

**Final Report**

# Ex post evaluation of the EQUAL Community Initiative (2000-2006)





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## List of Abbreviations

AIR	Annual Implementation Report
CAV	Community Added Value
CIP	Community Initiative Programme
CoP	Community of Practice
DP	Development Partnership
EC	European Commission
ECDB	EQUAL Common Database
ESF	European Social Fund
ETG	European Thematic Group
EU	European Union
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
MA	Managing Authority
MS	Member State
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NSS	National Support Structure
NTN	National Thematic Network
OP	Operational Programme
PCM	Project Cycle Management
TCA	Transnational Cooperation Agreement
TCP	Transnational Cooperation Partnership
TF	Thematic Field
TNC	Transnational Cooperation
ToR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Transnational Working Group

## Executive Summary

### I. Introduction

The EQUAL Community Initiative was financed by the ESF in the period 2000-2006 to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market. EQUAL was a central part of the Community integrated strategy to combat discrimination, in particular in relation to sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, and social exclusion. It was targeted at contributing to the achievement of the aims of the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion Process. The EQUAL guidelines stipulated that projects should be carried out by Development Partnerships in cooperation with transnational partners. Implementation was guided by five key principles: partnership, empowerment, transnational cooperation, innovation and mainstreaming. The Commission stipulated nine thematic fields of activity under which the projects took place. The EQUAL guidelines stated that these were the priority fields where groups of Member States considered that transnational co-operation would assist them in improving ways of delivering their national policies.

The ex post evaluation of EQUAL was part of the ESF 2000-2006 ex post evaluation. It was carried out by Metis GmbH in association with KANTOR and with MWH as sub-contractor between July and December 2009 and covered all 27 EQUAL Operational Programmes in the EU25. The evaluation was based on five Evaluation Questions stipulated in the Terms of Reference. These were:

EQ1: To what extent has the actual expenditure of the EQUAL Community Initiative been targeted at achieving the main objectives set in the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion process?

EQ2: To what extent has the EQUAL Community Initiative supported activities that produced relevant and useful innovation for preventing and combating discrimination and inequality in the labour market?

EQ3: To what extent has the EQUAL Community Initiative supported activities that resulted in the take up of innovation at high policy/institutional level or/and the transfer of innovation in different contexts?

EQ4: What long-term impacts is the EQUAL Community initiative expected to have?

EQ5: What is the Community Added Value of EQUAL?

The evaluation team consisted of a core team of evaluators responsible for developing the methodology and drafting the reports and an information group composed of country experts responsible for the desk research and fieldwork at national level. An Expert Panel and a Focus Group consisting of a selection of Managing Authorities (MAs) were also set up to comment on and provide expert inputs for the draft Interim and Final Reports.

### II. Methodological approach

The methodological approach to the ex post evaluation was based on programme theory to allow the identification of the logical connections between outputs, results and impacts with regard to the specific objectives of the programme and to provide the basis for the identification of potential long-term effects. It also took into account additional, unexpected impacts. The information collection and fact finding of the ex post evaluation included both desk research and fieldwork as well as two Expert Panel meetings and one Focus Group with MAs.

The first stage of the evaluation consisted in intensive desk research to fill in the inventories which constituted the main source of information for answering the Evaluation Questions and represented the first key outputs. Four inventories were developed:

- Key Output 1: Account of projects
- Key Output 2: Inventory of validated innovations

- Key Output 3: Inventory of successful mainstreaming
- Impact Grid

The second stage of the research consisted in interviews in all the EU25 and nine case studies – one for each thematic field of EQUAL. The interviews were carried out on the basis of a questionnaire dealing with the Evaluation Questions and were mainly with the MAs and National Support Structures (NSS) but were also with individual Development Partnerships (DPs) in some Member States.

The final stage of the research consisted in the analysis of the results of the desk research and fieldwork in view of answering the evaluation questions and drawing useful conclusions and making recommendations.

### III. The results of the research

The picture emerging from the desk research and interviews was that EQUAL managed to create the conditions for the generation of a significant number of innovations, to reach the vulnerable groups it set out to reach, to empower the structures working with these vulnerable groups and to enhance working in partnership at national and sub-national levels and across the EU.

The results of the evaluation in relation to the Evaluation Questions are briefly outlined below

#### **Evaluation Question 1: To what extent has the actual expenditure of the EQUAL Community Initiative been targeted at achieving the main objectives set in the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion process?**

Activities under EQUAL took place within nine thematic fields<sup>1</sup> which were grouped under five themes<sup>2</sup>, four of which corresponded to the four pillars of the EES<sup>3</sup>, and the fifth being specifically targeted at asylum seekers. The findings from the research reveal that EQUAL expenditure was targeted at all five themes and thus at achieving the main objectives of the EES. There were, of course, significant differences in spending between the thematic fields. Thematic field 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market) had the highest share of planned and of certified expenditure (close to 35%), followed by the thematic fields 2.D (Strengthening the Social Economy), 3.E (Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices) and 3.F (Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees) with an allocation of 10%. The other thematic fields had an allocation of below 10%. This can be explained by policy choices in the Member States and the predominance of labour market measures to support the integration of vulnerable groups.

EQUAL reached the target groups it set out to reach. NGOs and public administration were the main beneficiaries of EQUAL but all target groups were addressed by at least one thematic field. Regarding the distribution of individuals in the nine thematic fields, it appears that migrants/ethnic minorities were covered in larger numbers by thematic fields 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market) and 1.B (Combating racism), while people with impairments and discriminated people were covered chiefly by thematic field 1.A.

EQUAL expenditure was not significant enough compared to other sources of funding to produce a major contribution to the European Employment Strategy (EES) and Social Inclusion objectives in quantitative terms. It was also not the aim of EQUAL to compete with mainstream ESF and national funding but to support innovative solutions with regard to the main themes of

<sup>1</sup> 1.A. Access and return to the labour market; 1.B. Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market; 2.C. Opening up the business creation process 2.D. Strengthening the Social Economy; 3.E. Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices; 3.F. Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees; 4.G. Reconciling family and professional life; 4.H. Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation 5.I. Asylum seekers.

<sup>2</sup> The five themes are: 1) Increasing employability 2) Encouraging inclusive entrepreneurship 3) Facilitating adaptability 4) Promoting gender equality 5) Integrating asylum seekers.

<sup>3</sup> The four pillars are: 1) Employability 2) Entrepreneurship 3) Adaptability 4) Equal opportunities.

the EES. Accordingly, the specific structure, instruments and objectives of EQUAL, i.e. the production of innovation, the obligation to work in partnership, the networking, the capacity building, etc. were found to have contributed to achieving the conditions necessary for the achievement of the EES and Social Inclusion objectives.

EQUAL also contributed to the evolving debate on employment, social inclusion and sustainable development thus influencing the development of the main EU policies and strategies. EQUAL contributed to the integration of the EES, Social Inclusion and Sustainable Development strategies on the ground by strengthening the local dimension of the EES and the integration of various approaches (e.g. local employment and development initiatives, local welfare systems). However, it also showed the limitations of fighting social exclusion and poverty through employment and jobs alone. It demonstrated that growth and jobs were necessary but not enough to combat, for instance, income disparities, regional disparities, gender and ethnic disparities or household hardships.

In addition to supporting the EES, EQUAL effectively complemented national policies, providing an extra policy strain by addressing areas where national policies were somewhat fragmented or where certain target or risk groups were not covered.

In practice, it could be said that the EES and the Social Inclusion process provided the policy framework, while EQUAL provided an appropriate instrument to stimulate and support innovation, mutual learning and change on the ground.

**Evaluation Question 2: To what extent has the EQUAL Community Initiative supported activities that produced relevant and useful innovation for preventing and combating discrimination and inequality in the labour market?**

The operational goal of EQUAL was the production of innovation to overcome social exclusion and discrimination in the workplace and in accessing employment. Over 900 cases of validated innovation were identified in the evaluation. Just over one third were reported as having been mainstreamed, which is understood as integrated into policies or standard practices of stakeholders, and more than 200 cases of long-term impacts could also be identified. This considerable achievement is a good indication that 'relevant and useful' innovations were developed and tested, transferred and sustainably mainstreamed in the framework of EQUAL.

Broadly speaking, the number of innovations per thematic field more or less correlates to the amount of expenditure identified per thematic field. It also corresponds to the number of DPs working on the themes. It is therefore not surprising that the bulk of innovations (35%) came from thematic field 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market) and that the lowest numbers (5% and 6% respectively) were related to thematic field 5.I (Asylum seekers) and 1.B (Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market). Interestingly, the comparison between the number of innovations and expenditure and/or the number of DPs working in the field reveals that thematic fields 4.G. (Reconciling family and professional life) and 5.I. (Asylum seekers) performed particularly well, i.e. produced comparatively more innovations than the other fields. This may be explained by the relative novelty of actions for asylum seekers and in the field of work-life balance in some Member States and therefore more scope for innovation. The comparatively poor performance of the field 3.E. (Lifelong learning) may stem from the fact that already a lot of innovative actions had been done in this field in the past and the potential for more was less than in a field where very little had happened.

Regarding the types of innovation produced, about 10% were considered to have been imported and implemented more or less as they were from other contexts, 37% were active adaptations of innovations which proved useful in other contexts, and the majority of 53% were newly developed innovations. The vast majority (71%) of the innovations concentrated on the development of new approaches and methods and the improvement of existing ones (process-oriented innovation). These included above all general 'capacity building' projects, e.g. the setting up of new training measures and curricula. 20% were related to political and institutional

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structures and systems development including the setting up of new cooperation structures (context-oriented innovation). 11% were related to the formulation of new objectives including the identification of new qualifications, new professional profiles and the opening up of new areas of employment (goal-oriented innovation).

**Evaluation Question 3: To what extent has the EQUAL Community Initiative supported activities that resulted in the take up of innovation at high policy/institutional level or/and the transfer of innovation in different contexts?**

The evaluation used a strict definition of mainstreaming as the take up into or the influence of innovation on policy and practice at the institutional political, regulatory or administrative levels. It distinguished between different types of mainstreaming:

1. Vertical national mainstreaming: Transfer of lessons learnt and integration of all or part of results into policy and practice at the institutional, political, regulatory or administrative level. Here we are looking for clear evidence of take up at national level.
2. Horizontal national mainstreaming: Transferring lessons learnt to similar organisations at national or regional levels. The transfer can be specific (e.g. a particular tool) or broad (e.g. contributing to a change of practice). In this case, regional is understood in the national, rather than transnational context.
3. Horizontal transnational mainstreaming: Transfer of lessons learnt and integration of all or part of results into policy and practice between member states, social partners and the European Commission.
4. Vertical transnational mainstreaming: Where innovations/results influence the institutional, political or regulatory environment in other member states or at European Commission level.
5. Maintenance/continuation: Where the innovation results are continued or maintained by the immediate stakeholders.

Nearly 500 cases of mainstreaming were identified and not all of them linked to specific innovations. In fact, only for approximately 60% of all mainstreaming cases could a clear relation to specific innovations be established. This reflects the differentiation between Action 2 (project implementation) and Action 3 (mainstreaming) in the EQUAL Guidelines. The interviews revealed a great deal of uncertainty on the part of the project promoters in particular but also on the part of the Managing Authorities on how to practically deal with mainstreaming. While the inputs and results were clearly defined, the activities leading to the latter remained blurred, especially with regard to the difference between mainstreaming and dissemination. Given the lack of an analytical framework for mainstreaming which would facilitate the evaluation of the latter, the final report proposes a number of cornerstones for such a framework.

The majority of the mainstreaming cases identified (39%) were horizontal mainstreaming at national level, 25% were vertical mainstreaming at national level, 20% were continuation/maintenance and 4% were horizontal mainstreaming at transnational level. A negligible amount were vertical mainstreaming at transnational level and 12% could not be assigned to any specific mainstreaming type.

Regarding responsibility for mainstreaming, individual DPs could only reasonably be expected to transfer products between project partners and organisations at a similar level (horizontal mainstreaming), while the transfer of good practice into policy (vertical mainstreaming) should have been the responsibility of the MAs and National Support Structures. In reality, the responsibility for vertical mainstreaming often lay with the DPs, perhaps because of the assumption that if public authorities were included as strategic partners, they would carry out

vertical mainstreaming. In reality, many of the *strategic* partners<sup>4</sup> had a rather passive role. However, in those cases where public authorities were involved as *operative* partners<sup>5</sup>, better mainstreaming results were achieved.

The key factors identified as facilitating mainstreaming were:

- Political commitment and ownership
- Mainstreaming plans developed early in the project lifecycle
- The National Thematic Working Groups
- The strategic instrument of 'partnership'
- Support of the regional technical assistance with regard to the operationalisation of mainstreaming

The evaluation considered the results of mainstreaming as **intermediary impacts**. References to intermediary impacts could be identified for 221 reported mainstreaming cases. For 141 (around 64%) of them a relation to a validated innovation and the respective thematic field could be reconstructed, with 26% referring to thematic field 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market) and 11% to 4.G (Reconciliation of family and professional life). Since some of the mainstreaming cases produced several impacts, the total number of intermediary impacts identified was 253. Among them, policy impacts prevailed with 41%, followed by institutional impacts with 31% and organisational impacts with 28%.

