

European Social Fund
Gender Equality and Equal opportunities
Mainstreaming Plan
For England and Gibraltar 2007-2013

Updated for the second half of the ESF programme
(2011-2013)

Revised : March 2014



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1. Aim of this plan

This plan aims to:

- reinforce and support the **commitments** made in the 2007-2013 England and Gibraltar ESF Operational Programme to mainstream gender equality and equal opportunities;
- provide the national ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Sub Committee with a **management tool** and **point of reference** for assessing progress in mainstreaming gender equality and equal opportunities;
- propose objectives which support the achievement of **equality targets** and to contribute, in particular, to increasing the **female participation** rate for the second half of the programme period.

Although this plan is primarily a management tool for the national ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Committee, it will be published on the national DWP/ ESF website for the information of all ESF partners and stakeholders.

2. Policy and legislative context of this plan

The mainstreaming approach

This plan is designed primarily as a management tool for mainstreaming gender equality in the ESF Operational Programme (OP).

The OP explains that the mainstreaming approach for the current ESF programme aims to integrate gender equality and equal opportunities into the key programme processes of:

- (a) planning;
- (b) implementation;
- (c) monitoring; and
- (d) evaluation.

The ESF OP also explains that ESF aims to promote a 'dual' approach to mainstreaming, i.e.:

- horizontal mainstreaming of equality -all projects / providers take equality into account ,using **equality policies** and **equality mainstreaming implementation plans** as tools to help actively promote equality and

help meet ESF regulatory obligations as well as the general duty of the Equality Act 2010 ; and

- vertical mainstreaming – a number of projects providing specialised support for specific equality groups.

The approaches adopted at programme and delivery level aim to ensure that the programme complies with the various domestic and EU legislative requirements as well as the Structural Fund's own regulatory requirements

Progress in mainstreaming is discussed in more detail in section 3.

EU Policy Context

The ESF programme's promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities is important in the context of wider European and domestic policy.

The economic crisis has exacerbated problems faced by disadvantaged people in the EU and poses new challenges for the promotion and mainstreaming of equality. Key challenges include: a shrinking workforce; the need to increase the employment rate for women, young people and older workers; 80 million people with low or basic skills; and 20 million people in or at risk of poverty in the EU.

ESF is one of the EU's key financial tools designed to support the **EU 2020** economic growth strategy – a strategy designed to help the EU recover from the economic crisis. Inclusive growth will be an important component of the strategy. In this context, ESF has a clear role in supporting two of the EU 2020 strategy's **flagship initiatives: Agenda for new skills and jobs** and **European platform against poverty**.

The European Commission expect the ESF programme to play an important role in supporting the **EU Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men (2011-2015)** which builds upon the Roadmap for Equality Between Men and women. The strategy adopts key priorities set out in the European Commission's **Women's Charter**.

More detail on ESF and its role in promoting equality in the wider European context is given in Annex 1.

Domestic Policy Context

The ESF's support for women and people who face barriers in the labour market directly supports the Government's equality strategy “ **Building a**

Fairer Britain” by promoting social mobility, supporting a fair and flexible labour market and helping to embed equality within Government.

DWP has the lead responsibility for promoting the Government’s **Social Justice** agenda across Government and ESF will have an important role to play in supporting agenda. For example, DWP CFO will use ESF to help families with multiple problems as well as help people on incapacity benefit and income support who would not normally be eligible for the Work Programme to access it on a voluntary basis.

Legislative / Regulatory Context

Information about domestic legislation and the relevant regulations for equality are provided in Annexes 2 and 3.

3. Progress made in mainstreaming gender equality and equal opportunities in the first half of the programme

This section of the plan explains:

- the progress that the programme made towards achieving key equality targets as well as details on some of the key equality indicators for jobs and skills
- progress towards the key aims and objectives set out in the plan for the first half of the programme

Progress towards key programme equality targets

| OP Indicator Reference Number. | Programme Indicator | Target | Cumulative achievement | Difference +/- |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | Total number of participants | 1,790,000 | 3,903,798 | +2,113,798 |
| 8. | Female participants | 51% | 38% | -13% |
| 7. | Participants from ethnic minorities | 19% | 20% | +1% |
| 5. | Participants with disabilities or health conditions | 19% | 17% | -2% |
| 6. | Participants aged 50 or over | 19% | 17% | -2% |

Source: DWP ESF 'INES' database (November 2011)

The table above compares the target participation rates for the various protected groups listed.

