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**Evaluation of Mainstreaming Processes
and Impacts of the EQUAL Programme**

Final report

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EQUAL

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Abbreviations

Development partnership abbreviations:

Abbreviated description	Abbreviation on charts	Full name of the project
We Friends	1. We	We Friends - West Estonian Development Partnership
RE- START	2. RE	RE – START (Comprehensive Measures for Integrating the Youth with Criminal Records into the Labour Market)
Women Involved in Prostitution	3. PRO	Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution, Including Victims of Human Trafficking, into Legal Labour Market
Compulsive Gamblers	4. HAS	Reintegration of Compulsive Gamblers into the Labour Market and Prevention of Social Exclusion
HAPECO	5. HAPECO	Handicapped People Employed in Cooperatives (HAPECO)
Integration of Asylum Seekers	6. Asu	Increasing the Readiness of the Estonian Society for Integrating Asylum Seekers in the Framework of the ESF EQUAL Programme
Choices & Balance	7. C ja B	Choices and Balance: Flexible Forms of Training and Work – Best Practices of Reconciling Family and Professional Life
Connected Services	8. ST	Connected Services for Integrating Young Mothers into the Labour Market
WHOLE	9. WHO	WHOLE – Work and Home in Our Life in Europe
Care Service	10. HT	Development of Multifunctional Care Service to Enhance Employment
Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work	11. LAP	Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work!
Distance Working	12. KT	Models of Distance Working for Estonian Islands and Remote Coastal Areas
Farmers' Replacement Service	13. TALU	Development and Application of Farmers' Replacement Service

Other abbreviations found in the report:

Abbreviation	Explanation
Theme A	Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all
Theme G	Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of persons who have left the labour market, by developing flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services
Theme I	Supporting social and vocational integration of asylum seekers
EQUAL	European Community Initiative EQUAL

Brief summary of evaluation

EQUAL is a Community Initiative Programme with the main objective to develop new and innovative means of decreasing discrimination in the labour market. One of the objectives is that the achievements of the programme should not remain tentative but instead the acquired knowledge and experience should be mainstreamed, i.e., implemented in the practice of organisations and development of labour market policy. This report evaluates the processes and impacts of programme mainstreaming as the third phase of the EQUAL programme.

Evaluation indicated that the mainstreaming process has been somewhat rough, but nevertheless, the solutions or ideas developed within the programme have spread into legislation, programmes, strategies and practices of other organisations.

The target groups chosen by the EQUAL projects were appropriate for mainstreaming activities, but the concept of mainstreaming was at first unclear for the parties and the objectives of mainstreaming were not clearly planned. Generally, a combination of possible information activities was used in mainstreaming, but too many printed information materials were used, even though they were not considered a particularly efficient means. Cooperation and synergy between projects was rather limited. The managing authority facilitated the mainstreaming of projects through supportive mechanisms and activities, but they started too late from the viewpoint of effectiveness of the mainstreaming phase.

Survey results indicated that the projects affected the participants in mainstreaming activities but there were no significant differences between the attitudes of employers who participated in project activities and a random sample of employers.

The projects achieved the objectives set for mainstreaming. All projects have to a greater or lesser extent influenced legislation, programmes, practice of other organisations, or educational and training programs. However, transfer into the practice of other organisations and regions could have been more intense. All impacts of the projects may not yet be manifest at this time; continued spread of the results may be affected by state budget cuts.

Summary of main conclusions of EQUAL mainstreaming evaluation

Main conclusions and proposals from the evaluation of mainstreaming of the EQUAL programme

Based on the two objectives of the 2008 evaluation of the EQUAL programme, the **conclusions** have been grouped in two parts:

1. Evaluation of mainstreaming processes
2. Evaluation of impacts on national and regional processes

The **proposals** associated with the conclusions are directed towards future implementation of programs with similar application systems.

1. PROCESSES

The mainstreaming process has been somewhat rough. The mainstreaming goals were largely achieved, the mainstreaming activities have been generally relevant and have targeted important target groups, but the process has encountered several obstacles. In the following, we highlight the major obstacles together with relevant recommendations.

1.1. How did mainstreaming proceed?

1.1.1. Concept of mainstreaming was not understood

- The term is awkward and still incomprehensible for people outside the EQUAL context. The same conclusion was reached during earlier evaluation of the programme when the recommendation was made to change the term.
- The problem partially starts from the term used in English, which also has a second meaning in the field of social policy in connection with gender equality.
- Over time, understanding of the meaning of mainstreaming has improved amongst people linked with the EQUAL programme, but the majority of training courses on mainstreaming took place only in the end of 2006 and in 2007.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs believed that the extent of training was satisfactory but project implementers argued that it was insufficient, at least in the beginning.

We propose to ensure:

- **comprehensibility of key concepts both for project implementers and wider public;**
- **availability of adequately timed and sufficient explanatory training.**

1.1.2. Goals of mainstreaming were unspecific

- Transfer of results was not as clearly planned as some of the other activities in case of several projects and the project mainstreaming goals had not been adequately elaborated. Vagueness of goals was a problem also in case of some principal activities.
- The additional call for proposals helped to focus mainstreaming goals and actions but was less effective due to late and unexpected implementation.

- Achievement of mainstreaming goals was also hindered by the failure to understand the concept and nature of mainstreaming.

We propose to provide:

- ***the programme implementers with early in-depth instructions for planning mainstreaming goals or the goals of a similar specific project phase;***
- ***an opportunity to adjust and specify goals and priorities during implementation in response to changing circumstances.***

1.1.3. Printed publications and other physical information media were used extensively but their effectiveness is evaluated lower than other information activities

- In terms of relative importance of mainstreaming activities, the information materials come second after various events (on average 2.8 units per project).
- However, information materials as a method of mainstreaming received low evaluations in terms of relevance and effectiveness from all parties, because they tend to become obsolete, are difficult to notice in the general flow of information and can be complicated to use if additional technical equipment (such as a DVD player) is needed.
- However, the respondents admitted that information materials are useful for persons who are already interested in the topic and are indispensable in case of target groups that do not use electronic information channels.

In connection with information distribution we propose to:

- ***limit the number of printed publications and other physical information media;***
- ***prefer information channels that enable subsequent updating and upgrading.***

1.1.4. Surveys should be conducted centrally or as part of a specific Estonia-wide theme

- Relevant analyses are extremely useful as a method of mainstreaming but any wider surveys should be conducted nationally on a larger scale, with sufficient resources and coverage.
- As the projects included a large number of different activities both in the framework of mainstreaming and the principal actions, there could have been situations where a survey was conducted on other issues than the focus of the project itself.
- There is no capacity for extensive analysis within individual projects that have other goals than the survey. Consequently, the projects should be restricted to studies pertaining to the specific goal of the project.
- Surveys are recommended in case of projects that deal with certain Estonia-wide issues.
- In order to ensure the quality and wider coverage of the surveys, the managing authority could conduct additional trans-project surveys on specific issues.

In connection with surveys and analyses we propose to:

- ***ensure a link between the surveyed field and the main actions and content of the project;***
- ***make sure that the resources allocated for surveys would ensure sufficient quality;***
- ***conduct thematic trans-project surveys under the managing authority.***

1.1.5. Actions that offer communication opportunities are considered to be most effective

- ▼ According to feedback, the number of larger events (conferences and workshops) exceeded the number of personal events (lobbying), even though the latter was considered to be most effective.
- ▼ The respondents would like to see more lobbying opportunities, for instance, within the ministry, and this could have been facilitated by the managing authority.

We propose to offer project representatives in the future more:

- ▼ ***opportunities for personal contacts;***
- ▼ ***possibilities to meet the policy developers and decision-makers in their respective fields.***

1.1.6. Employers received little attention in the mainstreaming process

- ▼ Employers received little attention in the mainstreaming process in comparison to their role in the success of labour market projects.
- ▼ However, the target group of employers is relatively large, which means that some of the measures for general public could also have reached the employers.

We propose to involve the employers as an important party in labour market projects to a greater extent in project activities.

1.1.7. Only a few good examples of cooperation between projects

- ▼ The level of synergy between projects that could lead to future development of overlapping fields was lower than expected.
- ▼ A positive example was the cooperation between distance work projects and the consequent outputs that remain operational in the future. Similar preconditions existed and results could have been expected in the field of young families and mothers, but no shared outputs were developed.
- ▼ Considering the potential of the managing authority, it contributed little to finding cooperation points between projects.

We propose that the institution that has a centralised overview of the projects implemented should support cooperation between projects in similar fields.

- ▼ ***Similarly to the Lithuanian example, the groups should work together on the development of relevant amendment proposals.***
- ▼ ***Experiences of similar successful cooperation in other countries should be communicated to the cooperation groups.***
- ▼ ***Participate actively in the brainstorming sessions of theme groups and involve other persons who see the 'bigger picture'.***
- ▼ ***Take responsibility and effective leadership and make sure that all projects are included.***

1.2. Was the additional call for proposals useful?

1.2.1. The additional call for proposals did not create much added value

- ▼ The projects were not prepared to use additional resources, because the advance notification period of the availability of additional funds was too short.
- ▼ The expenditures on mainstreaming could have been regarded in a more integrated manner, which would have enabled making larger and more thorough allocations.

We propose to enable planning of financial resources in an integrated manner or to notify project implementers well in advance if additional resources become available.

1.3. How efficient were the mechanisms of the managing authority?

1.3.1. The supportive mechanisms of the managing authority could have started earlier and there could have been more of them

- ▶ As activity levels of the project implementers vary, some who are 'not attending' tend to be neglected and they should be approached personally and given more assistance.
- ▶ The activities of the managing authority to support mainstreaming were criticised for starting too late (December 2006). Several mainstreaming actions had already been completed by that time and therefore the efficiency of the training courses was lower.
- ▶ The managing authority could have contributed more to mainstreaming the results of individual projects. General and concluding activities of mainstreaming were performed well and thoroughly and they received positive evaluations.

In order to support implementation, we propose to:

- ▶ ***communicate personally with project managers who are absent for regional or other reasons in the programs with a similar application system;***
- ▶ ***start providing training at each phase well before the actual implementation of the phase.***

1.3.2. The main role of the managing authority in mainstreaming is to serve as coordinator, advisor and mediator

- ▶ The ministry cannot engage in direct lobbying among politicians. However, this is done indirectly through keeping certain themes on the action plans of the ministry, because politicians use these plans to get ideas for their platforms.
- ▶ The specialists of the ministry should be the persons who introduce the EQUAL themes into the policies. Effectiveness of mainstreaming was restricted by the limited connection and involvement of the respective officials in the projects, which has been criticised by the representatives of development partnerships and admitted by the officials themselves.
- ▶ However, it should be kept in mind, that the officials already had prior tasks and their own action plans and, therefore, EQUAL may not be able to attract their attention through mainstreaming.

We propose to make maximum use of the communication channels and direct contacts within the ministry to achieve results.

2. IMPACTS

The project goals were found to be relevant and, consequently, the wider distribution of the goals can be deemed as relevant. The impacts of mainstreaming are currently not yet fully manifest, because several results are still progressing, but it can be stated already that all projects have been integrated to greater or lesser extent in legislation, programmes, practice of other organisations or educational and training programs. The necessary target groups have been also

reached through mainstreaming. The goals of mainstreaming were largely achieved. Below are the main observations on the impacts of the projects.

2.1. Achievement of goals

2.1.1. Achievement of goals was evaluated higher than efficiency in terms of time and financial resources

- The envisaged actions for the achievement of mainstreaming goals were fully implemented and achievement of objectives received positive evaluations.
- The perceived cost of money and time was relatively high in comparison to the achievement of results but people generally tend to be more critical when it comes to the use of resources. In addition, they were dealing with novel and experimental actions where efficiency and emphasis on results are not the first priorities.
- As the collected data additionally also indicated that many actions would have been carried out even without the additional call for proposals, we can conclude that mainstreaming was implemented relatively ineffectively.
- Occasionally, the total duration of projects was perceived as too long.

We propose to implement integrated planning of financial resources in order to achieve efficiency.

2.1.2. All projects do not have to strive towards adoption of new legislation or amendment of existing legal acts

- There were three projects where the legislative amendment was achieved and, accordingly, this was the goal of mainstreaming. In addition, legislative amendments were indirectly associated with a project or are still in progress in case of five projects.
- Depending on the nature of the project, the project result could be more adequately mainstreamed through integration into strategies and programmes or through horizontal direction.

2.2. Impacts in target group

2.2.1. The mainstreaming actions had an impact on the participants. As a result of the actions, they ...

- shared the information received;
- applied the new knowledge;
- participated in follow-up actions.