With regard to **policy impacts**, it is difficult to attribute changes in the policy and legislative environments directly to EQUAL. New laws or amendments in legislation may have been introduced in any case. However, even if EQUAL alone did not trigger the changes, it undoubtedly reinforced them, for example by offering more evidence and arguments or steering the changes. In many cases, EQUAL projects and/or Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) lobbied for changes in legislation.

The design of the new ESF Operational Programmes (OPs) for the 2007-13 period was clearly influenced by EQUAL since some EQUAL MAs were also working on programming for the 2007-2013 period. ESF MAs, in translating the regulatory requirements of transnational cooperation and innovation into specific actions under their ESF OPs, could benefit from:

- A set of guidance notes on programming key EQUAL principles, drafted by a group of ESF/EQUAL MAs
- Their experience and expertise gained as EQUAL MAs
- Policy proposals developed by TWGs, which were often taken up by key stakeholders and introduced into the OPs through their involvement, as partners, in the programming process.

With regard to **institutional impacts**, changes in education and training systems on the one hand and changes in the labour market intermediation structures and processes on the other account for more than 50% of the cases of institutional impacts identified. Unlike policy impacts, more than half of the institutional impacts reported took place at regional or local level. Among the most common institutional impacts in the education and training system were the design of new or changes in existing curricula/training schemes; changes in the content and orientation of training programmes – especially with regard to the inclusion of new target groups; new certification mechanisms for professional qualifications; new education or training structures. The most common impacts in the field of labour market intermediation structures were improved

<sup>4</sup> Strategic partners have the role of contributing to the implementation of the projects by providing advice and policy support in the design, coordination and development of the actions of the DP and may also have an ambassador function.

<sup>5</sup> Operative partners have the role of ensuring the management and implementation of the projects in their respective areas of responsibility.



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coordination between actors – especially with regard to the cooperation of local employment services with other social service providers; changes in the way of working of such structures, i.e. in processes; improved organisation of employment services; integrated inclusion itineraries; new target groups. New labour market support structures and frameworks were also sometimes the direct result of the work of DPs.

In some Member States, EQUAL was very proactive in adapting, developing and disseminating tools for ESF managers, and for project promoters, some of which were “mainstreamed” transnationally, either through bilateral transfer, or through their integration into common guides and procedures (e.g. tools for ESF bodies to develop a mainstreaming strategy, or tools for project promoters to apply Project Cycle Management techniques).

Regarding changes in regulatory work arrangements, EQUAL was less successful, possibly due to the time involved in carrying out such changes and the complexity of obtaining the consensus of social partners in this process. In the field of support to business creation, the link to EQUAL can be established in those cases where vulnerable groups were explicitly addressed by, e.g. new counselling services.

With regard to **organisational impacts**, the documentation and the respective evidence for changes were the most fragmentary for this type of intermediary impact. If impacts were described, they referred to partners of the DPs which continued with certain practices. There was no serious indication that EQUAL succeeded in changing employers’ attitudes with the exception perhaps of gender mainstreaming measures as revealed in our Austrian case study (POP UP GEM). Awareness raising campaigns launched in some countries for example on the ‘abilities of people with disabilities’ may also have brought about some changes. However, due to the absence of the respective evaluations, these are only speculations. The low numbers of organisational impacts and the few references to take-up by the private sector found in the existing documentation as well as the fragmentary descriptions allow two different interpretations: either a failure of horizontal mainstreaming in the private sector or weak evidence.

#### **Evaluation Question 4: What long-term impacts is the EQUAL Community initiative expected to have?**

For the purpose of the evaluation, possible long-term impacts were surveyed in the interviews in relation to take up in ESF programming for the next period. EQUAL has impacted on ESF programming in two ways: the experiences gained under EQUAL led to the incorporation of some or all of the EQUAL principles in the 2007-2013 Operational Programmes (OPs). The most common principles are partnership, transnationality and equal opportunities between men and women and, to a lesser extent, the principle of innovation whereby innovation is more difficult to incorporate as it implies systematic and rigorous validation or experimentation that is not foreseen in most OPs. EQUAL also increased awareness amongst relevant actors and decision makers of the existence and needs of certain target groups, in particular, asylum seekers, immigrants and ethnic minorities (in particular, Roma) and ex-prisoners. These groups had not been sufficiently addressed before in some Member States where their inclusion in employment policies and actions was obstructed by the legal framework and prejudice. However, with the exception of some countries where widespread media campaigns were launched, there is no evidence of a general change in the public discourse on vulnerable groups.

Experiences indicate that the achievement of impacts takes longer if they require a change of mindset or a change in the way of life and shorter if only ‘technical’ changes have to take place. Equally, changes take longer if society as a whole is concerned than if the changes only refer to certain sectors.

One of the key questions to emerge was whether the continued application of the policies and models developed under EQUAL will depend on the continuation of a similar programme to



EQUAL or if the application of only some of the EQUAL principles in ESF OPs would suffice. The evidence appears to suggest that EQUAL's long-term impacts on the situation of vulnerable groups will not be so impressive in the absence of specific provisions for the continuation of EQUAL-type activities or their incorporation in national or regional mainstream ESF programmes with clear objectives and a budget earmarked specifically. In addition, the situation of vulnerable groups – and of course all other groups on the labour market – is predominantly affected by the economic cycle and the dominant public policies in the respective context. It is thus expected in most Member States that the economic crisis will have a particularly negative effect on the situation of vulnerable groups. However, the new constituencies created by EQUAL will not go away even in times of recession. The squeeze on public funding and the need to find new solutions to problems may also stimulate the development, testing and mainstreaming of innovative solutions and thus speed up and support change. Most of the previous Community Initiatives were launched to promote innovative solutions in times of economic downturn. EQUAL-type activities provided solutions which in the current recession may engender longer-term impacts.

#### **Evaluation Question 5: What is the Community Added Value of EQUAL?**

Community Added Value (CAV) is central to the issue of the legitimacy and legitimisation of policy action taken on European level, whether in a centralised form or in a more open method of coordination where the EU takes an active role in promoting new policy and governance approaches. It was therefore an important issue in the ex post evaluation of EQUAL. In our understanding, CAV requires more than just a positive outcome of programme activities as such. There must be something additionally gained that can be linked to that which makes EQUAL specific and different from standard activities.

EQUAL undoubtedly set a landmark by providing an unprecedented conceptual and financial framework for mutual learning and experimentation in the field of social integration policy related to the labour market, both with respect to the scope of activities and the structures and methods of delivery. The requirements of EQUAL for innovation, partnership and transnational cooperation represented a first level of CAV in that they 'forced' the DPs to cooperate and develop new ideas. The eligibility criteria and implementation requirements of the EQUAL guidelines produced an additional yield that would not have been possible through the existing national labour market policy approaches or the standard ESF.

There were fundamental differences between EQUAL and most national or regional ESF programmes and measures in most Member States. These were in particular EQUAL's emphasis on innovation and its strategic principles of partnership, transnationality and empowerment. These brought a totally new approach to addressing inequalities in the labour market. Moreover, with its funding provisions and strategic goals, EQUAL was considered to have brought into focus and provided funding for subjects otherwise neglected.

The additional funding for certain measures and target groups constituted an added value of its own, particularly in smaller and economically weaker Member States (net-receivers). However, the new and more integrated approach towards service delivery and policy development through innovation and mainstreaming was often regarded as more relevant than the funding itself. Also highly rated was the opportunity afforded by EQUAL for organisations from different sectors and with different responsibilities that had never worked together before to cooperate.

Not only the organisational and procedural aspects of the work within EQUAL offered learning opportunities that would not have taken place otherwise. The scope of policy was widened by the opportunity (and the incentives) to address new target groups (e.g. migrants, asylum seekers, ex-prisoners, self-employed people, social enterprises, homeless people, victims of trafficking, ex-substance abusers), to make their problems visible and to develop and adapt tools to support them.

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The creation of new spheres of activity and new types and combinations of activities by e.g. the public administration, NGOs and individuals were a direct result of EQUAL. Business start-ups and self-employment by young people, ethnic minorities and women (the latter especially, in isolated rural areas) were supported – often in new ways. For example, improved employability was no longer only fomented through innovation in training and re-qualification systems and methods, but also through a range of integrated activities (training, mentoring, advice, seminars, etc.) focused on a range of disadvantaged target groups. Also, within the entrepreneurship pillar, priority was given to the third sector with an unprecedented participation of NGOs.

The partnership principle turned out to be one of the most effective and appreciated factors of EQUAL. Even the relatively high cost of coordination was considered acceptable because of the positive effects of the partnership approach, particularly at local, regional and national level. The general opinion with regard to the transnational partnerships was more ambivalent but they were also considered to have brought additional know-how and experiences and new ways of looking at things.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

The **conclusions** are presented in two sections: general conclusions on design and performance, and specific conclusions on the five evaluation questions. Together these inform the recommendations.

##### **Overall conclusions**

In relation to the **overall design and performance** of EQUAL, key conclusions were:

1. EQUAL was extremely successful in enabling the development and mainstreaming of a large number of innovations and delivered Community Added Value not only through these results but also through the innovative and participative implementation of its activities as such.
2. The design of EQUAL proved to be highly appropriate for addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, practitioners and policy makers and demonstrated the effectiveness of working in partnership.
3. EQUAL contributed to the equality agenda by demonstrating the importance of a holistic approach to fighting social exclusion.
4. EQUAL was an important capacity building tool, in particular for the EU8/10.
5. There is a need to build on the EQUAL experience to continue to promote innovation and combat discrimination in the workplace.

##### **Specific conclusions**

In relation to the **specific evaluation questions**, the conclusions were:

<b>Evaluation Question 1: To what extent has the actual expenditure of the EQUAL Community Initiative been targeted at achieving the main objectives set in the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion process?</b>
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1. EQUAL closely and effectively addressed EES and Social Inclusion objectives:  
Analysis of actual expenditure confirms that funds were targeted at achieving EES objectives, EQUAL was therefore utilised as intended, and with good results.
2. The EQUAL 'methodology' actively contributed to the coordination of policies:  
Through its particular methodology and strategic instruments, EQUAL has actively contributed to effective action and to the coordination of policies.
3. EQUAL strengthened the local dimension of the EES:

The EES and the Social Inclusion process have provided the policy framework while EQUAL has provided an appropriate instrument to stimulate and support change on the ground by integrating various approaches (e.g. local employment and development initiatives, local welfare systems).

4. EQUAL both linked with national policies and provided an extra policy strain:

EQUAL addressed areas where national policies were somewhat fragmented or where specific vulnerable groups were not addressed. It also facilitated improvements in service delivery thus upgrading national policies.

**Evaluation Question 2: To what extent has the EQUAL Community Initiative supported activities that produced relevant and useful innovation for preventing and combating discrimination and inequality in the labour market?**

5. EQUAL has generated a high volume of useful innovations, particularly new and process-related innovations:

A total of 924 innovations of which a substantial proportion have been classed as 'mainstreamable' or indeed have been successfully mainstreamed, is a considerable achievement and a good indication that something 'relevant and useful' has been created in the framework of EQUAL

6. The strategic instruments, and partnerships in particular have been important 'drivers' of innovation:

Of most note is the important role of the partnerships in the development, validation, and mainstreaming of innovation. EQUAL's focus on innovation and its ability to create the conditions for stimulating and capturing innovation (through the strategic instruments) has provided a relatively 'low risk' vehicle for experimentation. Nevertheless, EQUAL cannot be considered as a 'pure' vehicle for social innovation (with clear design parameters, control groups etc.) but rather as an innovative approach to problem solving with policy learning as a desired but not inevitable outcome. Despite this, EQUAL is has focussed on identifying and recording innovations ('products') and this has provided a valuable base of data for policy-makers and practitioners throughout the Union.

**Evaluation Question 3: To what extent has the EQUAL Community Initiative supported activities that resulted in the take up of innovation at high policy/institutional level or/and the transfer of innovation in different contexts?**

7. EQUAL generated a high level of take up and transfer of innovation:

A considerable volume of mainstreaming took place at both horizontal and vertical levels.

8. There was some uncertainty as to how to tackle mainstreaming in practice:

Despite the relatively high number of mainstreaming cases and efforts by the Commission to provide guidance to the MAs and DPs, the analysis also indicates that there was a great deal of uncertainty on the part of the MAs and DPs on how to deal with mainstreaming in practice. The lack of an analytical framework for mainstreaming has also meant that it is a difficult to evaluate.

9. There is a need to integrate mainstreaming throughout the cycle, particularly at the early stages:

The evaluation highlights the need to include mainstreaming at an early stage and the importance of the commitment of and 'ownership' by political stakeholders.