The table shows that the total number of participants is more than double the original target and, of these, over 1.8 million were unemployed.

The issue of female participation rate being lower than the target that was anticipated at the start of the programme was discussed at the national ESF Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) meeting in September 2010.

ESF Evaluation Team explained that there was a shortfall because:

- There has been a higher number of unemployed participants in Priority 1 than forecast in the first half of the programme and the higher number of

male participants reflects the gender imbalance in the unemployed population.

- The programme flexed to respond to the increase in unemployment which increased more among men than women in England, thereby supporting the European Economic Recovery Plan.

Following the PMC meeting, the European Commission wrote to ESFD stating that :

- Gender equality is a fundamental issue for the European Commission.
- The ESF operational programme was predicated on the basis of promoting gender equality.
- DG EMPL readily acknowledges the impact that the economic crisis has had on mainstream provision in England, with its focus on unemployed and young people, but feel that the programme should be rebalanced by pro-actively targeting female participation within the unemployed target group and refocusing provision on more inactive participants in P1 and P4.
- Within priority 2 there should be more pro-active targeting to continue targeting female groups who now face even greater difficulty on entering the labour market.
- ESFD should consider alternative strategies to encourage female participants onto the programme, in particular, enhancing affordable support for childcare, increasing support for women with caring responsibilities and providing help for women entering non-traditional occupations as well as providing support for progression to flexible and sustainable employment.

The targets for female participation will remain the same during the second half of the programme period. This plan contains a specific aim to achieve female participation targets in the second half of the programme in the section 5 Action Plan.

Good progress has been made towards the other equality targets with the target for ethnic minority participation being exceeded by 2% and the profile for disabled and people aged 50 and over falling short by only 2%.

Progress towards key employment and skills indicators for protected groups

| | In work on leaving (ESF OP priorities 1 and 4 only) | Gained basic skills on leaving | Gained full qualification at level 2 or above on leaving (ESF OP Priorities 2 and 5) |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Target 2007-13 | 201,000 | 160,000 | 174,000 |
| Cumulative achievement | 248,982 | 119,472 | 348,925 |
| % female | 36% | 51% | 47% |
| % disabled | 21% | 11% | 8% |
| % aged 50 or over | 12% | 13% | 17% |
| % ethnic minority | 17% | 29% | 16% |

Source: DWP ESF 'INES' Database (November 2011)

The table above shows key jobs and skills indicators for groups with protected characteristics.

The table shows that:

- 47% of leavers in Priority 2 and Priority 5 gaining a level 2 (or above) qualification were women;
- 51% of leavers gaining basic skills were women
- 29% of leavers gaining basic skills were from ethnic minority groups
- 36% of those going into employment on leaving ESF for work were women
- 8% of leavers gaining a qualification at level 2 or above in P2 and P5 were disabled

Participants in Priority 2 and 5 are employed. The Skills Funding Agency have explained that it is possible that the low levels of disabled people participating in

Priority 2 and 5, and achieving qualifications at level 2 may be partly explained by participants failing to disclose their disability when they register for training.

A summary of progress made towards the ESF mainstreaming plan's key aims and objectives in the first half of the ESF programme (2007-2010)

Aim 1: To promote high level commitment to gender equality and equal opportunities

- Progress reports are presented to national ESF Programme monitoring committee (ESF PMC) on a regular basis.
- The cross-cutting themes are a standing agenda item at ESF PMC.

Aim 2: To promote a balanced participation of men and women in the management and delivery of ESF

- A report and good practice guidance on gender balance in monitoring committees was included in the 2009 mainstreaming progress report.
- National equality mainstreaming training provided as part of the ESF Technical Assistance project run during 2008-2009 highlighted the importance of CFO providers having equality policies and implementation plans that related to their own staff as well as delivery for ESF participants.