2.2.2. Employers have a pragmatic attitude towards using the labour force of persons discriminated against in the labour market

- There were examples of employers who had used disadvantaged persons before but who claimed that the members of the target group do not demonstrate sufficient commitment to work or are negligent in the performance of duties.
- According to many respondents, the nature of work is the main reason that prevents employment of disadvantaged persons (e.g., physical work in case of disabled persons).

2.2.3. There were no significant differences between the attitudes of employers who participated in projects and a random sample of employers

- ▼ There were no significant differences between the attitudes of participating employers and a random sample of employers.
- ▼ The employers from the random sample had so far employed more persons from high-risk groups than the participating employers.
- ▼ The participating employers had had more associations with employment in the target groups of the EQUAL projects.

We propose to pay more attention to the target group of employers when planning mainstreaming actions.

2.3. Spread of results

2.3.1. Less attention was paid to horizontal mainstreaming

- ▼ By nature, several EQUAL projects required horizontal mainstreaming, because the results of these projects cannot be generalised for entire Estonia. In addition to the limited number of respective actions, impact was also restricted by the insufficient level of local cooperation in Estonia.
- ▼ In comparison to the spread associated with development partners, the number of project results that were carried over into other organisations or counties was significantly lower.

We propose to make sure that sufficient horizontal mainstreaming actions are used in case of projects of regional nature in connection with spreading the results.

2.3.2. The economic and budget situation is not ideal for mainstreaming

- ▼ The current general economic situation in Estonia was mentioned as one of the reasons why the new methods or approaches will not be implemented on a wider basis and some planned initiatives will probably be postponed.
- ▼ There was a general opinion that, as the planning is integrated, the funds of ESF should be used as much as possible for the initiatives covered by ESF rules and restrictions. Consequently, there is no need to include these initiatives in the state funding and policies before 2013.
- ▼ However, there were some examples of project results and fields that were immediately integrated into policy.

2.3.3. The spread of project results is extensive and multi-levelled

- ▼ The results of mapping indicate that all projects have in variable ways influenced future political developments.
- ▼ 8 projects had impact on legislation; 15 strategies have been influenced; 21 organisations have implemented methods developed in EQUAL projects; and 8 curricula are in use.

2.3.4. Project goals were relevant and ambitious at that point in time

- ▼ Considering the labour market situation in 2004, the projects of the EQUAL programme were very relevant and ambitious.
- ▼ The urgency of various topics shifted somewhat during the long period of implementation and this was also a reason of variable results in mainstreaming.

Summary of results on the basis of EU evaluation criteria

Relevance – The goals of the projects were evaluated relevant at the interviews with policymakers as well as in the responses from the development partners,

which implies that it would be relevant to spread the practices based on project goals wider outside the boundaries of the project. However, it is not possible to evaluate the relevance of the activities carried out for reaching the goals, because the direct connections between the goals and content of project activities were not evaluated. The lack of control of correspondence between goals and content was considered an important observation also at the meeting with the parties related to the EQUAL programme.

Relevance of the project goals has been described in more detail in section 2.3.

Efficiency – Evaluation of the efficiency criterion focused on the results of the project mainstreaming vis-à-vis time and financial resources used. Efficiency of mainstreaming activities was evaluated lower than other criteria. Lower efficiency might be explained on the one hand by the nature of the programme, which entailed testing of new ideas, and on the other hand by the fact that people tend to evaluate efficiency of the use of funds lower than other criteria.

The actions of the managing authority in supporting the project activities were also evaluated under the efficiency criteria. Even though the managing authority carried out relevant and useful actions to support the mainstreaming of projects, the late start of the actions limited the efficiency. The managing authority has been flexible in responding to the recommendations.

Efficiency of the projects has been described in more detail in section 2.1 and efficiency of the supporting mechanisms of the managing authority in section 1.2.

Effectiveness – Effectiveness of mainstreaming is evident in the fulfilment of goals and effectiveness of individual actions as well as satisfaction of participants and the achieved impact.

Most of the projects fulfilled or exceeded their mainstreaming goals. Most of the actions planned were carried out.

Evaluation showed that the mainstreaming actions in the project framework were generally effective. Effectiveness of actions was evident in both the survey of participants in mainstreaming activities and the results of the actions (achievement of results is also described under the impact criterion). However, it could be mentioned that a disproportionately high number of information booklets were used to spread the results, considering that the relevant effectiveness evaluations were low.

The necessary target groups were involved in actions but the projects paid little attention to the target group of employers. Effectiveness of the actions for employers may be questioned on the basis of the fact that the assessments of employers who participated in project activities and those of a random sample of employers did not indicate any significant differences.

Effectiveness of the projects has been described in more detail in section 1.1.

Impact – The impact of mainstreaming the projects may be not yet fully revealed because many results of mainstreaming are still progressing but we can already state that the mainstreaming of projects has achieved a significant impact. The project results are reflected in legislation, various programmes and strategies and the practice of different organisations. While much focus was on vertical mainstreaming, horizontal mainstreaming has remained slightly on the background, also in the case of regional projects where the results could have been spread primarily in horizontal manner. The spread of results, which is still progressing, could be endangered by state budget cuts, which further underlines the necessity of horizontal mainstreaming.

Impact of mainstreaming of projects has been described in more detail in section 2.3.

Sustainability – Sustainability of the mainstreaming is dependent on the type of spread of the results and each particular case. Generally speaking, integration in legislation has the most lasting effect while sustainability in programmes and organisational practices varies, depending on the term of the programme and stability of the funding of the organization.

Sustainability of projects has been described in more detail in section 2.3.

Summary

EQUAL programme in Estonia started in 2004 with the selection of 13 projects from 68 applications. Last activities financed under EQUAL ended in the summer of 2008. The budget of Estonian EQUAL was 5 420 000 EUR in total. 4 068 888 EUR of it was financed from European Social Fund.

One keystone of EQUAL is the principle of “mainstreaming”. This is the integration and the incorporation of new approaches and ideas in policy and practice. Current evaluation was carried out in order to evaluate the mainstreaming process and impacts of 13 Estonian EQUAL projects.

The evaluation was carried out in three stages: collecting data, analyzing data and writing the evaluation report. In data collecting stage following activities were carried out:

- ▼ Desk research (applications, monitoring reports, previous evaluations etc)
- ▼ 11 interviews with policymakers
- ▼ Data request and questionnaires among all managing partners and other development partners (answers from 13 managing partners and 25 development partners).
- ▼ Questionnaire among participants of mainstreaming activities (sent to 487 participants; 115 answers)
- ▼ Questionnaire among control group employers (91 answers)
- ▼ Data requests to managing authority and implementing agency
- ▼ Benchmarking with Latvian and Lithuanian EQUAL programs

In next stages, collected data was analysed and tied into an analytical report, based on the specific criteria that were agreed upon with the evaluation steering group in the initial stage of the evaluation. The report was divided into two main parts:

- ▼ Evaluation of mainstreaming process.
- ▼ Evaluation of mainstreaming impacts.

Evaluation of mainstreaming process

The mainstreaming process was somewhat rough. The mainstreaming goals were not clearly set which means that at the beginning of projects mainstreaming was not a well planned integral part of the projects. One aspect that might have contributed to unclear mainstreaming goals was the fact that Estonian term for mainstreaming was new and the meaning behind it was not grasped.

A variety of different mainstreaming activities were executed, the activities were mainly appropriate for the target groups chosen. It can be said that the usage of physical data carriers was not proportional compared to their evaluated effectiveness - they were used too much.

Mainstreaming activities had mostly appropriate target groups. Most frequent target groups were policymakers and general public; too little attention was paid to employers and local government target groups.

There was too little cooperation between Estonian EQUAL projects. There were only few examples of a fruitful cooperation.

Managing authority carried out supportive mechanisms and also some mainstreaming activities to support projects mainstreaming. The activities carried out were relevant, but they started too late in the programme phase when projects had already begun their mainstreaming activities and therefore these attempts were less effective.

There was an extra application round for mainstreaming in which 8 projects out of 13 participated. The mainstreaming application round did not add much value because it was mostly about repeating the activities in larger scale and not bringing new innovative ideas. Its role in reaching mainstreaming goals was evaluated low.

Evaluation of mainstreaming impacts

The overall goals of the projects were appropriate which forms bases to the necessity of mainstreaming.

The questionnaires among employers involved in mainstreaming activities and control group employers showed that there are no big differences among the attitude concerning employing need-driven groups or using flexible forms of work. There were no remarkable differences in their attitude towards implementing flexible forms of work. Control group had employed slightly more need-driven groups, although participated employers were more involved with hiring need-driven groups, which were the target groups in EQUAL programme.

Although the mainstreaming process had its downsides, the mainstreaming impacts were quite good. All the projects had in some way affected laws or programs or had their experience continued by another organization.

Summary of Evaluation results on the bases of EU evaluation criteria

Relevance- The goals of the 13 projects were evaluated relevant by the policymakers and as well as by the development partnerships themselves, which implies that it would be relevant to spread these ideas wider. As there was no quality control done, it is difficult to say if the activities carried out for reaching the goals were relevant or not, therefore we suggest adding some form of quality control to the monitoring process.

Efficiency- Projects' efficiency (quality outputs vis-à-vis time and financial resources used) was evaluated lower than other criteria. Lower efficiency might be explained by EQUAL principle of experimenting new ideas as well as by the fact that people tend to evaluate efficiency lower than other criteria.

Managing authority's actions in supporting the projects mainstreaming were also evaluated under the efficiency criteria. Managing authority carried out relevant and useful actions, but they started with necessary training too late in the phase were most of the projects had already begun their mainstreaming activities.

Effectiveness- under this criteria, the fulfilment of goals and effectiveness of actions was evaluated. Most of the projects fulfilled or exceeded their goals and most of the actions planned in the beginning of the project were carried out. Although the whole mainstreaming process was rather rough, evaluation showed that the actions carried out during the mainstreaming phase were effective; this is supported by rather big impact of the projects and good feedback from the participants. The actions done and target groups used for mainstreaming were mostly relevant, although too many booklets were used and too little attention was paid to employers target group.

Impact- Some of the impacts have not yet revealed because the projects ended only a few months ago but already now we can see a rather good impact of the projects mainstreaming. All the projects had some impact which means that they either affected laws or programs or had their experience continued by another organization. Too little emphasis was put on the horizontal mainstreaming, as the state budget situation is rather critical right now, the importance of spreading the ideas among other organizations and regions (horizontally) gets even more important.

Sustainability- sustainability of the mainstreaming is dependent on each single mainstreaming case. To generalize reaching laws has a long lasting affect, reaching programs and other organizations depends on the length of the programme/ project and stability of their finances.

Introduction

Overview of EQUAL programme

EQUAL is a Community Initiative Programme with the main objective to develop new and innovative means of decreasing discrimination in labour market.

The novelty of the programme may consist in the fact that EQUAL projects are designed for previously disregarded target groups. Innovation may also mean new approaches to work methods and technologies.

Estonia has chosen three themes for implementing the programme:

- **A:** Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all
- **G:** Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the reintegration of persons who have left the labour market, by developing flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services
- **I:** Supporting social and vocational integration of asylum seekers

Implementation of the EQUAL programme in Estonia began in 2004 with the selection of 13 projects (theme A: 5 projects; theme G: 7 projects; theme I: 1 project).

The long-term programme objective was that the achievements should not remain tentative but instead the acquired knowledge and experience should be mainstreamed, i.e., implemented in practice and development of labour market policy. The success of this aspect is the focus of this evaluation.

Three evaluations have been so far carried out in the framework of the EQUAL programme:

- Evaluation of the preparatory and introductory phase of the EQUAL programme (2005);
- Evaluation of the implementation of Action 1 (establishment of development partnerships and international cooperation) and launching of Action 2 (implementation of projects) of the EQUAL programme (2006);
- Implementation of Action 2 (implementation of projects) and launching of Action 3 (thematic networks, dissemination of results and impact on policy) of the EQUAL programme (2007).

Goals of evaluation

The aim of this report is to evaluate project mainstreaming processes and their impacts.

In order to gain an overview of mainstreaming in the EQUAL programme, Ernst & Young Baltic AS in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs has carried out an evaluation, which has been used to produce this report.

The goals of evaluation were as follows:

- Perform an evaluation of mainstreaming processes of the EQUAL programme;

- ▶ Perform an evaluation of the impacts of the EQUAL programme on national and regional processes.

