day event for policy-makers, delivery agents and DPs which will highlight the outcomes from the programme).*
- Suite of publicity materials – targeting English regions and identified priorities in the Draft National Strategic Reference Framework for ESF in England 2007-2013, including updates on good practice that has emerged from Equal. *(to include DP fiches based on the themes of the programme and cross cutting issues).*
- Equal 2 video – 'Leaving a Legacy' – what worked and what next. *(This video will be used to open the Equal Works 2007 conference, it will celebrate and highlight the achievements of Equal in GB; draw attention to the positive impact of Equal funding; and spark new ideas for future funding and project activities).*

Annex 1:
The 'demand' matrix using based on priorities in the Draft National Strategic Reference Framework.

<i>Priorities for new ESF programme in England</i>	<i>Examples of work GB Equal Support</i>
<p>The England programme will focus ESF on the employment and skills challenges faced by all regions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Produce 'regional information packs' that include detailed analysis of all Equal activity underway in</i> • <i>Provide regional information to Co-Financing Or overarching themes.</i>
<p>Future Structural Funds Programmes will respect the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify good practice models of equal opportunity</i> • <i>Validate the lessons learnt</i> • <i>Produce a summary of best practice in these areas</i>
<p>Increasing levels of female entrepreneurship</p> <p>Improving access to finance for SMEs</p> <p>Tackling economic inactivity</p> <p>Workers with low or no skills (inc basic skills, literacy and numeracy)</p> <p>Raising learning participation rates amongst 16-19 year olds</p> <p>Increasing employment rates – target of 2.5 million need to be helped into work</p> <p>2.72 million people claiming incapacity benefit need the right opportunities and support</p> <p>Obstacles to labour market participation – lone parents and older workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evaluate what has worked</i> • <i>Spot the aspects that can be transferred</i> • <i>Validate the lessons learnt</i> • <i>Produce a summary of best practice in these areas</i>