Aim 3: Establishing a reporting system on equality mainstreaming

- A reporting system has been developed and implemented which is aligned to the ESF annual implementation reporting system for the programme.
- Three annual progress reports have been produced so far (2009, 2010 and 2011).
- Aim 4: To set up an ESF Technical Assistance project delivering equality training for key CFO staff (2008-09)
- Nearly 200 delegates participated in training workshops across the country along with a number of regional training events.
- Presentations on gender equality and equal opportunities were delivered to the ESF regional committees that existed at the time of the training.
- An equality toolkit for equality policies and plans was developed and published on the ESF website.

Aim 5: To update the original Equality Impact Assessment for the ESF programme

- The update to the EIA was completed in 2011 and published on the ESF / DWP website in August 2011.

Aim 6: To ensure that gender equality and equal opportunities is a highly visible theme

- Equal opportunities is fully integrated into the programmes publicity arrangements, for example: there have been regular equality-related features in the ESF e-zine; there is a dedicated web-page on gender equality and equal opportunities on the ESF website; the ESF-Works good practice website contains many examples of good practice in helping disadvantaged groups; and a virtual equality network was piloted in 2010.
- The annual ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming Awards were successfully launched in 2010, with a new 'Gender Equality Leader' award being introduced in 2011. These awards received high-level coverage at the ESF mid-programme review event held in Birmingham in 2010 and the global 2011 'World Skills' Event held in London Docklands.

Aim 7: To consider the findings and recommendations made from the evaluation of gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming conducted during 2009 and published in 2010.

- DWP has launched new ESF 13 checklists to help clarify what contract managers and compliance managers need to check when assessing progress and minimum standards for equality policies and implementation plans. These new checklists build upon and clarify the toolkits developed under the TA
- training project. Further training is planned (see section 5 - Action Plan)

A copy of the full evaluation report is available at:

http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_667.asp

4. Key future priorities for mainstreaming in the second half of the ESF programme (2011-2013)

The action plan for mainstreaming gender equality and equal opportunities is provided in section 5 below.

The aims and priorities for action are informed by the following:

ESF programme Performance / Equality Targets

- On-going performance in terms of progress towards equality targets – with **the need to try to increase female participation rate is a particular priority.**

ESF Equality Impact Assessment Update

- Recommendations from the updated ESF Equality Impact Assessment – which includes taking action **to increase female participation** by setting up an ESF Technical Assistance Project to:
- deliver national gender equality workshops in ESF to identify current practices **in promoting gender equality**, including procurement, contracting processes and monitoring – as well as well as considering delivery issues such as **care provision and other good practice**;
- update the mainstreaming plan of the second half of the programme to include a **specific aim to increase female participation rates** during the second half of the programme;
- promote gender equality through the ESF Leader Awards for 2011 by having a **specific gender category** of the award;
- update equality guidance for CFO staff so that it is tailored to meet their needs;
- promote good practice as identified in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) Triennial Review of equality (for example, EHRC's Trans Research review report no. 27);
- ask the Skills Funding Agency to report on under performance of representation of disabled people in Priority 2 and as the Skills Funding Agency to explain what action they can take to increase participation rates of this group; and

Evaluation of ESF gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming Report

Key actions identified in this report included the need to:

- improve female participation rates;
- agree a position statement on CFO contract managers and monitoring officer roles in actively promoting equal opportunities as part of the programme's mainstreaming requirement and amending the national guidance accordingly;
- agree minimum standards for assessing equal opportunities policies and implementation plans, including on-going progress, as well taking into

account existing or planned procurement arrangements as far as possible;

- provide targeted training workshops where required to ensure a consistent level of expertise and updating good practice guidance and training materials where necessary; and
- agree good practice for publicising and recruiting people from ethnic minorities and other protected groups.

Annual mainstreaming reports

Key recommendations identified in the annual ESF gender equality mainstreaming progress report identified the need to:

- address the shortfall in the female participation rate;
- promote female participation through DWP CFO's Priority 1 provision for families with multiple problems;
- commission action research on unemployed female participation (Skills Funding Agency);
- update the mainstreaming plan; and
- continue promoting good practice

Legislative and regulatory requirements, including commitments to maintain equality covered in the ESF Operational Programme

The need to maintain mainstreaming processes in-line with on-going commitments made in the ESF Operational Programme i.e. integrating equality into planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as meeting general and specific duties and Equality Act 2010.