Methodology

Evaluation of the EQUAL programme was carried out in three stages:

- Formulation of evaluation questions, data collection and information mapping;
- Analysis of maps and evaluations;
- Compilation of the report.

The following processes were used to collect the information for evaluation of the EQUAL programme:

- Analysis of documents (reports, self-assessments, previous evaluations);
- Surveys among lead and development partners, participants in mainstreaming actions and employers;
- Information requests to lead partners, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour Market Board;
- Interviews with policymakers;
- Benchmarking analysis with Latvian and Lithuanian EQUAL programmes,

Formulation of evaluation questions, data collection and information mapping

The evaluation questions were formulated at the first stage on the basis of the objective of evaluation and requests of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The evaluation questions were then used to compile survey questionnaires and information requests, develop interview questions and reference points for the analysis of other countries.

Previous evaluations of the programme, project reports and self-assessment reports were reviewed at the start of the information collection phase. The documents provided an initial overview of the methods and early progress of programme mainstreaming.

Four surveys were conducted:

- 1. Lead partners**
- 2. Development partners**
- 3. Participants in mainstreaming actions**
- 4. Employers**

In order to map the project mainstreaming actions and obtain evaluations, surveys were conducted in four different target groups: lead partners, development partners, participants in mainstreaming actions, and employers.

The survey of lead partners was sent to the lead partners of all 13 projects and the response rate was 100 %. The lead partners were asked for evaluation of the project mainstreaming goals, actions, target groups and assistance received from the managing authority. The questionnaire is provided in Annex 4.

The 13 projects had a total of 51 development partners, of whom 49 were sent the questionnaires¹. A total of 25 responses were received to the development partner questionnaires. No development partners responded in case of two projects and the response rate of development partners from other projects was between 13 and 100 per cent. The development partners were also asked for evaluation of the project mainstreaming goals, actions, target groups and assistance received from the managing authority. The average evaluations of development partners from 11 projects are used in analysis, which enables comparison between projects. The development partner questionnaire is provided in Annex 5. The following table

¹ Questionnaires could not be sent to all development partners, because two organisations that were partners in the RE-Start project (Viljandi Prison and Probation Supervision Department of Harju County court) no longer exist.

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indicates the number of development partners who responded to the questionnaire and the respective response rates by individual projects.

Table 0.1: Number of respondents and response rate among development partners by projects

Project	Total no of development partners	No of responding development partners	Response rate (%)
We Friends	7	5	71%
RE-START	3	0	0%
Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution	4	1	25%
Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers	3	2	67%
HAPECO	6	4	67%
Integration of Asylum Seekers	2	1	50%
Choices & Balance	9	5	56%
Connected Services for Integrating Young Mothers into the Labour Market	3	2	67%
WHOLE	1	1	100%
Care Service	1	0	0%
Children Taken Care of Mothers at Work	2	2	100%
Distance Working	2	1	50%
Farmers' Replacement Service	8	1	13%
AVERAGE:	51	25	

Source: Survey of development partners and lead partners

The target group of the third survey included participants in project mainstreaming actions. The questionnaire was sent to 487 participants and 115 responses were received. The survey measured the participants' satisfaction with the mainstreaming actions, focussing separately on the attitude of policymakers towards dissemination of project results and on the attitude of employers towards recruitment from high-risk groups and flexible work arrangements. The questionnaire is provided in Annex 6. The numbers of respondents by specific respondent categories are shown in the table below.

Table 0.2: Division of respondents between target groups

Group of respondents	Number of respondents
Private sector representatives	21
Non-profit sector representatives	27
Local government officials	27
Central government officials	23
Politicians	5
Final beneficiaries	3
Others	9
Total	115

Source: Survey of participants in mainstreaming actions

The group of policymakers comprised central and local government officials and politicians, while the group of employers comprised representatives of private and non-profit sectors.

The fourth questionnaire was also sent to a random sample of employers. This was a control group to test the impact of projects on participating employers. 91 employers responded to the control group questionnaires. The survey enquired about employers' attitudes towards recruitment from high-risk groups and flexible work arrangements, enabling comparisons between the attitudes of participating employers and a random sample of employers. The questionnaire is provided in Annex 7.

The respondents were divided between different sectors as follows:

Table 0.3: Respondents to the employers' survey by sectors

Group of respondents	Number of respondents
Private sector	60
Public sector	27
Third sector	4
Total	91

Source: Survey of participants in mainstreaming actions

11 interviews were conducted with policymakers

11 interviews were conducted in the course of evaluation. Most of the interviewees were from the Ministry of Social Affairs but the Social Committee of the Riigikogu, the Ministry of Justice and the Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions were represented as well. The interview questions are provided in Annex 8.

Information requests were sent to lead partners and the Ministry of Social Affairs in order to map the actions and results of mainstreaming. The Labour Market Board was also approached with the request to submit some necessary reports and contact details.

Benchmarking analysis with Latvian and Lithuanian EQUAL programmes

A list of reference points and questions was drawn up to enable comparison with foreign countries and questionnaires were submitted to Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian management teams of EQUAL. The programmes were compared on the basis of various numeric indicators. In addition, management authorities were asked evaluation questions.

Analysis of maps and evaluations

At the stage of analysis, the collected information was analysed according to evaluation questions and compared with the Latvian and Lithuanian EQUAL programmes. The analysis resulted in formulation of tentative conclusions and opinions, which were used as a basis for the report.

The stage concluded with the discussion of the draft report in the Ministry of Social Affairs to verify sufficiency of the information and accuracy of the directions of analysis. 19 policymakers and development partners participated in the focus group session.

Compilation of the report

This report embodies the observations and recommendations for better utilisation of project mainstreaming processes identified in the course of analysis.

Project Organisers

Evaluation of the mainstreaming processes and impacts of EQUAL was organised by Ernst & Young Baltic AS in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior. The project team of Ernst & Young Baltic AS included the following members:

- ▼ Mārt Loite, project manager;
- ▼ Mai Luuk, expert on labour market and social inclusion;
- ▼ Tauno Olju, expert;
- ▼ Merilin Truuväärt, analyst;
- ▼ Linda Blekte, foreign expert (Latvia);
- ▼ Linas Dičpetris, foreign expert (Lithuania).

1. Evaluation of mainstreaming process

1.1 How well have the actions of development partnerships been integrated in policies and practice?

In brief

- Clarity and ambitiousness of project mainstreaming goals
- Chosen target groups of mainstreaming and approach to the target groups
- Implemented mainstreaming actions and compliance with established goals
- Experience from other projects
- Summary

Clarity and ambitiousness of project mainstreaming goals

Clarity of mainstreaming goals

The proposals of 13 projects received during the main call for proposals and additional proposals of 8 projects funded after the additional call for proposals were analysed to evaluate the clarity of goals. The mainstreaming goals specified in the proposals were evaluated according to the SMART² criteria. It means that the goals were evaluated with regard to five aspects: specific nature (*Specific*), measurability (*Measurable*), attainability (*Attainable*), relevance (*Relevant*) and measurability in time (*Time related*) of the goals.

Specific: The criterion of specific nature was used to identify whether a goal included the respective target group and specified what it wanted to achieve in this target group, as well as to evaluate particularity of the goal. Five of the 13 project proposals had formulated the project mainstreaming goals in a clear manner where the necessary target groups and desired situations in the target group were clearly stated. The goal formulations in seven project proposals included certain weaknesses and the goal formulation in one project was too vague and did not specify the target groups that needed to be involved to attain the goal.

Measurable: The criterion of measurability was deemed to be satisfied if the goal formulation stated a particular measurable result. Particular measurable criteria had been set for the goals in two projects and another two had set relatively clear goals, but they described the desirable target levels rather than specific numeric indicators. Generally, a target level was not established for goals associated with an increase in awareness. This is understandable in the application phase, because it is likely that, prior to project launch, there is a lack of necessary information on the baseline level of awareness of the given subject and it is difficult to establish numeric targets without investigating the initial situation. A good solution was found by the project on integration of women involved in prostitution, where the number of persons to be reached was specified instead of the target impact level. It is also conceivable at the application phase to formulate a goal in terms of a description of the desired though patterns in the target group at the end of the project. Some goals were measurable and some did not have clear measuring criteria in case of four projects and five projects did not specify any criteria for measuring the project results.

² SMART- Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely; it is a recognised tool for establishment and evaluation of project goals.

Attainable: The criterion of attainability was used to evaluate whether specific actions for achievement of goals had been mentioned. As all proposals were required to include a specific action plan for project implementation, all projects did indeed satisfy this criterion. Some main actions were described also in goal formulation in case of several projects.

Relevant: Evaluation of relevance focussed on the question, whether the content of a goal is necessary for the project in general and whether all major target groups or directions have been reflected in a goal. Another consideration under this criterion was suitability for the social situation at the time of project launch. Five projects fully satisfied the requirement for inclusion of necessary target groups in the goals, as considered under the criterion of relevance. In case of further six projects, the criterion was satisfied if item 4.2.3 of the project proposal (policy areas affected by the envisaged results of the project and respective methods of information distribution) was included in the consideration in addition to stated goals.

Time-related: The time-related criterion was used to evaluate establishment of a specific deadline for the goals. The timeframe of all projects was the term of the project. As the approach was project-based, there was no requirement to specify a deadline for achievement of the goal in goal formulation.

*The mainstreaming goals
were generally vague*

In conclusion, only a few projects had formulated the mainstreaming goals in a manner that fully or nearly satisfied all SMART criteria. The Asylum Seekers and Choices & Balance projects set a good example in this respect. However, the mainstreaming goals had not been thought through in some important aspects in case of most project proposals. There were also some projects (for example, Distance Working) where the main proposal did not include any mainstreaming goals. This enables to conclude that mainstreaming as an important part of the EQUAL programme was not sufficiently valued at the start of the projects, the mainstreaming goals remained too general, or mainstreaming of the project had not been sufficiently thought through and formulated. Vagueness and partial inconsistency of goals in case of some projects was also confirmed by the opinions of interviewees. The main weaknesses concerned the measurability of goals and planning of monitoring. The problem of measurability of project goals was also raised during the interviews. It was stated that measurable targets had not been specified at the initial stages of the projects, which made it difficult to make interim performance assessments and introduce adjustments. One of the reasons for vagueness in the formulations of initial mainstreaming goals was the comprehensibility of the term 'mainstreaming' itself. Even though the meaning of the term was finally better understood by project partners, it is still foreign to outsiders.

The following table indicates the evaluations of the clarity of goals by individual projects. A maximum of one point could be given for each criterion and the column Evaluation shows the aggregate points for the mainstreaming goals of the given project.

Table 1.1: Evaluation of clarity of goals by projects³

Project	Clarity of goals	Evaluati on
1. We Friends	S: The goals specified in the main proposal enable to understand what is the target group of mainstreaming actions and the desired outcome has been stated as well. However, the goal is too general. The goal formulation in the additional proposal is even more vague and it is difficult to understand, which specific categories of persons will be involved in the achievement of the goal. The desired final situation has been defined. M: The mainstreaming goal is enhanced awareness, but no particular target level has been specified. R: Different target groups (general public, local government, opinion leaders) are represented.	3
2. RE-START	S: The mainstreaming goals in the main proposal are relatively specific; the goals involves the target groups. Formulation of goals in the additional proposal has remained at a slightly more general and vague level. M: The stated goal is raising the awareness, but no particular target level has been specified. R: Important target groups of project mainstreaming are represented.	4
3. Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution	S: The mainstreaming goal associated with the public is clear and specific. The goal specifies the target group and the desired situation in the target group. M: A measurable goal has been set in relation to general public. R: The goal formulation does not include work with policymakers on continuation of the project results, which actually became an important branch of mainstreaming for this project. However, relations with policymakers have been described under the item of influence on policy areas (4.2.3). There are also envisaged public opinion surveys to compare the baseline and target attitude levels.	4
4. Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers	S: The mainstreaming goal in the initial proposal is vague, making reference only to preventive work among youth and raising public awareness of the problem. The goal in the additional proposal is very specific and focuses on a particular target group. M: The goal in the initial proposal was not described in a measurable manner, but the goal in the additional proposal satisfies the criterion of measurability. R: The goal of the initial proposal does not include the target group of policymakers even though policymakers were involved in the project mainstreaming actions in addition to the public. However, the approach in relation to policymakers is again described in more specific terms under the item of policy areas. The goal of the additional call for proposals focuses purely on policymakers.	4
5. HAPECO	S: The elements of mainstreaming have been clearly and understandably stated in the goal formulation. Both the target groups and the expected impact on the target groups have been specified. M: Some goals are specific and measurable (e.g., to integrate the project results in policy), but there are also some generally formulated goals that include words like 'growth' or 'increase' without specifying the desired target level. R: The main target groups of project main streaming have been included and the objective for each major target group is clearly understandable.	4/5

³ The table does not include criteria for the categories Attainable and Time related, because all projects met these criteria for similar reasons.