10. EQUAL achieved a significant number of intermediary impacts as a result of the mainstreaming of the validated innovations:

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EQUAL achieved intermediary impacts at policy, institutional and organisational level. Policy impacts, which account for the majority of impacts achieved, include legislative changes, the integration of EQUAL principles into new policies or into the new OPs and new fiscal incentives to increase the labour market participation of vulnerable groups. Institutional impacts include changes in education and training frameworks and changes in labour market intermediation and support services. Organisational changes occurred in the employment and public services but are more difficult to assess in the private sector which could indicate a lack of private sector engagement with EQUAL. EQUAL also contributed to an increase in the quality of governance and professionalisation of civil society organisations.

**Evaluation Question 4: What long-term impact is the EQUAL Community Initiative expected to have?**

11. EQUAL impacts mainly on policies, rather than on the labour market:  
The nature of the programme, which aimed at promoting new models for working life and access to work by fighting discrimination and exclusion, meant that it impacted more on policies and structures than on job creation per se.
12. Long-term EQUAL impacts on awareness-raising and changing mindsets:  
The levels of discrimination, social exclusion as well as the long-term impacts of EQUAL on these levels are extremely difficult to measure because of the attribution problem. However, the Initiative introduced a useful approach to combat discrimination in the labour market with the empowerment of its stakeholders, the gathering of critical mass and by emphasising innovation. It has resulted in very important learning among the key stakeholders and influenced substantially how people who participated in the programme think and act.
13. EQUAL created a common language and approach to social inclusion across the EU:  
An EQUAL 'community' has emerged with a common vocabulary around anti-discrimination and social inclusion as well as concepts such as innovation and mainstreaming. This is an important by-product of the EQUAL process which should not be lost in the coming period as the Member States and the Union struggle to address the effects of the current economic crisis and where more concerted and more new approaches and joint actions will be required.

**Evaluation Question 5: What is the Community Added Value of EQUAL?**

14. EQUAL catalysed funding to groups that would not otherwise have been targeted:  
In terms of inputs, EQUAL had a 'boosting' effect to the extent that it catalysed funding towards groups that would not have been targeted otherwise – asylum seekers, ex prisoners etc. The funding was therefore not simply additional, but also conditional, which in turn ensured a high quality of the outputs
15. EQUAL provided resources for new areas of intervention, through new mechanisms:  
EQUAL offered new financial resources for the social economy and entrepreneurship. In addition, the partnership design in the form of a DP was a unique input in the organisation of EQUAL projects. The transnationality aspect offered know-how and experiences and brought actors into contact with new ways of doing things and helped to stimulate changes in both in ways of thinking and development of practical solution to problems.
16. EQUAL brought added value through its focus on innovation, complementarity with national policies and strategic instruments:  
EQUAL has filled gaps in national policy making processes and was therefore an important complement to national and sub-national policies in terms of enriching both

their content (opening up existing programmes and policies to new target groups) and adapting their delivery mechanisms to reach their target audience.

17. The EQUAL focus on gender equality and mainstreaming had mixed success:

Although gender equality and gender mainstreaming are not specific to EQUAL, they were strongly promoted within the initiative. Findings<sup>6</sup> however lead us to conclude that while EQUAL gave a new impetus to these issues, it was not as successful as may have been hoped from the strong general commitment in the regulatory framework.

## V. Recommendations

The Recommendations cover actions to be taken up in the current programming period and actions to be taken up in the next, whereby the recommendations for the first are of course also valid for the second.

### Actions to be taken up in the current programming period 2007-2013

#### 1) The Commission Services should take the lead in defining and operationalising the concept of social innovation.

- 1.1. The Commission Services should issue orientation and guidance on suitable, feasible and acceptable instruments to promote social innovation under the current and future ESF programming, including a clear definition and conceptual framework for innovation;
- 1.2. The Commission Services should issue guidance for monitoring and evaluation of social innovation, including definition of indicators for monitoring innovation, and criteria for cost-benefit analysis;
- 1.3. The Commission Services should consider guidance on good practice for innovation validation to support the current OPs, including the definition of a common validation process;
- 1.4. There are good reasons why the main implementation approach for innovation development under EQUAL was generally bottom-up, e.g. the benefits of proximity to the problem, involvement of local and regional actors in addressing local and regional problems etc. However, a complementary approach could be to identify the social policy 'bottlenecks' for which innovation would be welcome, based on SWOT analysis and construction of intervention logics. This approach could help to fine tune activities, as well as ensure utility of the innovations and provide a starting point for evaluations and quality assurance.
- 1.5. By its nature, innovation development is a risky undertaking. That gives it a dynamic that goes against the philosophy of ensuring accountability and guaranteeing (positive) results that underpins current approaches to management of public resources and the corresponding audit strategies. But, to make innovation development for social inclusion workable it is necessary to ensure that any risk is spread and that the burden of potential (and to be expected) failure is not left to the beneficiaries alone. Thus – in case of innovation development – success-criteria and definitions of guaranteed results have to be adequately designed to keep the risk manageable – in particular for smaller and financially weaker NGOs. Otherwise important stakeholders will either be excluded from participation or choose not to participate, with a corresponding loss in innovative potential. In this respect also the combination of national co-funding based on standard labour market measures (including binding success-benchmarks for e.g. trainees) - with EU co-funding dedicated to risk-related innovation development may limit the potential to stimulate the maximum amount and quality of innovations. MAs should therefore

<sup>6</sup> Gender mainstreaming as a specific area of inquiry was not part of the Terms of Reference for this assignment and was taken up only in the later stages of the research.

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consider how co-funding and other requirements can affect both the stakeholder participation, as well as the overall quality of innovations.

- 1.6. The Commission Services should capitalise on the inheritance of EQUAL and existing good practice for innovation validation, by *inter alia* including the definition of a common validation process as a standard requirement. Good examples on validation processes/approaches already exist (from Portugal for instance) and these could be analysed with a view to transfer and adaptation into other contexts, programmes and/or countries.

**2) Managing Authorities should strengthen the guidance available to project partners in relation to innovation.**

- 2.1. Integrate a bottom-up needs assessment (involving and mobilising citizens and stakeholders on a broad scale) into SWOT analysis, thus raising awareness 'uno actu'.
- 2.2. Design the programme with an explicit intervention logic based on the foregoing diagnostic exercise, translated into the procedures of tendering/call for proposals. Although, bottom-up approaches are necessary, they need to be complemented by a top-down strategy as has been clearly shown by the experience of gender mainstreaming and actions related to gender equality in general. Equally, social innovation development also needs support by a strong 'owner' in the background.
- 2.3. Create support structures and implement activities to overcome traditional barriers between 'silos' of policy and unrelated but potentially synergetic activities. The exchange of experience and mutual learning are key-factors for successful social innovation development.
- 2.4. Develop and test innovations and validate them in a transparent and comprehensive way.
- 2.5. Carry out appropriate forms of cost-benefit analysis. Where a comparative analysis of programme success (in terms of efficacy and efficiency) is envisaged, provision should be made to ensure comparability also relating to the relevant cost-structures. The Commission Services should therefore include guidance on carrying out cost benefit analysis within the evaluation framework.
- 2.6. Develop proper evaluation methods including experimental designs where feasible for more rigorous testing but be aware that not all innovation will be testable in this way but that testing has to be complemented by more 'soft' procedures like peer-reviewing and benchmarking.
- 2.7. Create from successful approaches a body of knowledge with good practise examples that are disseminated in a systematic manner.
- 2.8. Make sure that mainstreaming and scaling up becomes an integral part of innovation design and development.

**3) Policy makers and governments should enhance the focus on mainstreaming, and make mainstreaming more operational.**

- 3.1. The Commission Services should provide guidance on mainstreaming to clearly differentiate between mainstreaming and dissemination activities. Attention should also be paid to the respective roles of partners and other actors in the mainstreaming process. Where possible, indicators to inform evaluation should be developed.
- 3.2. Managing Authorities should develop mainstreaming strategies at thematic level, consistent with the institutional framework, be operational and ensure clarity of distinction between dissemination and mainstreaming.



- 3.3. Managing Authorities should assist project partners to build in mainstreaming at early project stages (rather than seen as a separate action), through stakeholder analysis that clearly identifies stakeholders at policy level and involves them in the project work, either as partners, or through tailored contacts (e.g. special briefings, reports etc.) and complemented by a mainstreaming strategy at the earliest practicable stage, i.e. in parallel with the development of the project concept.
- 3.4. Managing Authorities should develop guidelines on the benefits of 'horizontal' mainstreaming, including a special focus on business/enterprises: how can you 'sell' your innovation/ideas, etc. to other firms/organisations?
- 4) The work of the Thematic Working Groups should be continued to bring together the experience of the current programming round.**
- 4.1. The Commission Services and Managing Authorities should maximise the benefits from the Thematic Working Group approach by actively supporting the work of the groups and providing appropriate 'vehicles' for dissemination of their results, particularly in the policy-making context. The structure and focus of the Thematic Groups can reflect the current range and diversity of actions supported under the current ESF programming round and contribute to 'transnational' learning so that policy making at EU level as well as at national level can continue to be enhanced.

#### Actions to be taken up in the next programming period 2014-2020

#### **5) Ensure a holistic and balanced approach using EQUAL lessons**

- 5.1. The Commission Services should therefore ensure that Guidance Documents (to ESF managing authorities) for the new EU 2020 strategy include specific attention to the importance of promoting innovative approaches in the social inclusion process, as well as specific requirements on consultation with state and civil society actors.
- 5.2. Managing Authorities should ensure that the experiences from EQUAL are captured during the new planning period both regarding the approach and the results in terms of good practice by: a) specifically seeking feedback and input from EQUAL actors; and b) building on the outputs of national and European thematic networks; and c) clearly identifying a set of core Lessons Learned on an ex post basis from the EQUAL experience.
- 5.3. Related to the above, Managing Authorities of the new ESF Operational Programmes should translate the EQUAL experience into effective infrastructures and support services for project promoters and for ESF administrators as well as into tendering documentation and eligibility requirements thereby ensuring that EQUAL experiences are not only captured in theory but are also transferred into the practice of the new funding and support arrangements.

#### **6) Strengthen the focus on the most vulnerable through innovative actions**

- 6.1. The Commission Services should ensure that its guidelines for designing the next ESF programmes should identify a set of thematic fields concerning a new strand of innovative actions throughout the EU Member States while capitalising on the results of EQUAL. To this end, a stronger focus is recommended on the most vulnerable target groups in order to tackle the multi-dimensional issues of social inclusion and social cohesion according to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- 6.2. The Commission Services should also consider to propose a limited number of thematic fields (in comparison to the nine in EQUAL) in order to ensure that critical mass can be achieved in priority thematic areas.

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## **7) Provide experimentation space**

7.1. As part of the evaluation arrangements for ongoing OPs, Managing Authorities should specifically consider to assess the need of promoting a) take-up by vulnerable groups and b) innovation. Where participation rates are low, Managing Authorities should ensure that where possible, new actions should ensure a space for experimentation and testing of innovations, e.g. through a commitment to allocate a dedicated percentage of funding of for innovation-focussed actions.

## **8) Consider reintroducing one common action for developing and mainstreaming new approaches**

8.1. The Commission Services should therefore consider the need and opportunity for a common funding facility that would be able to generate of a new 'laboratory for social change' and, that would have the stimuli and resources to develop new policies and approaches, as well as involving multi-level actors and with a focus on mainstreaming validated innovations. Features of this new 'laboratory' should include: a focus on innovation, multi-level partnerships, selected thematic fields and mainstreaming.

## **9) Improve evaluation practices**

9.1. The Commission Services should improve their guidance to national authorities to ensure that evaluation is contracted and carried out in a timely manner (to ensure that evaluation results can inform programming at the appropriate time); that standardised long format summaries are available to facilitate multi-country analysis; innovation and gender equality (both in terms of funding allocated and outcomes) are considered in a consistent manner;

9.2. Managing Authorities should ensure that an evaluation strategy for the programme period is in place, providing for both operational and strategic evaluations with clear timetables. MAs should also ensure that evaluations are contracted and completed in a timely manner and that the monitoring information (including financial data) is collected, collated and made available in a timely manner, i.e. in line with the relevant strategy/timetable.

## **10) The EQUAL strategic principles should be continued into the 2014-2020 programming period.**

10.1. The Commission Services should ensure that the principles of partnership is emphasised in future guidelines. This could include a clear definition and operational concept of partnership, as well as good practice examples;

10.2. The Commission Services should ensure that the principles of empowerment is emphasised in future guidelines. This could include a clear definition and operational concept of empowerment, as well as good practice examples. Where appropriate, eligibility criteria could allow for funding of particular actions to support empowerment, e.g. specific skills enhancement (so that partners can contribute more effectively to the partnership) or networking activities for NGOs;

10.3. Managing Authorities should ensure than the principles of partnership and empowerment are becoming an integrated element of the new ESF OPs.

10.4. Managing Authorities should consider how best to involve the private sector in future ESF programmes, in both consultation on programme design and in implementation for example as partners in multi-actor projects.