Obviously, there is some duplication and overlap between issues and priorities identified and the recommendations made in the various reports listed above.

Web links for the key documents listed above are given below:

Update to the ESF Equality Impact Assessment 2011:
<http://dwp.gov.uk/docs/eia-esf-august-2011.pdf>

Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming Plan used in first half of ESF Programme:
<http://dwp.gov.uk/docs/equal-opps-plan.pdf>

Annual mainstreaming progress reports:
<http://dwp.gov.uk/docs/opps-progress-report-10.pdf>

5: Action Plan

Introduction

Aim 1 of the action plan below is clearly the most substantial aim of the plan and reflects the high priority that will be given to trying to increase the female participation rate to 51% in 2011-2013 (compared to the 38% that was achieved in the first half of the programme). This recognises that although it will not now be possible to achieve the female participation for the whole of the 2007-2013 programme, the programme will aim to achieve the targets for the 2011-2013 period only.

Aim 1 of the plan is supported by milestones and objectives which focus on:

- CFOs identifying providers who are underperforming in terms of achieving the 51% female participation rate and asking those who are to take action, wherever possible, to try to increase the female participation rate (milestone 1.1);
- the Managing Authority preparing and submitting progress reports on the female participation rate to the European Commission: ESF Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) and the ESF equal opportunities sub committee (milestone 1.2);
- the Managing Authority producing and publishing an updated ESF good practice guide for gender equality (milestone 1.3);
- the Managing Authority setting up and delivering two national gender equality workshops to consider with CFOs and providers what action can be taken to promote female participation in ESF (milestone 1.4);
- the Managing Authority and DWP CFO to continue reviewing the performance of the new DWP CFO provision for troubled families (milestone 1.5); and
- communicating the aims, milestones and objectives of the mainstreaming plan to all programme partners (milestone 1.6).

Aim 2 of the plan focuses on maintaining the on-going commitments made in the ESF operational programme in order to help ensure that legislative and regulatory requirements are met concerning the mainstreaming of equal opportunities.

Aim 3 of the plan is concerned with making sure that the lessons learned from mainstreaming gender equality and equal opportunities in the current programme are carried forward into the next programme as far as possible by ensuring that these are highlighted in:

- the final ESF evaluation synthesis evaluation report; and

- a separate `lessons learned' report produced by the Managing Authority and agreed with the gender equality and equal opportunities sub committee.

Aim 1: To increase the female participation rate to 51% in the second half of the programme

Milestone 1.1: **Managing Authority (MA)** to issue Action Note to **CFOs** requiring them to: identify providers achieving / not achieving 51% female participation rate; identify number of providers to be reviewed for female participation (i.e. construct a review list);and to agree action with providers on review list where appropriate;

| Objectives: | Indicators / targets (T) / profiles (P) : | | | | Comments |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Action Notes and good practice review checklist issued to CFO by MA on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2012 ▪ 2013 (April) ▪ 2013 (October) ▪ 2014 (April) ▪ 2014 (October) | <p>Number of CFOs responding to the action note</p> <p>T = 8 P = 8</p> <p>T= 7 P= 8</p> <p>T= 8 P= 8</p> <p>T = 8</p> <p>P=</p> <p>T= 8 P=</p> | <p>No of providers identified for reviews</p> <p>P = 256</p> <p>P= 225</p> <p>P= 148</p> <p>T =148 (Estimate)</p> <p>P =</p> <p>P = T=</p> | <p>Number of providers / provider contracts agreeing to take action</p> <p>P = 5</p> <p>P = 223</p> <p>P= 143</p> <p>T = 143-148 (Estimate)</p> <p>P =</p> <p>P= T=</p> | <p>Number of providers who have taken action :</p> <p>P = 1</p> <p>P = 223</p> <p>T = 143</p> <p>T = 143-148 (Estimate)</p> <p>P =</p> <p>T =</p> | <p>An updated Action Note 70 was issued in January 2014 seeking updates for April and October 2014. The Action Note 70 process will, therefore, continue during 2014 and results should be available by May and November 2014.</p> |

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- (i) A **detailed breakdown** of the information provided above is available in the annual mainstreaming progress report including examples of action agreed by providers in response to the reviews)
- (ii) Action Note 70 (update) incorporated **a review checklist** based on good practice from NIACE / Skills Funding Agency report on engaging with unemployed women. The review checklist is designed for CFOs to use to help inform their discussions with providers and is non-prescriptive.