Evaluation of Mainstreaming Processes and Impacts of the EQUAL Programme

6. Integration of Asylum Seekers	S: The goals have been clearly formulated both during the regular and additional call for proposals. The goal indicates, which specific groups are targeted and what the project should achieve. The formulation of goals during the additional call for proposals is particularly clear and specific. M: Most of the goals are measurable (submission of proposals to government institutions); the desired situation has been described with regard to influencing the public opinion. Use of survey data for developing an impact strategy has been pointed out in the additional proposal. R: All important target groups of mainstreaming are included. The additional proposal also mentions a survey as an instrument for measuring public opinion.	5
7. Choices & Balance	S: The goals by target groups were very thoroughly and clearly formulated during the main call of proposals. The formulation of goals during the additional call of proposals was sufficiently clear and understandable as well. M: The established goals were generally measurable; the desired results were described if a goal entailed impact on attitudes. R: The goal covers different important target groups.	5
8. Connected Services for Integrating Young Mothers into the Labour Market	S: Project proposal includes mainstreaming goals but the goals are not very clearly defined. The desired outcome has been established, but it does not indicate, which target groups should be the focal point in order to achieve this outcome. M: Formulation of goals is general and there are no criteria that would enable to establish at which point a goal is achieved. R: The goals do not specify the target groups for which actions are planned. More information on the connections between the target group and actions can be found under the item that describes the links of the project to policy areas (4.2.3).	2/3
9. WHOLE	S: The main proposal enables to identify the target group of mainstreaming actions but the goal itself remains slightly laconic and general. The mainstreaming goals have been defined more clearly during the additional call for proposals. M: The goal is associated with improved attitudes, but neither proposal specifies a target level or precise outcome. R: The goal includes major target groups.	3/4
10. Care Service	S: The goal described in the main proposal does not include many mainstreaming aspects. The goal of the main proposal only vaguely specifies policymakers as the target group of mainstreaming actions. The goal formulation in the additional proposal is not too clear either, even though general public and local government have been mentioned as important target groups. M: A part of the goal of the additional proposal is measurable but the desired targets have not been set for the other part. R: The goal of the main proposal does not cover mainstreaming; the goal of the additional proposal establishes links to main target groups.	3
11. Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work	S: The goals are clearly formulated. Links with the target group and the desired outcome in the target group have been described. M: Specific numeric indicators have been established for the goals. R: The goal does not refer to the policymakers at various levels as a target group, even though in reality they became an important target group of the project. However, actions targeting national policymakers have been mentioned under proposal item 4.2.3 (policy areas affected by the envisaged results of the project and respective methods of information distribution).	4/5
12. Distance Working	S: The main proposal does not contain any direct mainstreaming goals. The target groups and actions associated with mainstreaming are to some extent reflected in proposal item 4.2.3 (policy areas affected by the envisaged results of the project and respective methods of information distribution). The mainstreaming goals for the target group have been relatively well formulated in the additional proposal. M: Drafting of regulation is a measurable goal, but no target levels have been specified for other goals associated with distribution of information. R: The main target groups have been included in the goal in the additional proposal.	3/4

13. Farmers' Replacement Service	S: The mainstreaming goal is not clearly stated in the proposal and the focus is rather on the immediate objectives of the project. The formulation of goals makes it difficult to understand who exactly should be involved in order to achieve the described goals. Most of the mainstreaming actions are described in item 4.2.3 (policy areas affected by the envisaged results of the project and respective methods of information distribution). M: No measurable criteria have been set for the established goals. R: The goal refers only to the immediate target group (farmers and replacement workers). Other target groups of mainstreaming have been mentioned only under item 4.2.3.	2/3
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Source: Main and additional project proposals

The project goals were vague also in Lithuanian projects where development partners were given recommendations during the implementation of the first phase on how to improve the formulation of goals for the second phase.

Ambitiousness of mainstreaming goals

Established mainstreaming goals were considered to be rather ambitious by the interviewees

The general assessment at the interviews with policymakers was that project goals were ambitious. The interviewees even stated that the goals were too ambitious and occasionally unrealistic in case of certain projects. For example, some local projects attempted a too broad scope of actions. For instance, some locally oriented projects like We-Friends attempted to mainstream their results at national level, which was not a primary aim for this project. There were also several opinions that the goal of projects should not necessarily be a legislative amendment. According to the interviewees, the project mainstreaming goals could have also included submission of proposals or instigation of public debate, because actual implementation depends to a great extent on the budget situation and political will, which is largely beyond the reach of the projects. However, there were some opinions that achieving a legislative amendment in two or three years should be realistic and some projects did not make provisions for project sustainability at a sufficiently early stage.

In conclusion, it could be said that, from the viewpoint of mainstreaming, the projects could have had the ambition to make their actions sustainable by choosing the right means depending on the nature of each project. The mainstreaming actions were planned relatively late in the framework of some projects.

Chosen target groups of mainstreaming and approach to the target groups

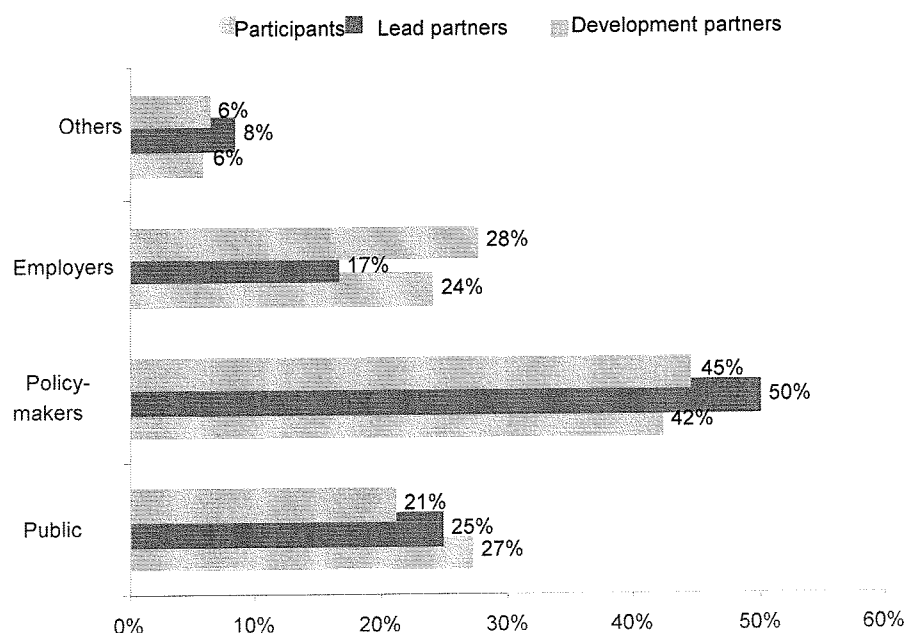
Target groups that should have been the focus of mainstreaming

The interviewed policymakers stated that the specific target groups depend in each case on the nature of the project and established goals. There were some clearly local projects (e.g., Connected Services, We-Friends) where communication with local governments, other similar organisations, NGOs and educational institutions would have been sufficient. Several interviewees emphasised the necessity of horizontal mainstreaming. The recommended target group of projects that aspired legislative amendments were policymakers, including both politicians and officials. There were also opinions that results could be maybe obtained faster through lobbying the politicians. Other frequently mentioned target groups included employers and general public. Provision of education to employees was proposed as a potential method for reaching the employers and, therefore, employees could also be an indirect target group of the projects. Several trade unions, social workers, law enforcement structures and, to ensure early development of attitudes, school-age children were also mentioned as potential target groups.

The lead partners found that vertical mainstreaming should focus mainly on policymakers and less on general public or employers. The immediate target group of the project was also mentioned among other target groups. The development partners believed similarly that policymakers are an important target group but they also attached high value to employers as a target group. They also mentioned employees, the immediate target group of the project, local governments and other non-profit organisations as additional potential target groups. They also mentioned international stakeholders. The opinions of project participants coincided to a great extent with the opinions of lead and development partners.

Figure 1.1: Target groups that should be involved in the vertical mainstreaming process (vertical axis: target groups considered important for vertical mainstreaming; horizontal axis: degree of importance in the opinion of lead partners, development partners and participants)

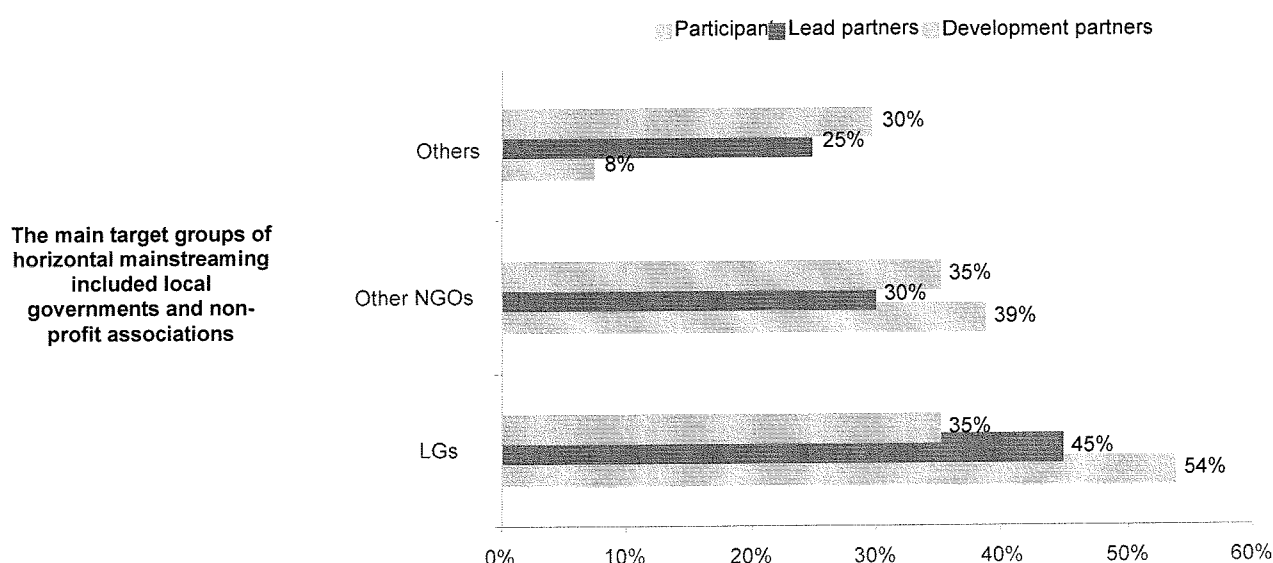
Policy-makers were the main target group of vertical mainstreaming



Source: Survey of lead partners, Survey of development partners

The role of local governments was considered to be most important for horizontal mainstreaming. NGOs as a target group of horizontal mainstreaming were also mentioned several times. Other possible target groups included area specialists, specialised organisations, political parties, politicians, educational institutions, media, entrepreneurs and the corresponding institutions in other EU Member States. Cooperation between organisations was considered very important.

Figure 1.2: Target groups that should be involved in the horizontal mainstreaming process (vertical axis: target groups considered important for horizontal mainstreaming; horizontal axis: degree of importance in the opinion of lead partners, development partners and participants)



Source: Survey of lead partners, Survey of development partners

In conclusion, the main target groups at the local level according to the respondents included local governments, non-profit associations and other organisations that can contribute to horizontal dissemination of project results. The main target groups at the national level were politicians and government officials. Other important target groups mentioned included employers and general public/media. The important role of the media was emphasised both in case of horizontal and vertical goals.

Actual target groups of the actions

Most actions focused on policymakers

Most of the mainstreaming actions of the projects focused on government officials and politicians at the national level and the local governments at the local level. Other preferences included distribution of information to the public and dissemination of project themes in the immediate target group. The immediate target group received much attention in case of projects where the innovative approach required activity on the part of the immediate target group and was necessary for sustainability of the project (e.g., in the projects of Farmers' Replacement Service and Distance Working).