**11) Transnational cooperation should be promoted as an opportunity and not as a necessary requirement.**

11.1. The Commission Services should promote transnational cooperation as an opportunity for learning that yields advantages and benefits. More flexibility and higher efficiency could be achieved if OPs were modified to give beneficiaries the option rather than the obligation to add a transnational component. However, this would imply that transnational activities have to be accepted eligible costs rather than a strict requirement. Guidance and good practice lessons on transnational cooperation should be disseminated.

**12) Balance flexibility in partnerships with minimum participation requirements.**

12.1. Managing Authorities should ensure that when a partnership approach in funding actions and projects is used, the partnerships selected are flexible in terms of numbers and types of partners and that each partner's involvement is meaningful and useful within the context of the partnership. One way to ensure this is to seek proof of working together in the project conception and preparation process.

12.2. Managing Authorities should ensure that the support structures and services are established. These need to pay special attention to how partners are performing within the partnership and provide support and guidance when problems arise. On going assessment of how partnerships function will help identify under-active or uncommitted partners and develop mechanisms/incentives to 'bring them back on track' or ultimately drop them.

12.3. Managing Authorities should identify lessons learned with regard to good practices for partnerships, where used, between programme rounds and refine requirements accordingly.

**13) Continue to support EU level networking**

13.1. To adequately capture relevant lessons gained under the current ESF to inform policy making in other countries and at community-level, the Commission Services should establish a formal mechanism for linking up national thematic networks at EU level, sharing experience and lessons, and for developing synergies. This could build on the Thematic Working Groups set up under EQUAL, some of which still operate under the current ESF OPs or have been funded as a learning networks at EU level.

13.2. Besides the establishment of flexible exchange and learning platforms, additional support to those 'who wish to do more' should be provided, such as the provision and further development of tools and methods for networking, validation, mainstreaming, peer learning etc. This could ensure a broad and intense participation and exchange of knowledge (of both good and bad practice) and offer participation to a broader audience than is possible in more formalised contexts. Managing Authorities should strengthen the guidance available to project partners in relation to innovation.

### I. Introduction

L'initiative communautaire EQUAL a été financée par le FSE pour la période 2000-2006 pour promouvoir des pratiques nouvelles de lutte contre les discriminations et les inégalités de toute nature sur le marché du travail. EQUAL constituait un axe central de la stratégie communautaire intégrée de lutte contre la discrimination et l'exclusion sociale fondée notamment sur le sexe, la race ou l'origine ethnique, la religion ou les convictions, un handicap particulier, l'âge ou l'orientation sexuelle. L'initiative EQUAL avait pour but de contribuer à la réalisation des objectifs relatifs à la stratégie européenne pour l'emploi et le processus d'inclusion sociale. Les lignes directrices d'EQUAL stipulaient que les projets devaient être menés au sein de Partenariats De Développement (PDD) en collaboration avec des partenaires transnationaux. Cinq principes clés en régissaient la mise en œuvre : le partenariat, la participation active (empowerment), la coopération transnationale, l'innovation et la diffusion et l'intégration dans les politiques (mainstreaming). La Commission avait prévu neuf domaines thématiques d'activité dans lesquels le projet s'inscrivait. Les lignes directrices de l'initiative EQUAL indiquaient que ceux-ci constituaient les domaines prioritaires pour lesquels des groupes d'Etats membres considéraient qu'une coopération transnationale les aiderait à améliorer la mise en œuvre de leurs politiques nationales.

L'évaluation ex-post d'EQUAL faisait partie de l'évaluation ex-post du FSE 2000-2006. Elle a été exécutée par Metis GmbH en association avec KANTOR et MWH en tant que sous-traitant entre juillet et décembre 2009 et couvrait les 27 Programmes opérationnels d'EQUAL dans l'UE25. L'évaluation s'est basée sur les cinq questions d'évaluation suivantes stipulées dans les termes de référence :

QE1: Dans quelle mesure les dépenses réelles relatives à l'initiative communautaire EQUAL visaient-elle la réalisation des objectifs principaux fixés par la stratégie européenne pour l'emploi et le processus d'inclusion sociale?

QE2: Dans quelle mesure l'initiative communautaire EQUAL soutenait-elle des activités d'innovation pertinentes et utiles pour la prévention et la lutte contre les discriminations et les inégalités sur le marché du travail?

QE3: Dans quelle mesure l'initiative communautaire EQUAL a-t-elle soutenu des activités résultant en une intégration de l'innovation au niveau des hautes instances politiques / institutionnelles ou/et en un transfert d'innovation dans différents contextes?

QE4: Quels impacts à long terme l'initiative communautaire EQUAL pourrait-elle avoir ?

QE5: Quelle est la valeur ajoutée communautaire d'EQUAL?

L'équipe d'évaluation était composée d'un groupe d'évaluateurs restreint (core team) chargé d'élaborer la méthodologie et de rédiger les rapports ainsi que d'un groupe d'information composé d'experts nationaux responsables de la recherche documentaire et du travail de terrain au niveau national. Un panel d'experts et un groupe de discussion (Focus Group) constitués d'une sélection d'Autorités de gestion (AG) ont également été mis sur pied pour commenter et fournir des contributions des/aux experts pour le projet de rapport intermédiaire et le rapport final.

### II. Approche méthodologique

L'approche méthodologique pour cette évaluation ex-post était basée sur la théorie du programme permettant l'identification des connexions logiques entre les réalisations (outputs), les résultats et les impacts par rapport aux objectifs spécifiques du programme et offrant une base à l'identification des effets à long termes potentiels. Des impacts supplémentaires et inattendus ont aussi été pris en compte. La collecte d'information et la mission d'enquête de l'évaluation ex-post incluaient à la fois de la recherche documentaire et du travail de terrain ainsi que deux réunions du panel d'experts et un groupe de discussion avec les AG.

La première étape de l'évaluation a consisté en une recherche documentaire intensive afin de compléter les inventaires qui constituaient la principale source d'information permettant de répondre aux Questions d'Evaluation et qui représentaient les premières réalisations (outputs) clés. On a élaboré quatre inventaires :

- Réalisation clé 1: Exposé des projets
- Réalisation clé 2: Inventaire des innovations validées
- Réalisation clé 3: Inventaire d'une diffusion et d'une intégration réussies dans les politiques (mainstreaming)
- Grille d'impact

La deuxième étape de la recherche a consisté en une série d'interviews dans toute l'UE25 et en neuf études de cas – une pour chaque domaine thématique d'EQUAL. Les interviews se sont déroulées sur base d'un questionnaire traitant des Questions d'Evaluation principalement auprès des AG et des Structures nationales de soutien (SNS) mais également auprès des Partenariats de Développement individuels dans certains Etats membres.

La dernière étape de la recherche a consisté en une analyse des résultats de la recherche documentaire et du travail de terrain dans le but de répondre aux questions d'évaluation, de tirer des conclusions utiles et de formuler des recommandations.

### III. Les résultats de la recherche

Ce qui est ressorti de la recherche documentaire et des interviews est qu'EQUAL avait réussi à créer des conditions favorables à l'émergence d'un nombre significatif d'innovations, à atteindre les groupes vulnérables que l'initiative prévoyait de toucher, à donner du pouvoir aux structures qui travaillent avec ces groupes vulnérables et à améliorer le travail en partenariat aux niveaux national et infranational et à travers l'Europe.

Les résultats de l'évaluation en rapport avec les Questions d'Evaluation sont exposés brièvement ci-dessous

#### **Question d'Evaluation 1: Dans quelle mesure les dépenses réelles relatives à l'initiative communautaire EQUAL visaient-elle la réalisation des objectifs principaux fixés par la stratégie européenne pour l'emploi et le processus d'inclusion sociale?**

Les activités menées sous EQUAL se sont déroulées dans les neuf domaines thématiques<sup>7</sup> regroupés en cinq thèmes<sup>8</sup>, dont quatre correspondent aux quatre piliers de la SEE<sup>9</sup>, le cinquième étant particulièrement destiné aux demandeurs d'asile. Les résultats de la recherche ont révélé que les dépenses relatives à EQUAL visaient chacun des cinq thèmes et atteignaient par conséquent les objectifs principaux de la SEE. Bien sûr, les dépenses différaient de manière significative selon les domaines thématiques. Le domaine thématique 1.A (Faciliter l'entrée et la réinsertion sur le marché du travail) a bénéficié de la part la plus importante des dépenses planifiées et certifiées (près de 35%), suivi des domaines thématiques 2.D (Renforcer l'économie sociale), 3.E (Promouvoir la formation tout au long de la vie et les pratiques inclusives) et 3.F (Favoriser la capacité d'adaptation des entreprises et des salariés) avec une part de 10%. Les autres domaines thématiques ont bénéficié d'une part inférieure à 10%. Ceci

<sup>7</sup> 1.A. Faciliter l'entrée et la réinsertion sur le marché du travail; 1.B. Lutter contre le racisme et la xénophobie sur le marché du travail; 2.C. Ouvrir à tous le processus de création d'entreprises 2.D. Renforcer l'économie sociale; 3.E. Promouvoir la formation tout au long de la vie et les pratiques inclusives; 3.F. Favoriser la capacité d'adaptation des entreprises et des salariés; 4.G. Concilier la vie familiale et professionnelle; 4.H. Réduire les écarts de traitement entre les hommes et les femmes et promouvoir la déségrégation professionnelle 5.I. Les demandeurs d'asile.

<sup>8</sup> Les cinq thèmes sont: 1) Augmenter la capacité d'insertion professionnelle 2) Encourager l'esprit d'entreprise 3) Faciliter la capacité d'adaptation 4) Promouvoir l'égalité des chances entre les hommes et les femmes 5) Intégrer les demandeurs d'asile.

<sup>9</sup> Les quatre piliers sont: 1) Capacité d'insertion professionnelle 2) Esprit d'entreprise 3) Capacité d'adaptation 4) Egalité des chances.

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peut s'expliquer par des choix politiques dans les Etats membres et par la prépondérance des mesures en faveur de l'intégration des groupes vulnérables sur le marché du travail.

EQUAL est parvenu à atteindre les groupes que l'initiative prévoyait de toucher. Les ONG et les administrations publiques ont constitué les bénéficiaires majeurs d'EQUAL. Toutefois, tous les groupes cibles ont été examinés par au moins un domaine thématique. En ce qui concerne la répartition des individus dans les neuf domaines thématiques, on constate que les migrants/minorités ethniques ont été traités plus largement dans les domaines thématiques 1.A (Faciliter l'entrée et la réinsertion sur le marché du travail) et 1.B (Lutter contre le racisme), alors que les personnes avec des infirmités et des personnes discriminées avaient surtout été examinées dans le domaine thématique 1.A.

Les dépenses relatives à EQUAL n'ont pas été suffisamment importantes en comparaison avec d'autres sources de financement pour produire une contribution majeure aux objectifs de la stratégie européenne pour l'emploi (SEE) et de l'inclusion sociale en termes quantitatifs. EQUAL n'avait pas pour objectif de rivaliser avec le FSE général et le financement national mais de soutenir des solutions innovantes concernant les thèmes principaux de la SEE. Par conséquent, on a constaté que la structure spécifique, les instruments et les objectifs d'EQUAL, à savoir la production d'innovation, l'obligation de travailler en partenariat, la mise en réseau, le renforcement des capacités, etc. ont contribué à rassembler les conditions nécessaires pour la réalisation des objectifs de la SEE et de l'inclusion sociale.

EQUAL a également contribué à l'évolution du débat sur l'emploi, l'inclusion sociale et le développement durable influençant ainsi le développement des principales politiques et stratégies européennes. EQUAL a contribué à l'intégration des stratégies de la SEE, de l'inclusion sociale et du développement durable sur le terrain en renforçant la dimension locale de la SEE et l'intégration de différentes approches (par exemple, les initiatives d'emploi local et de développement, les systèmes de protection sociale locale). Cependant, elle a aussi montré les limites du combat contre l'exclusion sociale et la pauvreté à travers l'emploi et le travail seuls. Elle a démontré que la croissance et les emplois étaient nécessaires mais insuffisants pour lutter par exemple contre les inégalités de revenus, les inégalités régionales, les inégalités entre les hommes et les femmes et les inégalités ethniques ou la détresse économique des ménages.

En plus de son soutien à la SEE, EQUAL a réellement complété les politiques nationales en apportant une dimension politique supplémentaire dans des domaines où les politiques nationales étaient en quelque sorte fragmentées ou bien dans des domaines où certains groupes cibles ou à risque n'étaient pas pris en considération.

En pratique, on peut dire que la SEE et le processus d'inclusion sociale ont fourni un cadre politique, là où EQUAL a fourni les instruments adéquats pour stimuler et soutenir l'innovation, l'apprentissage mutuel et le changement sur le terrain.