Milestone 1.2: The Managing Authority to prepare and submit progress reports on female participation rate to: (i) the European Commission; (ii) the national ESF Programme Monitoring Committee; (iii) the gender equality and equal opportunities sub committee; (iv) wider ESF partnership via web / publicity links

| Objective: | Indicators / Target (T) Profile (P) | Notes / Comments on progress: |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| ESF managing | Standard MI report designed and signed off | This standard report is now |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Authority to design a MI ESF standard report comparing female participation rates in first half and second half of the programme</p> | <p>T = 1 P = 1</p> | <p>available at programme/priority level. However, it is not available at /CFO / funding type level. This issue is being taken up with the contractors.</p> <p>If necessary, the CFO / funding type data will need to be loaded onto statistical software by ESF Evaluation team.</p> |
| <p>ESF Managing Authority to submit female participation rate progress report to key stakeholders (incorporating MI data and summary of CFO responses to Action Note 70 (update) twice in 2103</p> | <p>Participation report to PMC (annually) :</p> <p>T= 1 (in 2013) P= 1 T = 1 (in 2014) P = TBC</p> <p>Participation reports (combined with annual ESF equality mainstreaming report – for ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Sub Committee.)</p> <p>T= 1 (in 2013) P = 1 T = 1 (in 2014) P = TBC</p> | <p>A female participation report was submitted to the ESF PMC in September 2013.</p> <p>The ESF equality mainstreaming report for 2013 will combine the results of the two Action Note 70 returns (April and October) and will be presented at the national gender equality and equal opportunities sub committee in December 2013.</p> <p>The combined results will be publicised in ESF News and</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <p>ESF website in March 2014.</p> <p>The female participation rate and action taken to try to increase it will be covered in future PMC papers.</p> |
|--|--|---|

Milestone 1.3: The Managing Authority to produce an updated national ESF gender good practice guide

| Objective: | Indicators / targets (T) / profiles (P) | Notes / Progress |
|--|---|--|
| <p>To update the ESF Gender equality good practice guide</p> | <p>A new, updated guide produced and published in booklet and digital format</p> <p>T = 1 P = 1</p> | <p>The new guide was published in March 2012</p> |

Milestone 1.4: To set up and deliver two national ESF gender equality workshops to consider what action can be taken to try to increase the female participation rate 51% during the second half of the programme. (CFOs to run internal seminars or workshop where they feel this is necessary.)

| Objective: | Indicators / targets (T) / profiles (P) | Notes / Progress |
|---|---|--|
| To run two national ESF gender equality workshops | Number of workshops run T=2 P=2 | Two workshops were run in November 2012. The report was published on the ESF works website: http://www.esf-works.com/images/resources/gender_workshop_report_nov_12.pdf |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| CFOs to run internal workshops or seminars (there is no target for this) | | |

Milestone 1.5: To review the performance of DWP CFO's **new provision** for troubled families in Priority 1 in terms of achieving the female participation rate 2013. If there is any significant underperformance in achieving the target, the Managing Authority and DWP CFO to organise a workshop with key stakeholders to investigate reasons for any underperformance in this area and agree action as necessary. (This may include drawing upon any emerging evidence from the evaluation of this provision).

| Objective: | Indicators / targets (T) / profiles (P) | Notes / Progress |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Managing Authority to monitor female participation rate of DWP CFO provision on an ongoing basis.</p> | <p>Action Note 70 (update) returns supplied by DWP CFO</p> <p>T = 2 (April & October 2013) P = 2</p> <p>T = 2 (April and October2014) P = 0</p> | <p>So far, all DWP CFO providers have reported that their provision exceeds the 51% female participation rate target.</p> |
| <p>Workshop held to review performance</p> | <p>T= 0 P= 0</p> | <p>So far, performance indicates that a workshop is not necessary – given that female participation rate exceeds the 51% target.</p> |