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Table 1.2: Target groups of mainstreaming actions^{4 5}

Project/Target group	Public	Media	Opinion leaders	Politicians	Government officials	Local governments	NGOs	Employers	Educational institutions	Trade unions	Other organisations	Immediate target group	Experts/ Specialists	Foreign experts
We Friends	2		1	1			1	1						1
RE- START	1	2			3		1		2				5	3
Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution	6			8	7	9	5	2	1				1	2
Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers	3			1	1	1					1	3		
HAPECO	10		9	1	1	9					9			
Integration of Asylum Seekers	3			3	4									
Choices & Balance	4		1	2	3	3	1	4			2			1
Connected Services for Integrating Young Mothers into the Labour Market	3				2	1	1	1					1	1
WHOLE	1			2	3	2		1				7		
Care Service	5			3	2	4						1	2	
Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work	3			3	2	2						4		1
Distance Working	10			5	7	5	1	3			5	10		2
Farmers' Replacement Service	6	1		9	9				1	2		11	1	
TOTAL:	52	3	10	38	44	36	10	12	4	2	17	36	10	10

Source: Information request to lead partners

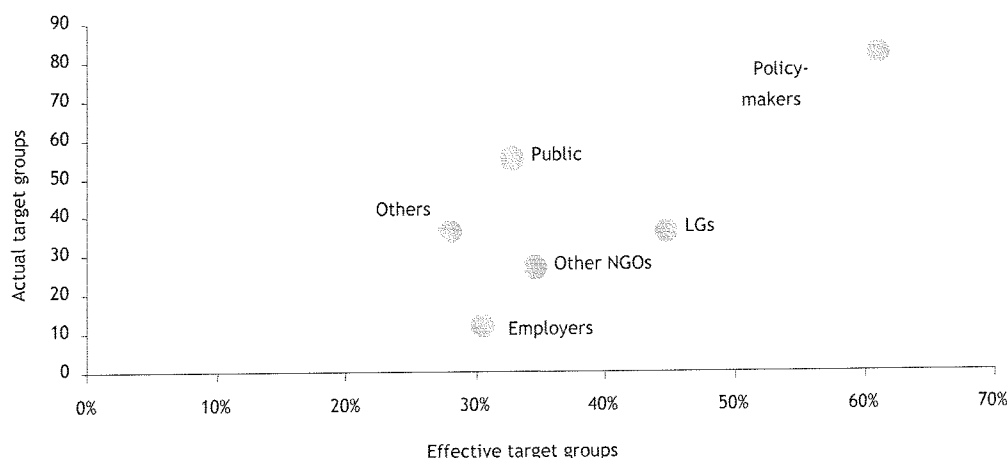
Nearly all target groups of actions were also mentioned in the surveys of lead and development partners and interviews as important target groups. Policymakers were an important target group both in theory and practice. The immediate target group of mainstreaming was not frequently mentioned as an important target group in the interviews and survey responses, but the number of actual actions for this target group was relatively high. However, the relative number of actions for local governments was lower and the relative number of actions for general public was higher than should have been the case according to the interviews and surveys.

⁴ Comparison of figures in the table may be complicated by the different levels of specificity of the lead partner responses. Nevertheless, the figures provide an indicative overview of the preferred target groups.

⁵ Yellow table cells indicate the preferred target groups of each project. Yellow figures in the last row indicate the aggregate preferred target groups of mainstreaming actions of the projects.

The number of actions for the target group of employers was insufficient in comparison to importance of this target group. It is important to note that the target group of employers was also influenced through mass media as part of the general public. Therefore, the actual number of actions for the target group of employers could be higher.

Figure 1.3: Matrix of relevance of target groups (vertical axis: target groups that were actually focused on; vertical axis: target groups that should have been focused on)



Source: Information requests to lead and development partners

Suitability of target groups for project goals

In order to evaluate the suitability of target groups for project goals, the mainstreaming goals established in the main and additional proposals were compared with the target groups that were actually in the focus of mainstreaming actions.

Selected target groups were relevant to the established goals

Generally, the actual target groups of actions corresponded with the project goals. There were some cases where an important target group was not mentioned in the goal formulation but received attention in the actual work. The mismatches between goals and target groups were largely due to unclear and hasty goal formulations. The following table provides information on the correspondence between individual project goals and target groups.

Table 1.3: Correspondence of the mainstreaming target group with the mainstreaming goals of the project

Project	Correspondence of the mainstreaming target group with the mainstreaming goals of the project
We Friends	Actions have been carried out for all target groups mentioned in the formulated goal.
RE-START	Shaping the attitude of the public and a wider group of employers received less attention than could have been expected on the basis of the proposed goals. However, policymakers, other NGOs and specialists dealing with the target group are identified as important groups in the additional proposal and they have also been the focus of the majority of actions.
Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution	The main focus was on policymakers and shaping the public opinion, which was in accordance with the established goals.

Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers	Attention has been paid to various policymakers and shaping the public opinion. Shaping the public opinion was also a goal in the initial proposal. The dimension of policymakers was added to the goals in the additional proposal.
HAPECO	Actions have been carried out for policymakers, general public and other social partners in accordance with the goal.
Integration of Asylum Seekers	The target groups of the project mainstreaming actions were general public and policymakers, which means that there is correspondence between the goals and actual practice.
Choices & Balance	Employers and policymakers have been the focus of attention in project actions. There were also some actions to involve the public. All mentioned target groups were also reflected in the goals.
Connected Services for Integrating Young Mothers into the Labour Market	Work has been done with the officials and residents at the local level. The main emphasis has been on local actions. The national level received less attention, even though it was also listed among the project goals.
WHOLE	Actions for the public and employers were carried out after the main call for proposals, as stated in the goals, but the main emphasis was on policymakers, even though they were not mentioned in the goal formulation. Actions after the additional call for proposals targeted both policymakers and the public, which corresponded to the mainstreaming goals stated in the additional proposal.
Care Service	The immediate client group and policymakers have been mentioned as the target groups in the main proposal. Explaining the necessity of implementation of the care service was a goal established in the additional proposal but it was not specified to whom this necessity will be explained. The main foci of mainstreaming actions included the immediate client group, policymakers and the public.
Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work	The local governments, parents and the public were involved in the actions as stated in the goal.
Distance Working	Based on the goal formulation, the majority of mainstreaming actions should have targeted policymakers and additionally also the public, the immediate target group and other NGOs and there have been actions for all these groups.
Farmers' Replacement Service	The proposal did not specify the exact target group of mainstreaming. The response from the lead partner emphasised policymakers, the immediate target group and the public and the project has indeed paid the most attention to these groups.

Source: Main and additional project proposals

Implemented mainstreaming actions and compliance with established goals

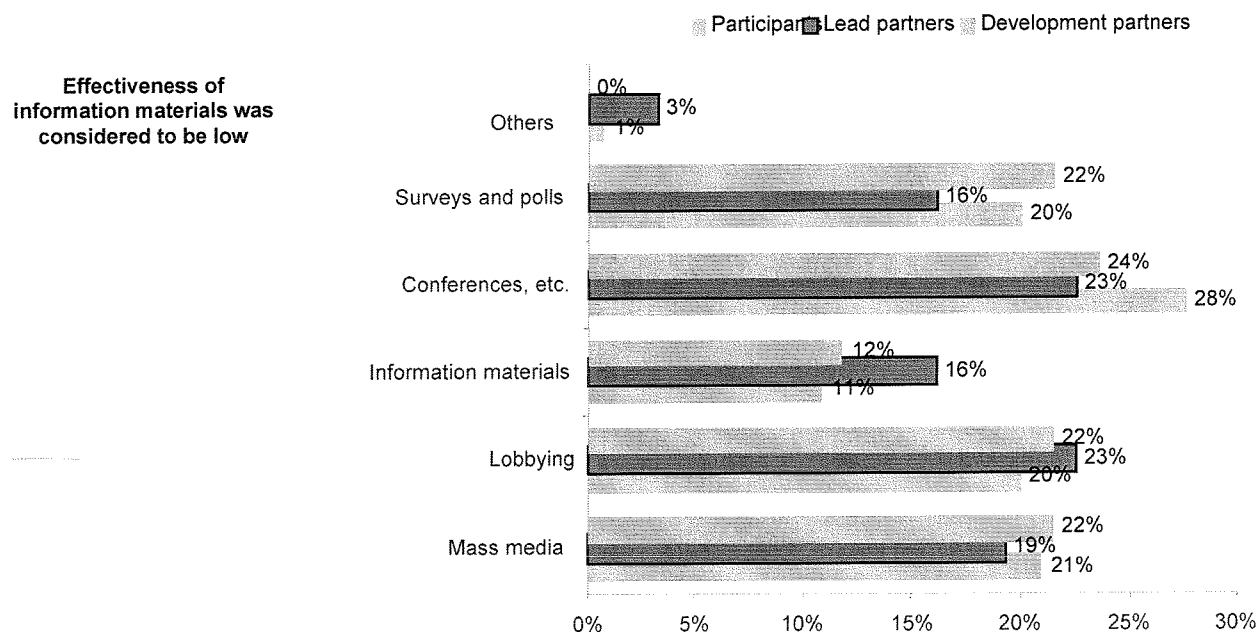
Effective actions

The lead and development partners were asked, which actions they consider most effective for mainstreaming the project results. The same question was also asked as a control question during the interviews with policymakers and in the survey of project participants.

According to the lead partners, the most effective mainstreaming actions include lobbying and organisation of conferences, discussion groups and workshops. The use of mass media also received higher evaluation than the other options. The development partners reported that conferences, discussion groups and workshops are the most effective actions. The mass media, surveys and opinion polls and lobbying were considered to be of equal effectiveness. The participants in mainstreaming actions gave highest appraisal to the conference format. All target groups considered the use of information materials less effective than other options. Participation in the legislative process was mentioned as another

potential action. Most lead and development partners believed that a combination of different actions produces the best results.

Figure 1.4: Effective mainstreaming actions (vertical axis: mainstreaming actions; horizontal axis: estimation of the effectiveness of the action in the opinion of lead partners, development partners and participants)



Source: Survey of lead partners, Survey of development partners

According to the interviewees, the choice of actions depends on the content of each project and the target groups chosen for dissemination of results. The use of mass media is a solution that helps to reach the public, but mass media also influences policymakers, project stakeholders and employers. There were also opinions that addressing the media, incl. local media, through spokespersons has not been sufficiently utilised. Some respondents did not believe in the use of mass media, because articles on a specific topic are only read by people who are interested in and familiar with this topic.

Direct contacts and lobbying were mentioned as the most effective methods for reaching policymakers. It was also reported that personal contacts can be used occasionally for influencing other groups as well, e.g., convincing employers to hire representatives of risk groups.

The importance of surveys was emphasised in most interviews. Surveys were considered necessary to justify political interference and to give weight to the discussions. This was also considered to be an effective method of shaping the public opinion. Dissemination of results was seen as an integral part of the surveys. However, the respondents stated that the goal of each survey should be carefully planned and all projects do not need large-scale surveys. In this past EQUAL programme, some projects undertook surveys on a too large scale and without a clear goal. Therefore, quality plays an important role in the surveys.

The respondents did not have much faith in the information materials, such as information leaflets or DVDs, because they can become quickly outdated, are difficult to notice among a large number of similar media, and have limited effect. Furthermore, using electronic media requires special equipment. However, information materials were still considered useful for overcoming the digital divide in case of some target groups. The respondents believed that more thorough, well-composed books and textbooks have more impact. Information materials were also said to be useful for attracting the attention of people who are already interested in the topic.

Conferences, discussion groups and training in combination with other actions were believed to be good tools for influencing officials and specialists. The actions of this type provide a good opportunity for establishing contacts for future lobbying and for providing a general overview. Some interviewees, however, had a very low assessment of this kind of actions. One of the interviewed officials claimed that the best method for attracting his attention would be to invite him as a speaker, because this would force him to think more thoroughly about the topic in question.

Study trips and similar actions based on direct experience were mentioned as having a good impact. Protest actions were also proposed as a possible method for attracting attention.

Of the actions not mentioned above, some interviewees recommended the use of the Internet as a method of mainstreaming, because information on the Internet seems to be fresher and it is available at any moment when necessary.

All interviewees believed in the necessity of combining different actions. A topic should reach the target group from several sources in order to have an impact.

The quality of actions is very important, particularly in case of information materials and surveys. Timing of actions was also believed to be a factor in the impact. For instance, the use of the media before elections is more effective than in other periods.

There was a great overlap between the opinions of lead and development partners and interviewees with regard to the efficiency of lobbying and the general attitude towards the use of mass media was positive as well. The use of information materials was not valued very highly by the parties. They could be justified in combination with other actions. The opinions of the lead and development partners diverged somewhat from the opinions of the interviewees on the question of conferences. While the lead and development partners believed this to be the best form of action, the interviewees had less faith in the impact of conferences, discussion groups, trainings and other similar actions. The interviewees believed that surveys and opinion polls are among the most effective actions and a similar high opinion was expressed by lead partners. The development partners did not consider the surveys as a particularly good method of mainstreaming.