**Question d'Evaluation 2: Dans quelle mesure l'initiative communautaire EQUAL soutenait-elle des activités d'innovation pertinentes et utiles pour la prévention et la lutte contre les discriminations et les inégalités sur le marché du travail?**

L'objectif opérationnel d'EQUAL visait l'innovation en vue de vaincre l'exclusion sociale et la discrimination sur le lieu de travail et faciliter l'accès à l'emploi. Au cours de l'évaluation, on a identifié plus de 900 cas d'innovations qui ont été validées. On rapporte que plus d'un tiers de ceux-ci se sont vus intégrés, ce qui signifie intégrés dans les politiques ou les pratiques standards des parties prenantes. En outre, on a aussi identifié plus de 200 cas avec impact à long terme. Cette avancée majeure indique clairement que des activités « pertinentes et utiles » d'innovation avaient été mises en œuvre et testées, mais aussi transférées et intégrées de façon durable dans le cadre d'EQUAL.

De façon générale, le nombre d'innovations par domaine thématique correspond plus ou moins au montant des dépenses identifiés par domaine thématique. Il correspond également au nombre de PDD travaillant sur ces thèmes. Il n'est donc pas surprenant de constater que la majeure partie des innovations (35%) provenait du domaine thématique 1.A (Faciliter l'entrée et la réinsertion sur le marché du travail) et que les pourcentages les plus bas (respectivement 5% et 6%) concernaient le domaine thématique 5.I (Demandeurs d'asile) et 1.B (Lutter contre le racisme et la xénophobie sur le marché du travail). Il est intéressant de noter que la comparaison entre le nombre d'innovations et les dépenses et/ou le nombre de PDD travaillant dans le domaine souligne que les domaines thématiques 4.G (Concilier la vie familiale et professionnelle) et 5.I (Demandeurs d'asile) ont eu un rendement particulièrement bon, à savoir qu'ils ont comparativement innové davantage que les autres domaines. Ceci peut s'expliquer par la nouveauté relative des actions pour les demandeurs d'asile ainsi que dans le domaine "concilier vie privée et professionnelle" dans certains Etats membres et ce qui a permis par conséquent de plus grandes possibilités d'innover. Comparativement, la faible performance du domaine 3.E (La formation tout au long de la vie) pourrait provenir du fait que beaucoup d'actions innovantes avaient été réalisées dans le passé et que la probabilité d'en réaliser davantage était plus faible que pour un domaine où très peu de choses s'étaient produites.

En ce qui concerne les types d'innovations, on considère qu'environ 10% avaient été importées d'autres contextes ou mises en œuvre plus ou moins en tant que telles; 37% d'entre eux étaient des adaptations actives d'innovations qui s'étaient avérées utiles dans d'autres contextes et une majorité de 53% constituaient des innovations fraîchement élaborées. La grande majorité des innovations (71%) portait sur l'élaboration de nouvelles approches et méthodes et sur l'amélioration des méthodes actuelles (innovations orientées processus). Il s'agissait avant tout de projets généraux "de renforcement des capacités" (capacity building), par exemple la mise en place de mesures et de programmes de formation. 20% étaient liés aux structures politiques et institutionnelles et à l'élaboration de systèmes y compris la mise en place de nouvelles structures de coopération (innovations orientées contexte). 11% portaient sur la formulation de nouveaux objectifs y compris l'identification de nouvelles qualifications, de nouveaux profils professionnels et l'ouverture à de nouveaux domaines d'emploi (innovations orientées objectifs).

**Question d'Evaluation 3: Dans quelle mesure l'initiative communautaire EQUAL a-t-elle soutenu des activités résultant en une intégration de l'innovation au niveau des hautes instances politiques / institutionnelles ou/et en un transfert d'innovation dans différents contextes?**

L'évaluation a employé une définition stricte de l'intégration (mainstreaming) en tant qu'intégration ou influence de l'innovation sur la politique et la pratique sur les plans institutionnel, politique, réglementaire et administratif. On a observé différents types de « mainstreaming »:

1. Le "mainstreaming" vertical national: Transfert d'acquis et intégration de tout ou partie des résultats sur les plans institutionnel, politique, réglementaire ou administratif. Nous cherchons ici des preuves tangibles de l'intégration sur le plan national.
2. Le "mainstreaming" horizontal national: Transfert d'acquis vers d'autres organisations similaires sur les plans national ou régional. Le transfert peut être précis (ex : un outil déterminé) ou plus diffus (ex : contribuer à la modification de pratiques). Dans ce cas, il faut comprendre régional dans un contexte national plutôt que transnational.
3. Le "mainstreaming" horizontal transnational: Transfert d'acquis et intégration de tout ou partie des résultats entre les Etats membres, les partenaires sociaux et la Commission européenne.
4. Le "mainstreaming" vertical transnational: Où les innovations/résultats influencent les milieux institutionnel, politique ou réglementaire dans d'autres Etats membres ou au niveau de la Commission européenne.

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5. Maintenance/continuation: Où les résultats d'innovation sont poursuivis ou assurés immédiatement par les parties prenantes.

On a identifié approximativement 500 cas de "mainstreaming" et tous n'étaient pas liés à des innovations spécifiques. En fait, une relation évidente avec des innovations spécifiques n'a pu être établie que dans environ seulement 60% des cas de "mainstreaming" ce qui reflète la différenciation entre l'Action 2 (mise en œuvre du projet) et l'Action 3 (intégration dans les politiques – « mainstreaming ») établies dans les lignes directrices d'EQUAL. Les interviews ont révélé une grande part d'incertitude particulièrement dans le chef des porteurs de projet mais aussi dans le chef des Autorités de Gestion sur la façon d'examiner le "mainstreaming" en pratique. Alors que les contributions et les résultats faisaient l'objet d'une définition claire, les activités menant à ces derniers demeuraient vagues, spécialement au regard de la différence entre l'intégration (mainstreaming) et la diffusion. Etant donné l'absence de cadre analytique pour le « mainstreaming » qui en faciliterait l'évaluation, le présent rapport propose un nombre de pierres angulaires pour un tel cadre.

La majorité des cas de "mainstreaming" identifiés (39%) relevait d'un "mainstreaming" horizontal sur le plan national, 25% portaient sur un "mainstreaming" vertical national, 20% sur la continuation/maintenance et 4% relevaient d'un "mainstreaming" horizontal sur le plan transnational. Une quantité négligeable relevait d'un « mainstreaming » vertical transnational et 12% ne pouvaient être attribués à aucun type de "mainstreaming".

En ce qui concerne la responsabilité de prise en compte du principe d'intégration (mainstreaming), on aurait pu raisonnablement s'attendre à ce que des PDD individuels transfèrent les produits entre les partenaires et les organisations du projets à un niveau similaire ("mainstreaming" horizontal) alors que le transfert de bonnes pratiques dans la politique ("mainstreaming" vertical) aurait dû relever de la responsabilité des AG et des Structures nationales de soutien. En réalité, la responsabilité d'un "mainstreaming" vertical incombait souvent aux PDD parce que l'on supposait peut-être que si les autorités publiques faisaient partie des partenaires stratégiques, ils se chargeraient du "mainstreaming" vertical. En fait, beaucoup de ces *partenaires stratégiques*<sup>10</sup> jouaient un rôle relativement passif. Toutefois, dans d'autres cas de figure, quand les autorités publiques faisaient partie des partenaires<sup>11</sup> opérationnels, on a pu constater de meilleurs résultats de « mainstreaming ».

Les facteurs clés identifiés pour faciliter le "mainstreaming" étaient:

- L'engagement et l'appropriation politiques
- Les plans d'intégration (mainstreaming) élaborés au début du cycle de vie du projet
- Les Groupes nationaux de travail thématiques
- L'instrument stratégique de "partenariat"
- Le soutien de l'assistance technique régionale au sujet de l'opérationnalisation du "mainstreaming"

L'évaluation a envisagé les résultats du "mainstreaming" comme des **impacts intermédiaires**. On a pu identifier des références à ces impacts intermédiaires dans 221 cas de « mainstreaming » qui ont fait l'objet d'un rapport. Pour 141 d'entre eux (environ 64%), on a pu rétablir un lien avec une innovation validée et le domaine thématique respectif, dont 26% se référaient au domaine thématique 1.A (Faciliter l'entrée et la réinsertion sur le marché du travail) et 11% au domaine 4.G (Concilier la vie familiale et professionnelle). Etant donné que certains

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<sup>10</sup> Les partenaires stratégiques contribuent à la mise en œuvre des projets en prodiguant des conseils et en apportant leur soutien politique pour la conception, la coordination et l'élaboration des actions des PDD et peuvent aussi avoir un rôle d'ambassadeur.

<sup>11</sup> Les partenaires opérationnels assurent la gestion et la mise en œuvre des projets dans leur domaine respectif de responsabilité.



cas de « mainstreaming » ont produit plusieurs impacts, le nombre total d'impacts intermédiaires identifiés se montait à 253. Parmi eux, les impacts politiques prédominaient à 41%, suivis des impacts institutionnels avec 31% et des impacts organisationnels à 28%.

En ce qui concerne les **impacts politiques**, Il est difficile d'attribuer les modifications dans les milieux politique et législatif directement à EQUAL. L'introduction de nouvelles lois ou de nouveaux amendements dans la législation aurait tout de même pu se produire. Cependant, même si EQUAL à elle seule n'a pas provoqué ces modifications, elle les a sans aucun doute renforcées, par exemple en présentant davantage de preuves et d'arguments ou en guidant ces modifications. Dans de nombreux cas, les projets EQUAL et/ou les Groupes de travail thématiques (GTT) ont fait pression pour modifier la législation.

EQUAL a clairement influencé la conception des nouveaux Programmes opérationnels (PO) du FSE pour la période 2007-2013 puisque certaines AG EQUAL ont également collaboré à la programmation de la période 2007-2013. En traduisant les exigences réglementaires de la coopération transnationale et l'innovation sous leurs PO du FSE, les AG du FSE ont pu bénéficier :

- D'une série de notes d'orientation pour la programmation de principes EQUAL clés, rédigés par un groupe d'AG du FSE/EQUAL
- De leur expérience et expertise acquises en tant qu'AG EQUAL
- De propositions politiques élaborées par les GTT souvent reprises par des acteurs clés et intégrées dans les PO grâce à leur engagement, en tant que partenaires, dans le processus de programmation.

Pour les **impacts institutionnels**, les modifications dans les systèmes d'éducation et de formation d'une part et les modifications des structures et processus d'intermédiation du marché du travail d'autre part représentent plus de 50% des cas d'impacts institutionnels identifiés. Contrairement aux impacts politiques, plus de la moitié des impacts institutionnels répertoriés se sont produits sur les plans régional ou local. Parmi les impacts institutionnels les plus répandus, figuraient la conception de nouveaux ou des modifications de projets de programmes/formation ; des modifications de contenu et d'orientation des programmes de formation – spécialement au sujet de l'inclusion de nouveaux groupes cibles ; de nouveaux mécanismes de certification pour les qualifications professionnelles ; de nouvelles structures d'éducation ou de formation. Dans le domaine des structures d'intermédiation du marché du travail, les impacts les plus communs concernaient l'amélioration de la coordination entre les acteurs – spécialement au regard de la coopération des services locaux pour l'emploi avec d'autres fournisseurs de services sociaux ; les modifications dans la façon de travailler de ces structures, à savoir dans les processus ; l'amélioration de l'organisation des services pour l'emploi ; l'intégration d'itinéraires d'inclusion ; l'émergence de nouveaux groupes cibles. De nouvelles structures et de nouveaux cadres de soutien sur le marché du travail constituaient aussi parfois le résultat direct du travail fourni par les PDD.

Dans certains Etats membres, EQUAL a agi de manière très proactive pour adapter, élaborer et diffuser des outils à destination des gestionnaires du FSE ainsi que pour les porteurs de projets, dont certains ont été intégrés de façon transnationale, soit par le biais d'un transfert bilatéral, soit par une intégration dans des guides et procédures communs (par exemple, les outils permettant de mettre au point une stratégie d'intégration pour les organismes du FSE, ou les outils à destination des porteurs de projets visant à appliquer les techniques de la Gestion du cycle du projet)

En ce qui concerne les modifications relatives aux dispositions réglementaires du travail, EQUAL a eu moins de succès et ce probablement en raison du temps consacré à opérer de telles modifications et de la complexité à obtenir le consensus des partenaires sociaux impliqués dans le processus. Dans le domaine du soutien à la création d'entreprises, on peut établir un lien avec

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EQUAL dans les cas où des groupes vulnérables ont été examinés à travers, par exemple de nouveaux services de conseil.

Pour les **impacts organisationnels**, la documentation et la preuve respective des modifications constituaient la part la plus incomplète de ce type d'impact intermédiaire. Si on décrivait les impacts, ils faisaient toujours référence aux partenaires des PDD qui continuaient à utiliser certaines pratiques. Il n'existe aucune indication tangible qui démontre qu'EQUAL a réussi à modifier les attitudes des employeurs, à l'exception peut-être des mesures d'intégration de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes comme l'a révélé notre étude de cas autrichienne (POP UP GEM). Dans certains pays, des campagnes de sensibilisation sur par exemple "les capacités des personnes handicapées" ont peut-être apporté quelques modifications. Toutefois, en l'absence d'évaluations respectives, ce ne sont là que des spéculations. Le faible nombre d'impacts organisationnels et le peu de référence à une intégration par le secteur privé repris dans la documentation existante ainsi que les descriptions incomplètes donnent lieu à deux interprétations: soit il s'agit d'un échec du "mainstreaming" horizontal dans le secteur privé soit il s'agit d'un manque de preuves.