Milestone 1.6: To communicate the aims, milestones and objectives set out in this mainstreaming plan, highlighting the issue of increasing female participation and the progress that is being made and sharing ideas for action

| Objective: | Indicators / targets (T) / profiles (P) | Notes / Progress |
|------------|---|------------------|
|------------|---|------------------|

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Publish articles for ESF News letter highlighting the need to increase the female participation rate to 51% for the second half of the programme</p> | <p>Number of articles published</p> <p>P =</p> | |
| <p>Publish articles on ESF website setting out performance in terms of female participation rate –and ideas for action that can be taken by providers.</p> | <p>Number of articles published</p> <p>P =</p> | |
| <p>Encourage CFOs to use internal communications to promote female participation.</p> | <p>Number of articles published</p> <p>P =</p> | |

Aim 2: To maintain on-going commitments made in the ESF Operational programme in order to help ensure that legislative and regulatory requirements concerning gender equality and equal opportunities are met

Milestone 2.1 To maintain the role of the ESF gender equality and equal opportunities sub committee, ensuring that it reports to the national ESF Programme Monitoring Committee and helps ensure that equality is embedded into the ESF programme in terms of planning, delivery , monitoring and evaluation.

| Objective: | Indicators / targets (T) / profiles (P) | Notes / Progress |
|--|---|---|
| Annual meetings of the ESF equality sub committee held on an on-going basis | Number of annual meetings held T= 1 P= 1 (2011) 1 (2012) 1 (2013) | Next meeting of sub committee will be in December 2014 |
| Annual mainstreaming progress report produced highlighting performances of the ESF programme in terms of gender and other equality characteristics | Number of annual mainstreaming reports produced T = 1 (annually) P = 1 (2011) ; 1 (2012); 1 (2013) | Next report due in December 2014 |
| Skills Funding Agency CFO to investigate under-representation of disabled people in their P2 provision and take action to improve the participation rate of disabled people. | Skills Funding Agency to produce a report on disclosure of disability in ESF provision and how to promote disclosure in future. T = 1 report P = 1 report | The report on disclosure has now been published. The report was presented at the 2013 national gender equality and equal opportunities sub-committee meeting. |

| Objective: | Indicators / targets (T) / profiles (P) | Notes / Progress |
|--|---|------------------|
| The mainstreaming action plan updated annually | <p>Mainstreaming plan updated.</p> <p>T = 1 P = 1 (August 2013)</p> | |
| Ensure that evaluation reports contain appropriate equality sections / equality coverage during the second half of the ESF programme | <p>Cohort survey 2012 has a female section and equality groups covered generally, including issues such as female engagement, barriers to provision for women and childcare support for participants.</p> <p>Priority 1 and Priority 4 evaluation has equality coverage – including female equality.</p> <p>Families provision evaluation covers equality, including female equality.</p> | |
| To update the annual ESF Gender Equality Award criteria – focus on rewarding performance | <p>ESF Leaders award – launched by June 2014, award ceremony to be held in autumn 2014.</p> | |

Aim 3: To consider lessons learned from the gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming approach during the 2007-2013 programme and to take these into account when mainstreaming equality in the next programme period.

| Objective: | Indicators / targets (T) / profiles (P) | Notes / Progress |
|---|--|--|
| <p>The ESF Evaluation Team to ensure that the final ESF evaluation synthesis report includes lessons learned from mainstreaming gender equality and equal opportunities in the current programme.</p> | <p>An ESF Evaluation synthesis report is published which includes details of lessons learned from mainstreaming equality</p> <p>T= 1 (2014) P = 0</p> | |
| <p>ESFD to set up working group to produce two reports: (i) good practice / case studies taken from Action Note 70 returns; (ii) lessons learned – for new programme.</p> | <p>Lessons learned report produced by May 2014</p> <p>T= 1 P= 0</p> | <p>The lessons learned report to be agreed by the sub committee and shared with the ESF Evaluation Team to help inform the evaluation synthesis report.</p> <p>It should also be published on the ESF website along with good practice checklist.</p> <p>The report should cover issues such as procurement, contract management, as well as policies, plans and gender.</p> |