All Baltic countries concluded that a combination of actions is the best way to disseminate project results. In Latvia and Lithuania, lobbying in combination with supporting information materials and survey results was considered to be the best way to reach policymakers.

It was stated in the case of Latvia that mainstreaming of the results of EQUAL and the impact on national policies was better in the areas where there was increased and regular cooperation between development partnerships and policymakers (ministries, government agencies and offices). The effectiveness was highest when policymakers served as partners or strategic partners.

Interviews emphasised
the importance of surveys
and lobbying

In conclusion, it could be said that there was a great degree of overlap between the opinions of lead and development partners and interviewees on different methods of mainstreaming.

Implemented mainstreaming actions

Various mainstreaming actions were implemented in the framework of the projects. Both the surveys and the interviews emphasised the necessity of combining the actions. All projects used different combinations of mainstreaming actions. Every project implemented at least four different types of actions. However, some types of actions were used more often than others. In particular, organisation of various conferences, discussion groups and workshops was a popular choice. Information materials, direct contacts and mass media were also frequently used channels.

Table 1.4: Frequency of use of different types of mainstreaming actions

Type of mainstreaming actions	No of actions implemented
1. Mass media	26
2. Personal contacts (lobbying)	31
3. Information materials	36
4. Conferences, discussion groups, workshops	89
5. Surveys and opinion polls	18
6. Internet	16
7. Action plans/development plans	11
8. Competitions	1
10. Advertising	1

Source: Information request to lead partners

Information materials
were overused, lobbying
was underused

Organisation of conferences, discussion groups, workshops and similar actions received positive assessment from lead and development partners but their impact was slightly less valued by policymakers and, consequently, the fact that the usage rate of this type of actions was nearly three times higher than average could indicate overuse.

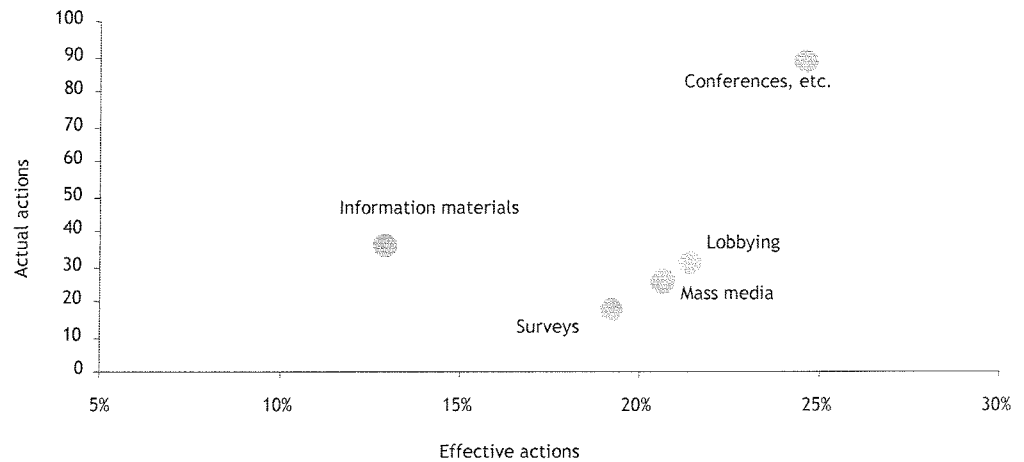
Even though information materials received a relatively low assessment from all parties in comparison to other actions, they occupy the second place in terms of the usage rate, which is a clear indication of overuse.

On the other hand, lobbying as an action of mainstreaming is underused, considering the high evaluation of this method by all parties.

The use of mass media is rather optimal, considering the generally positive attitude of the parties towards this channel.

The total number of projects was 13 and the number of surveys conducted was 18, which seems to indicate that the potential of surveys was used successfully.

Figure 1.5: Matrix of relevance of mainstreaming actions (vertical axis: actions used for mainstreaming; horizontal axis: actions considered to be effective)



Source: Information requests to lead and development partners

Actions by target groups

The following matrix illustrating the use of different types of actions by target groups was compiled on the basis of responses from lead partners and project reports.

Table 1.6: Actions by target groups

	Public	Media	Opinion	Politicians	Government officials	Local development	NGOs	Employers	Educational institutions	Trade unions	Other organisations	Immediate target group	Experts/ Specialists	Foreign experts
Mass media	15			3	2	1	1	1				3		
Personal contacts (lobbying)	1	2		11	8	1	1		1	2		3	1	
Information materials	13		2	2	3	4	2			2	4		3	1
Conferences, discussion groups, workshops	9		3	8	15	15	3	5	2	3	6	10	8	2
Surveys and opinion polls	2			5	4	4	1	1					1	
Internet	6		1	1	1	1					1	5		
Action plans/development plans	1	1		2	3	2	1				1			
Competitions								1						
Advertising	1													

Source: Information requests to lead partners, analysis of documents

Too uniform approach was used for different target groups

The matrix shows that different target groups have been approached in a relatively similar manner, namely through various conferences, discussion groups,

workshops and similar actions. This uniform approach is not justified according to the evaluations of the interviewees presented in section "Effective actions". This format is considered to be a good one in case of specialists and officials but there are better actions for other target groups according to the interviewees.

Few approaches to local officials have been made through personal contacts and the conference format is the most frequently used type of action for this target group as well. Similar trend is noticeable with regard to the target group of employers but a novel idea has also been used in this target group, namely organisation of a competition to shape attitudes.

Politicians have been mainly approached through lobbying, which is a justified approach in case of this target group according to the interviewees. Surveys as an effective method for this target group have been used as well.

The public has been approached mainly through mass media, which the interviewees consider to be a correct channel for this target group. In addition, many information materials have been used as well, which was thought to be a better type of actions for persons who are somewhat familiar with or interested in the topic and, therefore, this is a slightly inadequate method for attracting public attention. The number of surveys is lower, even though it was considered to be an important action for the public.

Conferences have been organised and information materials have been published for specialists, which is in agreement with the recommendations of the interviewees.

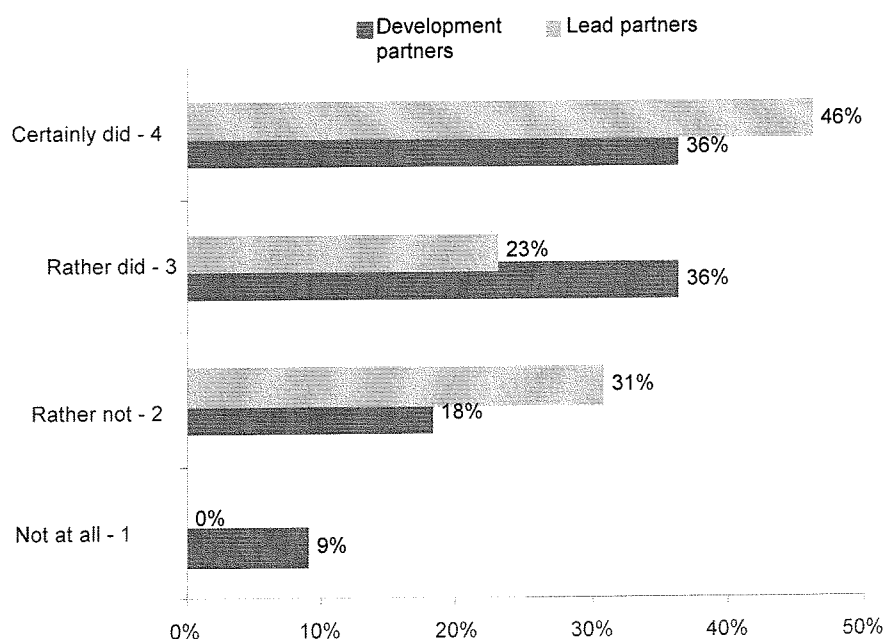
In conclusion, it could be said that the approaches adopted in case of different target groups have been too similar; there were attempts to reach many target groups with the same type of initiatives. The tactical approach to every target group should have been elaborated more thoroughly.

Experience from other projects

Partnerships and learning were established as important aspects of the EQUAL programme. In this light, learning from other projects received poor evaluations. Nearly one third of the lead partners and development partners believed that rather nothing or nothing was learned from the experiences of other projects. On a four-point scale, cooperation received an evaluation of 3.2 from the lead partners and 4.2 from development partners.

Better use could have been made of the mainstreaming experiences of other projects

Figure 1.6: Did you benefit / receive new ideas from the experience of mainstreaming actions in other EQUAL projects (incl. projects from other countries)?



Source: Surveys of lead and development partners

The lack of a suitable partner was mentioned twice as the reason why nothing was learned from the experiences of other projects. Two respondents also mentioned that they tended to share their own ideas rather than take ideas from others. However, several lead and development partners stressed the importance of experiences from other projects, particularly the experiences received through formal or informal channels from foreign partners.

Summary

The mainstreaming process has been rough. Often, the goals of mainstreaming had not been thoroughly thought through in relation to the particular project during the phase of project proposals. Most of the mainstreaming goals were ambitious but some projects had chosen an incorrect mainstreaming strategy (some local projects initiated many actions for vertical mainstreaming, which is not a primary concern for these projects). There were also misunderstandings with regard to the concept of mainstreaming, which became clear to the project partners by the end but still causes confusion for outsiders. The incomprehensibility of the concept of mainstreaming could have been one of the reasons for insufficient descriptions of mainstreaming in project goals. The concept of mainstreaming needs to be made more intelligible for wider public if it is going to be used in the future.

Generally, the projects chose suitable target groups for their goals. The target group of policymakers plays an important role in influencing the policies and this was the group included most by the projects. The use of local governments and employers as target groups was insufficient and the number of actions for the public was occasionally too high.

A combination of different actions is important for successful mainstreaming but, nevertheless, some actions are more effective than others. The effectiveness of information materials is lower in comparison to other actions but the projects still made heavy use of this method. The number of conference-type actions

significantly exceeded the number of other actions. It is an effective mainstreaming action but it overshadowed some other important actions. Lobbying as an action of mainstreaming was underused, considering the high evaluation of this method by all parties. The use of mass media and surveys was rather optimal. Approaches to different target groups were too similar; the conference format was the main type in case of almost all target groups.

The synergy between projects through mutual learning remained at an average level. Some projects learned many important skills from others, incl. projects abroad, but some projects found nothing useful in the experiences of other projects or had communication issues.

1.2 To what extent did the additional call for proposals contribute to mainstreaming the development partnership actions?

In brief

Impact of the additional call for proposals on the quality of project mainstreaming strategy
 Role of the additional call for proposals in disseminating project results
 Deadweight and significance of the additional call for proposals for the results
 Novelty of actions under the additional call for proposals
 Summary

Impact of the additional call for proposals on the quality of project mainstreaming strategy

Additional call for proposals contributed to the clarity of the goals of mainstreaming

The mainstreaming goals formulated during the additional call for proposals were generally more specific than in the first round. Most of the mainstreaming goals had become more exhaustive and included important target groups that were not considered in the goals of the main proposal. However, the RE-Start project, for instance, had formulated the mainstreaming goals in the additional proposal at a more general level than in the initial proposal.

It is possible that the clarity of goals was improved by the smaller volume of the proposal and the fact that the concept of mainstreaming had been clarified in the course of the projects. An important impact is also evident from the purpose of the additional call for proposals – the additional call for proposals was designed for mainstreaming the project results.

Role of the additional call for proposals in disseminating project results

In order to identify the role of the additional call for proposals, the set of project mainstreaming actions was analysed to determine the percentage of mainstreaming actions financed from the resources of the additional call for proposals. The percentages by projects are shown in the following table.

Table 1.7: Contribution of the additional call for proposals to mainstreaming actions

Project	Percentage of mainstreaming actions implemented in the framework of the additional call for proposals
1. We Friends	23%
2. RE-START	22%
3. Integration of Women Involved in Prostitution	0%
4. Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers	25%
5. HAPECO	0%
6. Integration of Asylum Seekers	23%
7. Choices & Balance	63%
8. Connected Services for Integrating Young Mothers into the Labour Market	0%
9. WHOLE	55%
10. Care Service	26%
11. Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work	0%
12. Distance Working	18%
13. Farmers' Replacement Service	0%
AVERAGE:	20%

Source: Information request to lead partners, analysis of project reports

The percentage of mainstreaming actions implemented under the additional call for proposals was rather small

Considering that the average percentage of actions under the additional call for proposals was less than a quarter of all mainstreaming actions, it could be stated that the additional call for proposals did not play a particularly important role in project mainstreaming. Communication discrepancies between the projects and management authority could be identified as one reason for this situation – many projects were not aware of the additional funding for mainstreaming actions and included the mainstreaming actions in their initial project plans.