#### **Question d'Évaluation 4: Quels impacts à long terme l'initiative communautaire EQUAL pourrait-elle avoir ?**

Pour effectuer cette évaluation, on a cherché à obtenir, à travers les interviews, des impacts à long terme relatifs à l'intégration dans la programmation du FSE pour la prochaine période. L'impact d'EQUAL sur la programmation du FSE peut se mesurer de deux façons : Les expériences acquises sous EQUAL ont engendré l'introduction de certains ou de tous les principes d'EQUAL dans les PO pour la période 2007-2013. Les principes les plus répandus sont le partenariat, la transnationalité, l'égalité des chances entre les hommes et les femmes et, dans une moindre mesure, le principe d'innovation parce que l'innovation est plus difficilement intégrable puisqu'elle sous-entend une validation ou une expérimentation systématiques et rigoureuses qui ne sont pas prévues dans la plupart des PO. EQUAL a également sensibilisé les acteurs et décideurs responsables sur l'existence et les besoins de certains groupes cibles, en particulier, les demandeurs d'asile, les immigrants, les minorités ethniques (notamment les Romanichels) et les anciens détenus. On n'avait pas examiné suffisamment ces groupes auparavant dans certains Etats membres où leur inclusion dans les politiques et les actions pour l'emploi avait été entravée par le cadre légal et les préjugés. Toutefois, à l'exception de certains pays où des campagnes médiatiques de grande envergure avaient été lancées, il n'existe pas de preuve d'un changement général du discours du public envers les groupes vulnérables.

Les expériences ont démontré que la réalisation des impacts prenait plus de temps s'ils exigeaient un changement de mentalité ou un changement des habitudes de vie et prenait moins de temps s'il s'agissait seulement de changements "techniques". De la même manière, les changements prennent plus de temps si la société dans son ensemble est concernée que si ceux-ci ne touchent que certains secteurs.

Une des questions clés à émerger était de savoir si l'application continue des politiques et des modèles mis en œuvre sous EQUAL, dépendrait de la poursuite d'un programme identique à EQUAL ou si l'application de seulement quelques principes d'EQUAL dans les PO du FSE suffirait. Il semble évident de suggérer que les impacts à long terme d'EQUAL sur la situation des groupes vulnérables ne seront pas si impressionnants en cas d'absence de dispositions spécifiques en faveur de la poursuite d'activités de type EQUAL ou si leur intégration nationale ou régionale dans les programmes du FSE avec des objectifs clairs et un budget n'est pas spécialement définie. En outre, la situation des groupes vulnérables - et bien entendu de tous les autres groupes sur le marché du travail - est essentiellement affectée par le cycle économique et les politiques publiques dominantes dans un contexte respectif. Dans la plupart des Etats membres, on peut dès lors s'attendre à ce que la crise économique ait un effet particulièrement négatif sur la situation des groupes vulnérables. Cependant, les nouvelles entités créées par EQUAL ne disparaîtront pas même en période de récession. Le resserrement



du financement public et le besoin de trouver de nouvelles solutions aux problèmes pourraient aussi aider à développer, tester et intégrer des solutions innovantes et par conséquent accélérer et soutenir le changement. La plupart des Initiatives communautaires précédentes ont été lancées pour promouvoir des solutions innovantes en temps de récession économique. Des activités de type EQUAL ont apporté des solutions qui pendant la récession actuelle pourraient provoquer des impacts à plus long terme.

#### **Question d'Evaluation 5: Quelle est la valeur ajoutée communautaire d'EQUAL?**

La Valeur ajoutée communautaire (VAC) est un élément central de la question de la légitimité et de la légitimation des actions politiques prises au niveau européen, que ce soit sous une forme centralisée ou selon une méthode de coordination plus ouverte où l'UE joue un rôle actif pour promouvoir les nouvelles approches politiques et de gouvernance. La question revêtait, par conséquent, une importance capitale dans l'évaluation ex-post d'EQUAL. Selon nous, la VAC exige plus qu'un simple résultat positif des activités du programme en tant que telles. Il doit y avoir quelque chose en plus qui puisse y être relié rendant EQUAL spécifique et différent des activités standards.

EQUAL a indubitablement marqué une étape importante en établissant un cadre conceptuel et financier sans précédent pour un apprentissage et une expérimentation mutuels dans le domaine de la politique d'intégration sociale relative au marché du travail, à la fois par rapport à l'éventail des activités et des structures que par des méthodes de transmission. Les exigences d'EQUAL en matière d'innovation, de partenariat et de coopération transnationale représentaient un premier niveau de la VAC dans le sens qu'elles « forçaient » les PDD à coopérer et à élaborer de nouvelles idées. Les critères d'éligibilité et les exigences de mise en œuvre de lignes directrices d'EQUAL ont entraîné un rendement supplémentaire qui n'aurait pas été possible à travers les approches politiques nationales actuelles pour le marché du travail ou à travers le FSE classique.

On a noté des différences fondamentales entre EQUAL et la plupart des programmes et mesures du FSE sur les plans national et régional dans la majorité des Etats membres. Celles-ci reprenaient en particulier l'accent mis par EQUAL sur l'innovation ainsi que ses principes stratégiques de partenariat, de transnationalité et de participation active (empowerment), ce qui a fait naître une approche totalement nouvelle pour examiner les inégalités sur le marché du travail. En plus, grâce à sa mise à disposition de financement et ses objectifs stratégiques, EQUAL a permis de faire prendre conscience de sujets qui auraient sinon été négligés et de les financer.

Un financement supplémentaire pour certaines mesures et groupes cibles constituait une valeur ajoutée en soi, notamment dans des Etats membres plus petits et plus faibles économiquement (receveurs nets). Toutefois, la nouvelle approche plus intégrée envers la livraison de services et le développement politique par le biais de l'innovation et de l'intégration était souvent considérée comme plus pertinente que le financement lui-même. Au premier plan également, il y avait la possibilité qu'offrait EQUAL à des organisations issues de secteurs différents avec des responsabilités différentes qui n'avaient jamais travaillé ensemble avant de coopérer.

Les aspects organisationnels et en matière de procédures pour le travail au sein d'EQUAL offraient des possibilités d'apprentissage qui n'auraient pas pu se produire sans cela. La portée politique se voyait élargie par cette possibilité (et les primes) pour examiner de nouveaux groupes cibles (par exemples, des migrants, des demandeurs d'asile, des anciens détenus, des indépendants, des entreprises sociales, des SDF, des victimes de la traite des êtres humains, des anciens toxicomanes), pour rendre visibles leurs problèmes et mettre au point des outils adaptés pour les assister.

La création de nouvelles sphères d'activités, de nouveaux types ou combinaisons d'activités par, par exemple l'administration publique, les ONG et les individus ont été le résultat direct

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d'EQUAL. L'initiative a soutenu – souvent de manière innovante - les jeunes, les minorités ethniques et les femmes (ces dernières principalement dans les zones rurales isolées) à créer leur entreprise ou à devenir indépendants. Par exemple, l'amélioration de l'employabilité n'était plus seulement incitée par l'innovation dans la formation ou des systèmes et des méthodes de requalifications mais aussi grâce à une série d'activités intégrées (formation, mentorat, conseil, séminaires, etc.) orientées vers des groupes cibles défavorisés. Au sein du pilier Esprit d'entreprise aussi, on a donné la priorité au troisième secteur avec une participation sans précédent des ONG.

Le principe de partenariat s'est avéré être un des facteurs les plus efficaces et appréciés d'EQUAL. Le coût relativement élevé de la coordination a même été considéré comme acceptable en raison des effets positifs de l'approche de partenariat et ce particulièrement sur les plans local, régional et national. En ce qui concerne les partenariats transnationaux, l'opinion générale était plus ambiguë; par ailleurs, il a été reconnu qu'ils avaient apporté un savoir-faire et des expériences supplémentaires ainsi que de nouvelles façons de voir les choses.

#### IV. Conclusions

Nous avons décidé de présenter les **conclusions** en deux sections: d'une part, les conclusions générales sur la conception et la performance et d'autre part, les conclusions spécifiques relatives aux cinq questions d'évaluation. Ensemble, elles ont guidé les recommandations.

##### Conclusions générales

Voici les conclusions clés relatives à la **conception et la performance générales** d'EQUAL:

1. EQUAL est extrêmement bien parvenu à développer et intégrer un grand nombre d'innovations et a produit une Valeur ajoutée communautaire à travers ces résultats mais aussi grâce à une mise en œuvre innovante et participative de ses activités en tant que telles.
2. La conception d'EQUAL s'est avérée très appropriée pour examiner les besoins des groupes vulnérables, des praticiens et des décideurs, et a prouvé l'efficacité du travail en partenariat.
3. EQUAL a contribué à la cause de l'égalité en montrant l'importance de l'approche holistique pour combattre l'exclusion sociale.
4. EQUAL s'est révélé être un outil essentiel de renforcement des capacités, particulièrement pour UE8/10.
5. Il est nécessaire de s'appuyer sur l'expérience d'EQUAL pour continuer à promouvoir l'innovation et lutter contre les discriminations sur le lieu de travail.

##### Conclusions spécifiques

Voici les conclusions relatives aux **questions d'évaluation spécifiques**:

**Question d'Evaluation 1: Dans quelle mesure les dépenses réelles relatives à l'initiative communautaire EQUAL visaient-elle la réalisation des objectifs principaux fixés par la stratégie européenne pour l'emploi et le processus d'inclusion sociale?**

1. EQUAL concernait directement et de manière efficace les objectifs de la stratégie européenne pour l'emploi (SEE) et de l'inclusion sociale:  
Une analyse des dépenses réelles a confirmé que les fonds avaient pour but de réaliser les objectifs de la SEE; par conséquent, l'utilisation d'EQUAL s'est déroulée comme prévu, avec en prime de bons résultats.
2. La « méthodologie » d'EQUAL a activement contribué à coordonner les politiques :  
EQUAL a contribué de manière active à des actions efficaces et à la coordination des politiques, grâce à sa méthodologie spécifique et à ses instruments stratégiques.

3. EQUAL a renforcé la dimension locale de la SEE:

La SEE et le processus d'inclusion sociale ont fourni le cadre politique, alors qu'EQUAL a apporté un instrument adéquat pour stimuler et soutenir les changements sur le terrain par l'intégration de nombreuses approches (par exemple, des initiatives d'emploi et de développement locaux, des systèmes de protection sociale locale).

4. EQUAL s'est à la fois associé aux politiques nationales et a fourni une dimension politique supplémentaire:

EQUAL concernait des zones où les politiques nationales étaient en quelque sorte fragmentées ou bien des zones où des groupes vulnérables spécifiques n'étaient pas pris en considération. Elle a aussi facilité l'amélioration de la livraison des services et donc la réforme des politiques nationales.

**Question d'Evaluation 2: Dans quelle mesure l'initiative communautaire EQUAL soutenait-elle des activités d'innovation pertinentes et utiles pour la prévention et la lutte contre les discriminations et les inégalités sur le marché du travail?**

5. EQUAL a créé un volume important d'innovations utiles, notamment de nouvelles innovations et des innovations liées au processus :

La somme de 924 innovations dont une large proportion a été classée comme "intégrable" ou a en effet été intégrée avec succès, représente une réussite considérable et indique bien que quelque chose de "pertinent et utile" s'est produit dans le cadre d'EQUAL.

6. Les instruments stratégiques et notamment les partenariats ont joué le rôle essentiel de « moteurs » en terme d'innovation :

Il est à noter le rôle primordial des partenariats dans le développement, la validation et l'intégration de l'innovation. L'accent mis par EQUAL sur l'innovation et sa capacité à créer les conditions favorables pour stimuler et saisir l'innovation (grâce aux instruments stratégiques) a fourni un moyen d'expérimentation à risque relativement faible. Néanmoins, EQUAL ne peut être considéré comme un moyen "pur et simple" d'innovation sociale (avec des paramètres clairs de conception des groupes de contrôle, etc.) mais plutôt comme une approche innovante pour résoudre les problèmes liés à l'apprentissage politique (policy learning) en tant que résultat souhaité et non comme un résultat inévitable. Malgré cela, EQUAL s'est concentré sur l'identification et l'inventaire des innovations ("produits") créant ainsi une base de données d'une grande valeur pour les décideurs et les praticiens dans toute l'Union.

**Question d'Evaluation 3: Dans quelle mesure l'initiative communautaire EQUAL a-t-elle soutenu des activités résultant en une intégration de l'innovation au niveau des hautes instances politiques / institutionnelles ou/et en un transfert d'innovation dans différents contextes?**

7. EQUAL a créé une intégration et un transfert d'innovation de grande qualité:

On a constaté un volume important d'intégration (mainstreaming) à la fois sur les plans horizontal et vertical.