Annex 1

ESF in the context of EU equality / social inclusion policy priorities

The European Commission has placed jobs, new skills and the fight against poverty at the heart of its economic, employment and social agenda - the **Europe 2020 Strategy** – which aims to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Inclusive growth means:

- raising Europe's employment rate by creating more and better jobs especially for women, young people and older workers;
- helping people of all ages anticipate and manage change through investment in skills and training; and
- modernising labour markets and welfare systems ensuring that the benefits of future growth reach all parts of the EU.

The Europe 2020 Strategy that Europe needs inclusive growth because:

- Europe's workforce is shrinking as a result of demographic change – a smaller workforce is having to support a growing number of inactive people;
- the economic crisis has brought high youth unemployment (over 21%) and made it harder for people out of work to find jobs;
- the EU has around 80 million people with low or basic skills;
- even before the current economic crisis, there were 80 million people at risk of poverty, including 19 million children; and

The EU targets for inclusive growth include:

- 75% employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 by 2020 – to be achieved by helping more people into work, especially women, the young, older and low-skilled people and legal migrants;
- better educational attainment , for example, 40% of 30-34 year olds completing third level education or equivalent; and
- at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social inclusion.

The EU will use two flagship initiatives to help promote inclusive growth:

- Agenda for new skills and jobs – helping people acquire new skills and adapt to labour market change as well as modernising labour markets to raise employment levels;
- European platform against poverty – which aims to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, guarantee respect for the fundamental rights of people experiencing poverty and mobilise support to help people integrate in the communities they live, find training and help find a job.

EU policy has a particularly strong focus on gender equality. Equality between women and men is one of the European Union's founding principles and can be traced back to 1957 when the principle of equal pay for equal work became part of Treaty of Rome. The European Commission adopted a **Women's Charter** on 5 March 2010 which committed it to strengthening gender equality across all of its policies.

The European Commission has developed a **Strategy For Equality Between Women and Men** (2011-2015) which builds upon the Roadmap for Equality Between Women and Men (2006-2010) as well as the European Pact for Gender Equality.

The European Commission's Strategy For Equality Between Women and Men (2011-2015) describes 5 priority areas for action (four of which were identified in the Women's Charter):

- equal economic dependence (to help women and men exercise control
- over their lives and to make genuine life-choices);
- equal pay for equal work and work of equal value;
- equality in decision making (especially at the highest levels);
- dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence; and
- gender equality in external actions (i.e. work undertaken by the EU in 'third' countries) .

The Strategy for Equality between Women and Men supports key aspect of the EU2020 growth strategy, in particular, inclusive growth and some of the related targets. The Europe 2020 targets are unlikely to be achieved unless women are helped into employment.

The **European Social Fund** is the **key European financial tool** for supporting employment and social inclusion and is therefore important for contributing to the EU202 Strategy and, in particular, the two flagship initiatives – Agenda for New Skills and Jobs and European Platform against Poverty.

Over the current 2007-2013 programme period, more than 10 billion euros have been earmarked for ESF projects that combat social exclusion and promote employment.

The ESF is also an important tool in terms of supporting the Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men (2010-2015), for example by promoting gender equality, promoting jobs for women and men and for increasing skills and contributing to equal pay. ESF therefore contributes, in particular, to the strategy's priority areas of promoting equal economic dependence and equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.

ESF in the context of the UK Government's Equality Strategy and promotion of Social Justice

Equality Strategy

The UK Government's equality strategy "**The Equality Strategy – Building a Fairer Britain**" (December 2010) sets out the Government's vision for a strong, modern and fair Britain.

The strategy explains the UK Government's commitment to tackling the barriers to equal opportunities and social mobility. It sets the framework for how equality will be a fundamental part of the Government's programmes across the UK.

The strategy highlights key issues, such as:

- early years, education and social mobility
- a fair and flexible labour market
- changing culture and attitudes
- embedding equality at the heart of Government

Annex 2 describes the legislative foundation to the strategy, in the form of the Equality Act 2010, which applies broadly to Great Britain (Northern Ireland has its own equality legislation).