Only the projects Choices & Balance and WHOLE stood out, with more than half of mainstreaming actions implemented under the additional call for proposals.

At the same time, the additional call for proposals enabled to reach a larger group of people, because frequent use was made of mass media channels.

Deadweight and significance of the additional call for proposals for the results

Deadweight of the additional call for proposals was relatively high – nearly 30 % of the respondents would have implemented the actions even without additional resources

Deadweight is the percentage of support, which was ineffective, i.e., was spent on achieving results that would have been achieved even without the support. Deadweight reflects the actions that would have been implemented even without the support. Deadweight was rather high in case of the additional call for proposals of EQUAL. Namely, according to the lead partner, there were only three points where the actions under the additional call for proposals would not have been implemented without the additional resources. Nearly 30 % of the respondents would have certainly or likely implemented the actions implemented for the funds from this call for proposal also without the additional resources. For instance, it was pointed out in case of the Compulsive Gamblers project that mainstreaming actions had already been planned by the time of the additional call for proposals and nothing would have left undone without the additional call for proposals.

Table 1.8: Deadweight and significance of the additional call for proposals for the results

Project ⁶	Would you have implemented the actions under the additional call for proposals also without the additional resources?	How much did the additional call for proposals contribute to dissemination of project results?	Were there important results that could not have been achieved without the additional call for proposals?
1. We Friends	Rather yes	Rather contributed	Rather yes
2. RE-START	No	Yes, contributed	Yes
4. Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers	Yes	Did not contribute	No
7. Choices & Balance	Rather no	Yes, contributed	Rather yes
9. WHOLE	No	Yes, contributed	Rather yes
10. Care Service	No	Yes, contributed	Rather yes
12. Distance Working	Rather no	Yes, contributed	Rather no
1. No	3	1	1

⁶ Five projects did not participate in the additional call for proposals: Women Involved in Prostitution; HAPECO; Connected Services; Children Taken Care of, Mothers at Work; and Farmers' Replacement Service. Response to this question could not be obtained from the Asylum Seekers project.

2. Rather no	2	0	1
3. Rather yes	1	1	4
4. Yes	1	5	1
Average	2	3,4	2,7

Source: Information request to lead partners

In the assessment of lead partners, the additional call for proposals contributed to achieving the project results but the position on the significance of these results was less firm. While five of the seven lead partners believed that the additional call for proposals did contribute to the achievement of project results, only one lead partner stated that important results would not have been achieved without the additional call for proposals.

Novelty of actions under the additional call for proposals

The lead partners were asked to evaluate the novelty of actions implemented under the additional call for proposals in comparison to actions under the main proposals. Only one lead partner responded that the additional call for proposals enabled many novel actions while the other lead partners believed that the aspect of novelty in the actions under the additional call for proposals was rather limited.

Table 1.9: How many completely novel actions were implemented under the additional call for proposals?

The additional call for proposals did not introduce novel actions

How many completely novel actions were implemented under the additional call for proposals?	
1. None	3
2. Only a few	3
3. Quite a few	1
4. Many	0
Average	1,7

Source: Information request to lead partners

The lead partners' evaluations of novelty of actions under the additional call for proposals were compared with the analysis results where the novelty of types of actions under the additional call for proposals had been examined in case of each project. The results of the analysis matched the evaluations by lead partners to a great extent. Only in case of the Choices & Balance project, the analysis showed many novel actions under the additional call for proposals, while the lead partners believed that the number of novel actions was low.

Table 1.10: Lead partners' evaluations of the novelty of actions under the additional call for proposals in comparison to the analysis of actions

Project	Were novel actions implemented under the additional call for proposals? (analysis of responses from lead partners)	How many completely novel actions were implemented under the additional call for proposals?
1. We Friends	No	None
2. RE-START	No	Only a few
4. Re-integration of Compulsive Gamblers	No	None
6. Integration of Asylum Seekers	No	
7. Choices & Balance	The additional call for proposals enabled to publish a book, establish the Distance Working Association and a Distance Working project, and conduct lobby among politicians.	Only a few

9. WHOLE	The additional call for proposals enabled to inform the public through mass media, conduct a survey on project results and conduct lobby among policymakers.	Quite a few
10. Care Service	No	Only a few
12. Distance Working	The Distance Working Association was established in cooperation with the Choices & Balance project to carry forward the project results under the additional call for proposals.	None

Source: Information request to lead partners, analysis of project reports

The usefulness of the additional call for proposals and the novelty of the associated actions were limited by the development partners' lack of knowledge that additional funding was available for mainstreaming actions. As a result, mainstreaming was already included in the initial proposals in most cases. The additional funding was used to repeat the actions that had been already implemented instead of making grander plans already at the beginning. The additional funding contributed most to the projects that had included few mainstreaming actions in the main call for proposals (e.g., WHOLE).

An important reason why the additional call for proposals did not live up to its full potential was insufficient communication between the projects and the managing authority. Project actions had to be planned without being aware of the possibility of additional funding for mainstreaming. In addition, the projects were not aware of the joint mainstreaming actions and training planned by the managing authority. By the time this became known, many projects had already implemented their mainstreaming actions.

Summary

The additional call for proposals did not play a particularly important role in financing the project mainstreaming actions as is indicated by the fact that only one fifth of the project mainstreaming actions were implemented under this call for proposals. In addition, nearly 30 % of the projects that submitted additional proposals had implemented their mainstreaming actions even without the additional support. The additional call for proposals contributed to the results but impact was limited by the initial lack of information on the future additional call for proposals and the potential for additional funding for mainstreaming actions. The managing authority could have made earlier plans for the additional call for proposals and notified the projects well in advance. In addition, the mainstreaming training activities offered by the managing authority should have started earlier to enable initial better planning of mainstreaming.

The additional call for proposals was used mainly to repeat or extend the actions that had been already planned. There were few completely novel actions for which no funds were requested in the initial proposals. In conclusion, it could be said that the additional call for proposals did not significantly contribute to the dissemination of project results.

1.3 How well have the mechanisms and actions implemented by the managing authority contributed to mainstreaming?

In brief

Mechanisms implemented by the managing authority to support mainstreaming
Mainstreaming actions implemented by the managing authority
Flexibility of the managing authority and ability to take account of the observations of previous evaluations
Summary

Mechanisms implemented by the managing authority to support mainstreaming

Mainstreaming mechanisms created by the managing authority

The managing authority implemented several supportive actions to facilitate project mainstreaming. The mechanisms included organisation of meetings of the monitoring committee, development of cooperation between development partnerships, as well as training and guidelines for better implementation of mainstreaming. The types of actions are shown in the following table.

Table 1.11: Mechanisms implemented by the managing authority to support mainstreaming

Type of action	No of actions
Direct contacts and meetings to prepare mainstreaming actions and mechanisms	7
Organisation of the meetings of the monitoring committee	4 ⁷
Development of cooperation between development partnerships	3
Provision of training to development partnerships	2
Guidelines for implementers of the EQUAL programme and notification manual	1
Mainstreaming strategy	1
Total:	18

Source: Information request to the managing authority

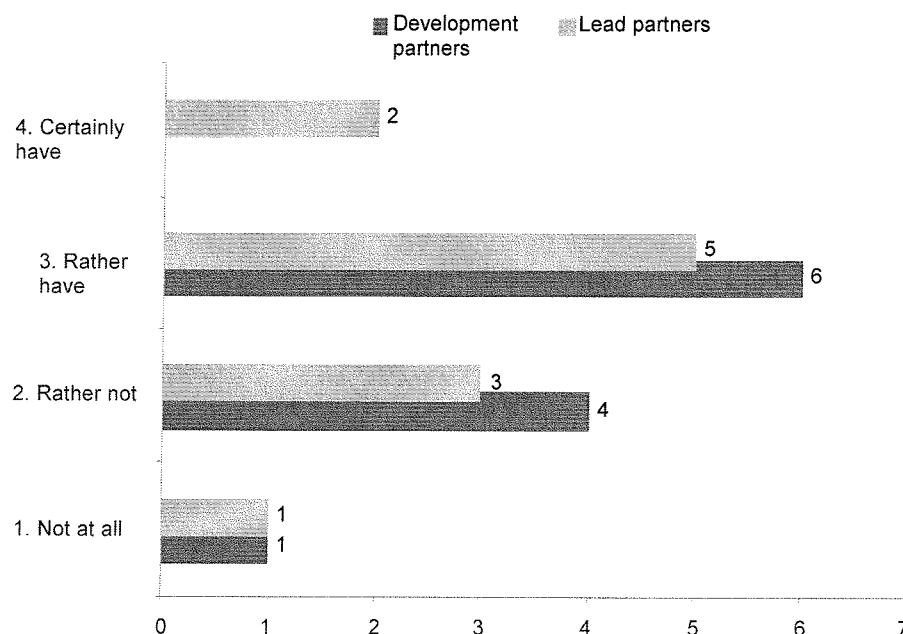
Evaluation of the mainstreaming mechanisms created by the managing authority

Even though the majority of the respondents stated that the mechanisms and actions implemented by the managing authority have rather or definitely contributed to mainstreaming actions, as many as 45 % of development partners and 36 % of lead partners believed that the actions of the managing authority have not or rather have not contributed to mainstreaming actions. It could be pointed out that the

⁷ The table indicates the meetings of the monitoring committee, which by nature were mechanisms that supported project mainstreaming actions (mainstreaming mechanisms). The actual number of monitoring committee meetings was higher but they focused directly on mainstreaming itself (mainstreaming actions).

projects that did not participate in the additional call for proposals gave rather positive evaluation of the assistance from the managing authority.

Figure 1.7: Have the mechanisms and actions of the managing authority contributed to mainstreaming actions?



Source: Survey of lead partners, Survey of development partners

The managing authority established relevant mechanisms to support mainstreaming but some project partners claimed that the number of mechanisms was too small and they were introduced too late

More support and information was expected from the managing authority. The responses from lead partners included complaints about the insufficiency of the guidelines and, in the opinion of some development partners, the number of training sessions was insufficient as well. At the same time, the managing authority believed that the number of training actions was sufficient and the effectiveness of organised actions was occasionally limited by the lack of participation by development partnerships. One major problem for the lead partners was also the delayed action of the managing authority; the assistance for mainstreaming should have reached the projects sooner.

On the one hand, the interviews gave a positive picture of informative presentations in the monitoring committee and one interviewee mentioned that finding spokespersons for training events would be a good mechanism of mainstreaming. On the other hand, the ministry was criticised for lack of participation in project actions by the specialists in the respective fields. Communication between the ministry and project partners should have been improved.

The mechanisms established by the managing authority to support mainstreaming were good initiatives but they came partially too late to provide actual support for mainstreaming and the development partnerships would have needed more guidance and communication.

Mainstreaming actions implemented by the managing authority

Mainstreaming actions implemented by the managing authority

In addition to the mechanisms that supported mainstreaming, the managing authority also implemented many direct mainstreaming actions. Most of them were actions that encompassed the entire programme or wider themes but there were also actions associated with a specific project. The managing authority implemented similar types of actions as the development partnerships. This included conferences, discussion groups and information days, distribution of information materials, use of direct contacts, web pages and mass media. The following table provides an overview of the mainstreaming actions implemented by the managing authority.

Table 1.12: Mainstreaming actions implemented by the managing authority

Type of action	No of actions
Conferences, discussion groups, forums, etc.	8
County information days	2
Distribution of information at international events	8
Information materials	6
Direct contacts with media and policymakers	4
Actions to support individual projects (direct contacts, conferences, exhibition)	6
Internet	2
Media reports	2
Media project	1
Total:	39

Source: Information request to the managing authority

Relevance of the actions implemented and target groups chosen by the managing authority

The interviewed policymakers believed that the task of the managing authority is to combine the shared elements from different projects and disseminate them to the wider audience. The managing authority (and the Ministry of Social Affairs in general) should act as a filter, choosing the most sensible parts from the projects for dissemination. The ministry should collect good practices, give them an attractive form and propose them at the right moment. The managing authority as part of the ministry should have an excellent opportunity to influence the policy of the ministry. The managing authority was also expected to engage in presenting the project themes (at monitoring committee meetings, for example), conducting surveys of wider scope and initiating media discussions. The respondents stated that the concluding forum of EQUAL was an example of positive actions.