8. La façon d'aborder la question de l'approche intégrée en pratique a donné lieu à quelques incertitudes:

Malgré le nombre élevé de cas et d'efforts d'intégration dans le chef de la Commission pour orienter les AG et les PDD, l'analyse indique également que les AG et les PDD ont exprimé leur incertitude face à la manière d'aborder la question de l'approche intégrée (mainstreaming) en pratique. L'absence de cadre analytique pour l'intégration rend l'évaluation difficile.

9. Intégrer le "mainstreaming" tout au long du cycle et particulièrement dans les phases initiales est nécessaire:

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L'évaluation souligne le besoin d'intégrer le "mainstreaming" dès le début ainsi que l'importance de l'engagement et l'appropriation de la part des acteurs politiques.

10. EQUAL a produit un grand nombre d'impacts intermédiaires en raison de l'intégration d'innovations validées:

EQUAL a produit des impacts intermédiaires sur les plans politique, institutionnel et organisationnel. Les impacts politiques, qui représentent la majorité des impacts produits, comprennent les modifications législatives, l'intégration des principes d'EQUAL dans de nouvelles politiques ou de nouveaux PO ainsi que de nouveaux incitants fiscaux pour augmenter la participation des groupes vulnérables sur le marché du travail. Les impacts institutionnels incluent les modifications dans des cadres relatifs à l'éducation ou la formation ainsi que des modifications relatives à l'intermédiation et les services de soutien sur le marché du travail. Des changements organisationnels se sont produits dans les services pour l'emploi et les services publics mais sont plus difficiles à évaluer dans le secteur privé ce qui pourrait indiquer un manque d'engagement du secteur privé vis-à-vis d'EQUAL. EQUAL a également contribué à l'augmentation de la qualité de la gouvernance et à la professionnalisation des organisations de la société civile.

**Question d'Evaluation 4: Quels impacts à long terme l'initiative communautaire EQUAL pourrait-elle avoir ?**

11. EQUAL affecte davantage les politiques que le marché du travail:  
En promouvant de nouveaux modèles pour la vie active et l'accès à l'emploi par la lutte contre la discrimination et l'exclusion, la nature même du programme affectait davantage les politiques et les structures que la création d'emplois *per se*.
12. Les impacts à long terme d'EQUAL sur la sensibilisation et le changement des mentalités:  
Les niveaux de discrimination, d'exclusion sociale ainsi que les impacts à long terme d'EQUAL sur ces niveaux sont extrêmement difficiles à mesurer à cause du problème d'attribution. Toutefois, l'Initiative a présenté une approche utile pour lutter contre les discriminations sur le marché du travail avec une participation active de ses parties prenantes, le rassemblement de la masse critique et en mettant l'accent sur l'innovation. Elle a donc permis aux acteurs clés d'apprendre de manière substantielle et a grandement influencé la manière de penser et d'agir des personnes participant au programme.
13. EQUAL a créé un langage et une approche communs à l'inclusion sociale dans toute l'UE:  
On a vu l'émergence d'une "Communauté" EQUAL partageant un même vocabulaire autour de la non-discrimination et de l'inclusion sociale ainsi que des concepts tels que l'innovation et l'intégration (mainstreaming). Il s'agit d'un important produit dérivé du processus d'EQUAL qui devrait perdurer au cours de la prochaine période puisque les Etats membres et l'Union s'efforcent de traiter les effets de la crise économique actuelle et que davantage de concertation, de nouvelles approches et des actions communes seront nécessaires.

**Question d'Evaluation 5: Quelle est la valeur ajoutée communautaire d'EQUAL ?**

14. EQUAL a joué un rôle de catalyseur pour le financement de groupes qui sans cela n'auraient pas été examinés:  
En termes de contributions, EQUAL a eu un effet "stimulant" dans la mesure où elle a servi de catalyseur envers des groupes qui n'auraient pas été examinés sans cela – les demandeurs d'asile, les anciens détenus, etc. Par conséquent, le financement n'était

plus seulement additionnel mais aussi conditionnel ce qui a, en retour, assuré la grande qualité des réalisations (outputs).

15. EQUAL a fourni des ressources dans de nouveaux domaines d'intervention à travers de nouveaux mécanismes:

EQUAL offrait de nouvelles ressources financières pour l'économie sociale et l'esprit d'entreprise. En outre, le fait de concevoir le partenariat sous la forme d'un PDD représentait une contribution unique dans l'organisation des projets EQUAL. L'aspect transnational offrait le savoir-faire et les expériences ; il mettait les acteurs en relation en leur montrant de nouvelles façons de faire les choses ce qui stimulait les changements tant dans les manières de penser que dans l'élaboration de solutions pratiques à des problèmes.

16. EQUAL a apporté une valeur ajoutée grâce à l'accent mis sur l'innovation, la complémentarité avec les politiques nationales et les instruments stratégiques:

EQUAL a comblé les lacunes dans les processus de décision politique sur le plan national et est devenu un complément important des politiques nationales et infranationales permettant ainsi d'en enrichir le contenu (par l'ouverture des programmes et des politiques existants à de nouveaux groupes cibles) et d'adapter leurs mécanismes de transmission pour atteindre leur audience cible.

17. L'attention particulière d'EQUAL sur l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes et l'intégration de la dimension de genre a connu un succès mitigé :

Bien que l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes et l'intégration de la dimension de genre (gender mainstreaming) ne soit pas caractéristique d'EQUAL, elles ont fait l'objet d'une large promotion au sein de l'initiative. Toutefois, les résultats<sup>12</sup> nous amènent à conclure que même si EQUAL a donné un nouvel élan à ces questions, le succès n'a pas été celui espéré malgré un engagement général fort dans le cadre réglementaire.

## V. Recommandations

Les Recommandations concernent des actions à entreprendre pour la période de programmation actuelle ainsi que pour la suivante, les recommandations pour la première étant bien entendu valables pour la seconde.

### Actions à entreprendre au cours de la période de programmation actuelle 2007-2013

#### 1) Les Services de la Commission devraient prendre l'initiative de définir et opérationnaliser le concept d'innovation sociale.

- 1.1. Les Services de la Commission devraient fournir des orientations sur des instruments appropriés, réalisables et acceptables afin de promouvoir l'innovation sociale au titre de la programmation actuelle et à venir du FSE, y compris une définition claire et un cadre conceptuel pour l'innovation ;
- 1.2. Les Services de la Commission devraient fournir des orientations sur le suivi et l'évaluation de l'innovation sociale, y compris une définition des indicateurs relatifs au suivi de l'innovation ainsi que des critères pour l'analyse coûts-avantages ;
- 1.3. Les Services de la Commission devraient envisager des orientations sur les bonnes pratiques pour la validation de l'innovation dans le but d'assister les PO actuels, y compris une définition du processus commun de validation ;
- 1.4. Il existe de bonnes raisons pour lesquelles la principale approche de mise en œuvre du développement de l'innovation pour EQUAL était en règle générale une approche "bottom-up", par exemple, les avantages d'être à proximité du problème, l'implication

<sup>12</sup> Le gender mainstreaming en tant que domaine spécifique d'investigation ne faisait pas partie des Termes de Référence pour cette tâche et n'a été intégré que plus tard dans la recherche.

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des acteurs locaux et régionaux pour examiner les problèmes locaux et régionaux, etc. Pourtant, identifier les “obstacles” dans la politique sociale pour lesquels l’innovation serait bien accueillie, sur base d’une analyse SWOT et de la construction de logiques d’intervention, constituerait une approche complémentaire. Cette approche permettrait d’ajuster les activités, d’assurer l’utilité des innovations et constituerait le point de départ des évaluations et de l’assurance qualité.

- 1.5. Par nature, le développement d’innovations est une entreprise risquée. Elle lui confère une dynamique qui va à l’encontre du principe de garantie de la responsabilisation des acteurs et des résultats (positifs) qui soutient les approches actuelles en matière de gestion des ressources publiques et des stratégies d’audit correspondantes. Mais pour que le développement d’innovations pour l’inclusion sociale fonctionne, il est impératif de s’assurer que tous les risques sont partagés et que le poids d’un échec éventuel (et auquel il faut s’attendre) ne repose pas sur les seules épaules des bénéficiaires. Par conséquent – en cas de développement d’innovations – les critères de réussite et les définitions de résultats garantis doivent être suffisamment élaborés pour que le risque reste gérable - surtout pour des ONG plus petites et financièrement plus fragiles. Sinon, des acteurs essentiels seront exclus de la participation ou choisiront de ne pas participer, résultant en une perte équivalente de potentiel innovant. A cet égard, combiner le cofinancement national, basé sur les mesures classiques du marché du travail (y compris les critères liés à la réussite par exemple pour des stagiaires) – avec un cofinancement européen réservé au développement d’innovations lié au risque pourrait limiter le potentiel à stimuler le nombre et la qualité maximum des innovations. Les AG devraient dès lors tenir compte de la manière dont le cofinancement et d’autres exigences pourraient influencer à la fois la participation des parties prenantes et la qualité générale des innovations.
  - 1.6. Les Services de la Commission devraient capitaliser l’héritage d’EQUAL et d’autres bonnes pratiques existantes pour la validation des innovations, entre autre en ajoutant la définition d’un processus commun de validation comme exigence standard. Il existe déjà de bons exemples relatifs au(x) processus/approches de validation (c’est par exemple le cas du Portugal) et ceux-ci pourraient être analysés dans le but de les transférer et les adapter à d’autres contextes, programmes et/ou pays.
- 2) Les Autorités de Gestion devraient renforcer les orientations à destination des partenaires du projet au sujet de l’innovation.**
- 2.1. Intégrer une analyse des besoins « bottom-up » (impliquant et mobilisant les citoyens et les parties prenantes sur une large échelle) à l’analyse SWOT, opérant ainsi une sensibilisation de manière constante ;
  - 2.2. Concevoir le programme selon une logique d’intervention explicite basée sur un exercice diagnostique préalable, traduite dans les procédures de l’appel d’offres/ appel à propositions. Bien que les approches “bottom-up” soient nécessaires, elles doivent être complétées par une stratégie “top-down” comme l’ont démontré l’expérience de l’intégration de la dimension de genre (gender mainstreaming) et les actions liées à l’égalité entre les hommes et les femmes en général. De même, un « propriétaire » solide en toile de fond doit également soutenir le développement de l’innovation sociale.
  - 2.3. Créer des structures de soutien et mettre en œuvre des activités pour dépasser les barrières traditionnelles entre les ‘silos’ de la politique et des activités sans lien mais potentiellement synergiques. L’échange d’expériences et l’apprentissage mutuel constituent les facteurs clés d’un développement réussi de l’innovation sociale.
  - 2.4. Elaborer et tester les innovations et les valider de manière transparente et détaillée.

- 2.5. Effectuer une analyse coûts-avantages sous des formes appropriées. Quand on envisage une analyse comparative de la réussite d'un programme (en termes d'efficacité et d'efficience), il conviendrait d'en prévoir la comparabilité également en ce qui concerne les structures des coûts en question. Les Services de la Commission devraient dès lors ajouter des orientations pour effectuer une analyse coûts-avantages dans le cadre de l'évaluation.
- 2.6. Elaborer des méthodes d'évaluation convenables y compris des conceptions expérimentales si possible pour effectuer des tests de manière plus rigoureuse tout en gardant à l'esprit que toutes les innovations ne peuvent être testées de cette façon mais que ce test peut être complété par des procédures 'douces' comme un peer-review ou un benchmarking.
- 2.7. Créer un corpus de connaissances à partir d'approches réussies avec des exemples de bonnes pratiques diffusés de manière systématique.
- 2.8. Assurer que le "mainstreaming" et l'accroissement fassent partie intégrante de la conception et du développement de l'innovation.
- 3) Les décideurs et les gouvernements devraient mettre en valeur le « mainstreaming » et le rendre plus opérationnel.**
- 3.1. Les Services de la Commission devraient fournir des orientations sur le "mainstreaming" afin de différencier clairement les activités de "mainstreaming" et de diffusion. Une attention particulière devrait être accordée aux rôles respectifs des partenaires et autres acteurs dans le processus d'intégration (mainstreaming). Si possible, il conviendrait de mettre au point des indicateurs pour guider l'évaluation.
- 3.2. Les Autorités de Gestion devraient élaborer des stratégies d'intégration (mainstreaming) sur le plan thématique, en accord avec le cadre institutionnel, être opérationnelles et s'assurer que la distinction entre diffusion et "mainstreaming" est claire.
- 3.3. Les Autorités de Gestion devraient assister les partenaires du projet à intégrer le "mainstreaming" dès les phases initiales du projet (plutôt que de le considérer comme une action à part), et ce par le biais d'une analyse des parties prenantes identifiant clairement les acteurs sur le plan politique et les impliquant dans le projet, soit en tant que partenaires, soit à travers des contacts sur mesure (par exemple, des briefings spécifiques, des rapports, etc.), le tout complété par une stratégie de "mainstreaming" le plus tôt possible, c'est-à-dire parallèlement au développement du concept du projet
- 3.4. Les Autorités de Gestion devraient élaborer des lignes directrices sur les "avantages" d'un "mainstreaming horizontal", avec un accent particulier mis sur les entreprises: Comment pouvez-vous « vendre » votre innovation/vos idées, etc. à d'autres firmes/organisations ?
- 4) Le travail des Groupes thématiques de travail devrait continuer à rassembler les expériences de la période de programmation actuelle.**
- 4.1. Les Services de la Commission et les Autorités de Gestion devraient maximiser les avantages tirés de l'approche des Groupes thématiques de travail en soutenant activement le travail des groupes et en leur fournissant les moyens adéquats pour la diffusion de leur résultats, notamment dans le contexte politique. La structure et l'orientation des Groupes thématiques peuvent refléter la gamme et la diversité actuelles des actions soutenues au titre de la période de programmation actuelle du FSE et contribuer à l'apprentissage « transnational » pour que la politique sur les plans européen et national soit toujours mise en valeur.