Social Justice

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has an ambitious agenda of reform which aims to create a new welfare system for the 21st century; to transform the opportunity for people without jobs to find work and support themselves and their families; and to ensure that the most vulnerable in society are protected.

- tackle poverty and welfare dependency through a simplified welfare system that : encourages and provides an incentive for people to find work; rewards responsible behaviour; and protects the most vulnerable;

- promote high levels of employment by helping people who are out of work, including people in disadvantaged groups, to move into work;
- help people meet the challenges of an ageing society and maintain standards of living in retirement;
- provide opportunity, choice and independence to enable disabled people to take an equal role in society.

The DWP has the lead role in promoting **social justice** within its operations and on a cross-Departmental basis. Social justice involves tackling the root causes of disadvantage and pathways to poverty such as: family breakdown; worklessness; educational failure; addiction; and debt.

For the second half of this programme, the DWP ESF Co Financing Organisation's provision will be supporting families with multiple problems by helping them move closer to the labour market. The DWP CFO will also be using ESF funds to help people in receipt of incapacity benefit and income support access the Work Programme on a voluntary basis (people in receipt of these benefits would not normally be eligible).

DWP will be publishing its equality objectives, in line with the new specific duties of the new Equality Act 2010 (which came into force in October 2011) by April 2012. It is likely that the equality objectives will be integrated into the business objectives of the DWP Business Plan once it is updated next year.

Annex 2

Structural Fund Regulations & Equal Opportunities

The main General and ESF Structural Fund regulations that relate to gender equality and equal opportunities are:

General regulation: Council regulation (EC) no 1083/2006

Article 16

The Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective is promoted during the various stages of the implementation of the Funds.

The Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the various stages of implementation of the Funds and, in particular, in the access to them. In particular, accessibility for disabled persons shall be one of the criteria to be observed in defining operations co-financed by the Funds and to be taken into account during the various stages of the implementation.

ESF Regulation No 1081/2006

Para 16

“The Member State and the Commission are to ensure that the implementation of the priorities financed by the ESF and the Convergence and Regional competitiveness and employment objectives contribute to the promotion of equality and elimination of inequalities between women and men. A gender mainstreaming approach should be combined with specific action to increase the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment.”

Article 3 (scope of assistance)

Paragraphs under this Article list a wide range of actions which ESF can support, including “mainstreaming and specific support to improve access to employment, increase the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment and reduce gender-based segregation in the labour market,

including by addressing the root causes, direct and indirect, of gender pay gaps.” 52

Article 6 (Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities)

The Member States shall ensure that operational programmes include a description of how gender equality and equal opportunities are promoted in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of operational programmes. Member States shall promote a balanced participation of women and men in the management and implementation of operational programmes at local, regional and national level, as appropriate. 53

Annex 3 - Legislation

International Legislation

The right to non-discrimination is recognised by key international legal instruments such as:

- the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights;
- the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- the UN Convention on the elimination of racial discrimination;

and

- the ILO convention No 111.

The provisions of non-discrimination contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms were reinforced by the entry into force on 1 April 2005 of a new Protocol 12 to that Convention, which provides for a free-standing right to equal treatment.

Domestic Equality Legislation – The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is the law which bans unfair treatment and helps achieve equal opportunities in the workplace.

This single Act replaces previous anti-discrimination laws as well as strengthening protection in certain instances.

The Act covers nine protected characteristics, which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has one or more of these characteristics listed below, so the Act protected everyone from unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The Equality Act sets out different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person.

The Act prohibits unfair treatment in the workplace, when providing goods, facilities or services when exercising public functions.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The public sector Equality Duty, at section 149 of the Equality Act, requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies (which includes private and voluntary sector organisations delivering public services to the public) to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of equal opportunities, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making by requiring public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities , so that policies and services are accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations, which came into force on 10 September 2011, requires public bodies to be transparent about how they are responding to the Duty, requiring them to publish relevant, proportionate information showing compliance with the Equality Duty and to set Equality Objectives.