The responses from lead partners indicated that the mainstreaming actions of the managing authority were not perceived as contributing greatly to the mainstreaming actions of the projects. The lead partners indicated that the number of actions by the managing authority was rather limited and the implemented actions could have contributed more to mainstreaming the specific projects, not only to dissemination of shared themes. The reason for a negative evaluation by lead partners could be the fact that the lead partners evaluated the mainstreaming actions of the managing authority from the perspective of their projects, not from the perspective of the entire programme. The actions of the managing authority in the first years received particular criticism.

The managing authority fulfilled its role as the disseminator of shared project elements but did not invest enough time in counselling and contributing to the mainstreaming of individual projects

The lead partners and interviewees found that the managing authority has not fully utilised its potential to influence the policy of the ministry. The media reports initiated by the managing authority were seen as the most beneficial aspect of the activities. Consequently, it could be said that the managing authority did indeed implement only a few actions to support particular projects and did not fully use its potential to serve as a channel between the projects and policymakers.

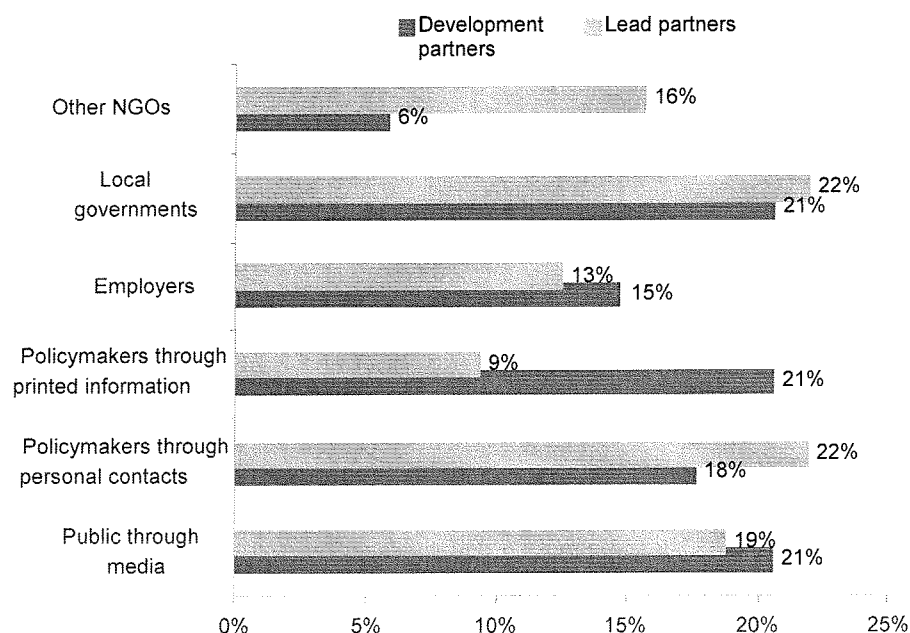
A comparison of the actual actions of the managing authority with the opinions of the interviewees and development partnerships leads to the conclusion that the managing authority was moving in the right direction. It attempted wider dissemination of the shared elements of the projects and supported the projects through information actions encompassing the entire programme. However, there was a lack of actions to support particular projects. Most of the projects belong to the government area of the Ministry of Social Affairs and, being a part of the ministry, the managing authority did not make full use of the opportunity to influence the policies of the ministry. Another aspect that can be pointed out is great emphasis on international information activities. An apparent problem was the timing of the actions by the managing authority. The level of activity was low in the first programme years and it was harder to get the necessary support from the managing authority and final beneficiary as a result of change in personnel. The personnel situation improved later.

Relevance of the target groups chosen by the managing authority

The interviewees and survey respondents were asked, which target groups should be in the focus for the managing authority? The interviewees believed that the target groups of the managing authority should be policymakers and the Ministry of Social Affairs as a whole. They also claimed that the ministry should disseminate the project themes to a wider audience. The opinion of the lead and development partners did not focus on a specific target group but they too appreciated informing policymakers through lobbying and approaches to the general public. The opinions of the lead and development partners are reflected on the following figure.

Figure 1.8: Which target groups should have been in the focus of the mainstreaming actions implemented by the managing authority?

Evaluation of Mainstreaming Processes and Impacts of the EQUAL Programme



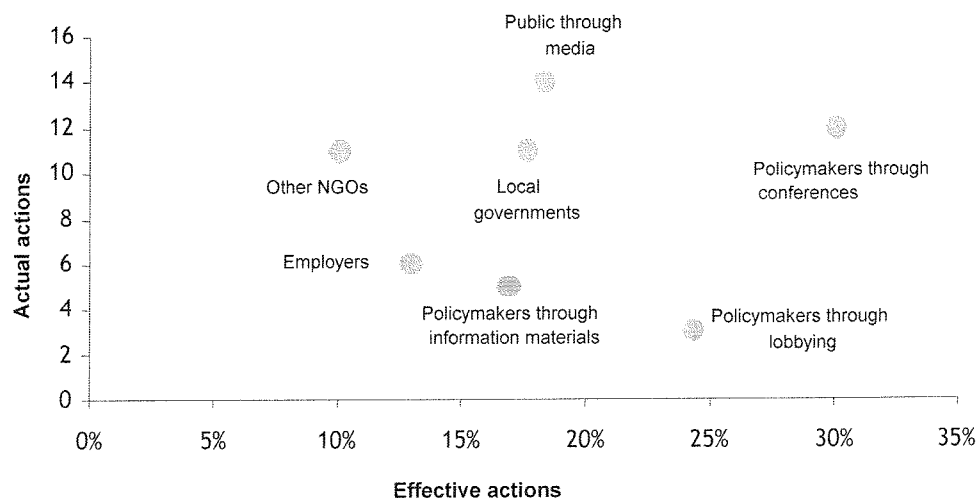
Source: Survey of lead partners, Survey of development partners

Many of the actual target groups of the managing authority were indeed the ones that were considered important by the respondents. A large proportion of the actions focused on policymakers and general public. The target group of employers was also reached through the public. The local governments were informed through county information workshops and information materials to promote the programme were compiled as well. Less emphasis was placed on lobbying among the policymakers, which would have been one of the most important actions according to the development partnerships and interviewees.

Considering the evaluations of the lead and development partners with regard to the mainstreaming target groups of the managing authority, the managing authority implemented too many actions for the public, even though the interviewees believed the public to be an important target group for the managing authority. The actual share of lobbying in the actions of the managing authority was lower than it should have been, considering its professed importance.

Figure 1.9: Which target groups should have been in the focus of the mainstreaming actions implemented by the managing authority? (vertical axis: target groups that were actually focused on; horizontal axis: target groups that should have been focused on)

**The managing authority
did not do enough
lobbying to support
mainstreaming of project
results**



Source: Survey of lead partners, Survey of development partners, Information request to the managing authority

Actions of the managing authority in other Baltic countries

The Latvian managing authority only established mechanisms that contributed to mainstreaming by coordinating the thematic groups and simplifying project mainstreaming but did not implement any mainstreaming actions itself. The Lithuanian managing authority coordinated the entire process of mainstreaming through the management of thematic networks. The Lithuanian managing authority facilitated dissemination of project results and presented the results of EQUAL in the Ministry of Social Affairs while also discussing their sustainability. It also actively participated in the events organised by development partnerships.

The Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian managing authorities all learned from others. Experiences gained from the workshop of Baltic countries were considered important. Both Latvia and Lithuania also learned from the experiences of Portugal. All three countries believed that cooperation with other managing authorities was important. The perceived level of cooperation was generally sufficient. Estonia and Latvia stated that continuation and development of regional cooperation (incl. between the Baltic countries) is an important area for the future.

Flexibility of the managing authority and ability to take account of the observations of previous evaluations

Flexibility of the managing authority in implementing changes

According to the interviews, the managing authority was relatively flexible and helpful. The development partnerships that had previous experiences with European projects also found that the managing authority was relatively flexible. There were some problems with the change of personnel in the managing authority and final beneficiary and the resulting confusion.

Ability of the managing authority to take account of previous observations

Previous evaluations highlighted the recommendations for changing the Estonian term for "mainstreaming" and organising respective workshops. There were corresponding explanatory efforts but the term remained the same and still unintelligible for persons outside the projects.

A recommendation had been made to the managing authority that it should be the body that communicates the content of the projects to the officials of the respective fields of the Ministry of Social Affairs (Labour Market Board, the Ministry itself). The managing authority has indeed organised two training events for new employees to familiarise them with the EQUAL programme but project-centred lobbying efforts have been insufficient.

The managing authority has responded to most recommendations but delayed action did not enable solving all problematic issues

Another recommendation for the managing authority was to increase the percentage of media work in information dissemination (a column on innovative social projects). Such column was not established but the percentage of media work has indeed increased in the activities of the managing authority as a result of the completed media project.

Establishment of unofficial partnerships should be facilitated according to the recommendations of previous evaluations. The managing authority has attempted to increase unofficial partnership through several mechanisms, but this promotion of partnerships was sometimes carried out too late in the programme and this was part of the reason why some projects remained disinterested. However, a good example of cooperation is the cooperation on distance working between the Distance Working and Choices & Balance projects.

Previous evaluations also highlighted the need for appointing a responsible official for each project. This was an important recommendation that could have improved the opinion of the project partners concerning the interest from the managing authority. Unfortunately, responsible officials have not been appointed for all projects and, consequently, there were projects that felt as if they had been left alone.

According to evaluations, emphasising the importance of preparations for mainstreaming should be another task of the managing authority. The importance of preparations is also evident in the current report. Training on mainstreaming should have been organised earlier. There was also a lack of useful guidelines. In the future, support from the managing authority should be available at an earlier phase in the planning of mainstreaming and the projects should have access to necessary guidelines.

The managing authority was recommended to present the mainstreaming tools by using examples from other projects. The managing authority has implemented actions to facilitate cooperation and exchange of experiences between projects but the number of this type of actions could have been higher. Failure to utilise the full potential of learning from other projects is also evident in the evaluation of learning from others by the projects themselves (see Figure 1.6).

Previous evaluations indicated a need for expanding/sharing the experiences of active involvement (how and in which events the target groups should be involved). BDA did provide training courses on mainstreaming but the approach of the projects to the target groups was too unvaried. Late timing of the training courses when project mainstreaming plans had already been made can be identified as one of the reasons for this situation.

In conclusion, it could be said that the managing authority has partially complied with recommendations but significant results have not always been achieved as a result of the recommendations. One major reason is the late timing of actions by the managing authority as well as a rather general approach from the managing authority, which did not enable special attention to individual projects.

Summary

The managing authority implemented mechanisms to facilitate successful mainstreaming. They organised training courses for project partners, compiled guidelines and studied from the mainstreaming experiences of other countries. They also attempted to facilitate mainstreaming through cooperation between projects. The established mechanisms were relevant but remained insufficient for some projects. This could have been partly due to the fact that some projects were less active than others and, consequently, received less attention from the managing authority. However, even less active projects should have been drawn in. Earlier evaluations included recommendations for greater involvement of the projects as well but, unfortunately, these recommendations were not fully complied with. One of the main weaknesses of the mainstreaming mechanisms was late timing – by the time the training courses took place, many projects had already planned their mainstreaming actions and any instructions for better planning of the mainstreaming process came too late.

In addition to the mechanisms, the managing authority also implemented several actions for immediate mainstreaming of the programme. The main focus was on disseminating the shared elements of the programme through media and conferences. Much work was done to disseminate programme results in other countries. Less attention was paid to providing assistance to the mainstreaming actions of individual projects. Being a part of the ministry, the managing authority has an ideal opportunity to conduct lobbying on the project themes among fellow officials but this opportunity was not sufficiently used. Earlier evaluations had also recommended that the managing authority should be the body that communicates the content of the projects to the officials of the respective fields of the Ministry of Social Affairs, but this recommendation has not been fully complied with. In this respect, the Lithuanian managing authority serves as a positive example in that it actively communicated the proposals of the projects to the ministry.

According to the interviews and evaluations of some project partners, the managing authority was relatively flexible, and the managing authority has implemented actions to comply with previous recommendations but, occasionally, the response to the recommendations has come too late to be able to solve the problematic issues. The weaknesses highlighted in previous evaluations are to a great extent still visible in this evaluation. For example, there have been recommendations to explain the concept of mainstreaming and some work has been done but the concept has still remained confusing to people outside the programme. Consequently, in the future, the managing authority should be more active already in the earlier programme phases.