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**Actions à entreprendre au cours de la prochaine période de programmation 2014-2020.**

**5) Assurer une approche holistique et équilibrée en utilisant les enseignements d'EQUAL**

- 5.1. Les Services de la Commission devraient dès lors s'assurer que les Documents d'orientation (pour les autorités de gestion du FSE) pour la nouvelle stratégie européenne 2020 portent une attention particulière à l'importance de la promotion des approches innovantes dans le processus d'inclusion sociale, ainsi que des exigences spécifiques pour consulter les acteurs étatiques et de la société civile.
- 5.2. Les Autorités de Gestion devraient s'assurer que les expériences tirées d'EQUAL soient saisies durant la nouvelle période de planification en ce qui concerne à la fois l'approche et les résultats en termes de bonnes pratiques: a) en obtenant un retour d'information et des contributions de la part des acteurs d'EQUAL; b) en misant sur les réalisations des réseaux thématiques sur les plans national et européen ; et c) en identifiant clairement une série d'enseignements tirés de l'expérience d'EQUAL sur une base ex-post.
- 5.3. En lien direct avec ce qui précède, les Autorités de Gestion des nouveaux Programmes opérationnels du FSE devraient transposer l'expérience d'EQUAL en infrastructures et services de soutien efficaces autant pour les porteurs de projet que pour les administrateurs du FSE ainsi que dans la documentation relative aux appels d'offres et les exigences d'éligibilité. Ceci permettrait aux expériences d'EQUAL non seulement d'être saisies en théorie mais également d'être transférées dans la pratique pour les nouvelles dispositions de financement et de soutien.

**6) Renforcer l'accent mis sur les plus vulnérables par des actions innovantes.**

- 6.1. Les Services de la Commission devraient faire en sorte que ses lignes directrices élaborant les prochains programmes du FSE identifient une série de domaines thématiques à propos d'un nouveau courant d'actions innovantes dans tous les Etats membres de l'UE tout en capitalisant les résultats d'EQUAL. A cette fin, on recommande de se concentrer davantage sur les groupes cibles les plus vulnérables afin de s'attaquer aux problèmes multidimensionnels de l'inclusion sociale et de la cohésion sociale comme le prévoit la Charte des Droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne.
- 6.2. Les Services de la Commission devraient aussi envisager de proposer un nombre limité de domaines thématiques (par rapport aux 9 d'EQUAL) afin de s'assurer la réalisation de la masse critique dans des domaines thématiques prioritaires.

**7) Fournir un espace dédié à l'expérimentation**

- 7.1. Dans le cadre des dispositions en matière d'évaluation pour les PO en cours, les Autorités de Gestion devraient particulièrement envisager d'évaluer le besoin de promouvoir a) l'intégration par des groupes vulnérables et b) l'innovation. Lorsque les taux de participation sont bas, les Autorités de Gestion devraient faire en sorte, si possible, que les nouvelles actions prévoient un espace dédié à l'expérimentation et au test de l'innovation, par exemple, en obtenant un engagement prévoyant d'allouer un pourcentage donné du financement à des actions orientées innovation.

**8) Envisager de réintroduire une action commune pour le développement et l'intégration (mainstreaming) de nouvelles approches**

- 8.1. Les Services de la Commission devraient dès lors envisager le besoin et la possibilité d'un moyen de financement commun qui pourrait créer un nouveau "laboratoire pour le changement social" et qui aurait l'impulsion et les ressources pour mettre au point de nouvelles politiques et approches tout en impliquant des acteurs à plusieurs



niveaux et en mettant l'accent sur l'intégration (mainstreaming) d'innovations validées. Ce nouveau « laboratoire » devrait comporter les caractéristiques suivantes: un accent sur l'innovation, des partenariats à plusieurs niveaux, une sélection de domaines thématiques et l'intégration (mainstreaming).

#### **9) Améliorer les pratiques en matière d'évaluation**

- 9.1. Les Services de la Commission devraient par conséquent améliorer leurs orientations envers les autorités nationales pour faire en sorte que l'évaluation fasse l'objet d'un contrat et soit menée dans les meilleurs délais (s'assurer que l'évaluation puisse guider la programmation à un moment opportun) ; que des résumés standardisés au format long soient accessibles pour faciliter l'analyse multi-pays ; que l'innovation et l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes soient envisagées de façon cohérente (à la fois en termes de fonds alloués et de résultats) ;
- 9.2. Les Autorités de Gestion devraient faire en sorte qu'une stratégie d'évaluation pour la période de programmation soit en place, avec des calendriers clairs à la fois pour les évaluations opérationnelles et stratégiques. Les AG devraient aussi s'assurer du fait que les évaluations fassent l'objet d'un contrat et soient complétées dans les meilleurs délais et que l'information de suivi (y compris les données financières) soit collectée, assemblée et accessible dans les meilleurs délais, c'est-à-dire en accord avec la stratégie/le calendrier en question.

#### **10) Les principes stratégiques d'EQUAL devraient être maintenus pour la période de programmation 2014-2020.**

- 10.1. Les Services de la Commission devraient faire en sorte que les principes de partenariat soient accentués dans les prochaines lignes directrices ce qui pourrait se traduire par une définition claire du partenariat et de son concept opérationnel, ainsi que par des exemples de bonnes pratiques ;
- 10.2. Les Services de la Commission devraient faire en sorte que les principes de participation active (empowerment) soient accentués dans les prochaines lignes directrices ce qui pourrait se traduire par une définition claire de la participation active (empowerment) et de son concept opérationnel, ainsi que par des exemples de bonnes pratiques. Si nécessaire, les critères d'éligibilité pourraient permettre le financement d'actions particulières pour soutenir la participation active (empowerment), par exemple l'amélioration de compétences spécifiques (pour une contribution plus efficace des partenaires au partenariat) ou des activités de mise en réseau pour les ONG ;
- 10.3. Les Autorités de Gestion devraient faire en sorte de transformer les principes de partenariats et de participation active (empowerment) en un élément intégré des nouveaux PO du FSE ;
- 10.4. Les Autorités de Gestion devraient envisager une solution pour impliquer le secteur privé de la meilleure façon dans les futurs programmes du FSE, à la fois en le consultant sur la conception du programme et dans sa mise en œuvre en tant que partenaire, par exemple, dans des projets à parties prenantes multiples.

#### **11) Promouvoir la coopération transnationale en tant qu'opportunité et non comme une exigence nécessaire.**

- 11.1. Les Services de la Commission devraient promouvoir la coopération transnationale comme une possibilité d'apprentissage produisant des avantages et des bénéfices. On pourrait obtenir davantage de flexibilité et une plus grande efficacité si les PO étaient modifiés et proposaient aux bénéficiaires d'ajouter la composante transnationale comme une option plutôt que comme une obligation. Toutefois, cela

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signifierait que les activités transnationales soient acceptées sur les coûts éligibles plutôt que sur une stricte exigence. L'orientation et les enseignements tirés des bonnes pratiques sur la coopération transnationale devraient être diffusés.

**12) Equilibrer la flexibilité dans les partenariats avec un minimum d'exigence de participation.**

- 12.1. Les Autorités de Gestion devraient faire en sorte que lorsque qu'une approche de partenariat est utilisée pour financer des actions et des projets, les partenariats sélectionnés soient flexibles en termes de nombre et de types de partenaires et que l'implication de chacun des partenaires ait un sens et une utilité au sein même du partenariat. Une façon de garantir cela est de demander une preuve de collaboration commune dans la conception du projet et son processus de préparation.
- 12.2. Les Autorités de Gestion devraient s'assurer de la création de structures et de services de soutien. Ceux-ci doivent porter une attention particulière sur la façon dont les partenaires fonctionnent au sein du partenariat et doivent leur prodiguer soutien et assistance en cas de problèmes. Une évaluation continue du fonctionnement des partenaires permettra d'identifier des partenaires peu actifs ou pas impliqués et pourra mettre en place des mécanismes / incitants pour les « remettre sur la bonne voie » ou en fin de compte s'en débarrasser.
- 12.3. Les Autorités de Gestion devraient identifier les enseignements tirés par rapport aux bonnes pratiques pour les partenariats, quand elles sont appliquées, entre les périodes du programme et ajuster les exigences en conséquence.

**13) Continuer à soutenir la mise en réseau sur le plan européen**

- 13.1. Afin de tirer de manière adéquate les enseignements pertinents acquis au cours de la période actuelle du FSE pour guider la politique dans d'autres pays et sur le plan communautaire, les Services de la Commission devraient créer un mécanisme formel pour relier les réseaux thématiques nationaux au niveau de l'UE, où expérience et enseignements seraient partagés et pour développer des synergies. On pourrait mettre à profit les Groupes de travail thématique créés sous EQUAL; certains fonctionnent toujours sous les PO du FSE actuel ou ont été financés en tant que réseaux d'apprentissage au niveau communautaire.
- 13.2. En plus de la création d'un échange flexible et des plateformes d'apprentissage, il conviendrait de fournir un soutien supplémentaire à "ceux qui souhaitent faire davantage", comme fournir et développer davantage les outils et les méthodes pour la mise en réseau, la validation, l'intégration (mainstreaming), l'apprentissage en équipe, etc. Tout ceci pourrait garantir une large et intense participation ainsi qu'un échange de connaissances (à la fois de bonnes et mauvaises pratiques) et pourrait offrir la participation à une audience plus large que ce qui est possible dans des contextes plus formels. Les Autorités de Gestion devraient renforcer les orientations accessibles pour les partenaires du projet par rapport à l'innovation.

## Zusammenfassung

### I. Einleitung

Die Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL wurde im Zeitraum von 2000-2006 aus dem Europäischen Sozialfonds finanziert, um neue Wege der Bekämpfung aller Formen von Diskriminierung und Ungleichbehandlung am Arbeitsmarkt zu erproben. EQUAL war ein wesentlicher Teil der Strategie der Europäischen Union mit dem Ziel Diskriminierung zu bekämpfen, insbesondere hinsichtlich des Geschlechts, der Herkunft und des ethnischen Ursprungs, der Religion oder des Glaubens, Behinderung, Alter oder sexueller Orientierung und sozialer Ausgrenzung. Die Initiative zielte darauf ab, einen Beitrag für die Ziele der Europäische Beschäftigungsstrategie (EBS) und des Prozesses der sozialen Integration zu leisten. Die Leitlinien von EQUAL legten fest, dass die Projekte über Entwicklungspartnerschaften in Zusammenarbeit mit transnationalen Partnern durchgeführt werden sollten. Die Implementierung erfolgte anhand von fünf Bausteinen: Partnerschaft, Stärkung der Handlungskompetenz („Empowerment“), Transnationalität, Innovation und Integration der Ergebnisse in Politik und Praxis („Mainstreaming“). Die Kommission legte neun thematische Aktionsfelder fest, innerhalb derer die Projekte durchgeführt werden. Die Leitlinien von EQUAL legten aus Sicht der Gruppen von Mitgliedsstaaten jene Prioritätsfelder fest, die durch transnationale Kooperationen die Art der Umsetzung ihrer nationalen Politiken verbessern würde.

Die Ex post Evaluierung von EQUAL war Teil der ESF Ex post Evaluierung 2000-2006. Sie wurde von Metis GmbH in Zusammenarbeit mit KANTOR und mit MWH als Subauftragnehmer zwischen Juli und Dezember 2009 durchgeführt und umfasste alle 27 EQUAL Programme der EU25. Die Evaluierung basiert auf fünf Evaluierungsfragen (EF), welche in der Leistungsbeschreibung (Terms of Reference) festgelegt waren. Diese waren:

EF1: Inwiefern waren die getätigten Ausgaben der Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL darauf ausgerichtet, die Hauptziele, welche in der Europäischen Beschäftigungsstrategie und im Prozess der sozialen Integration festgelegt sind, zu erreichen?

EF2: Inwiefern hat die Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL Aktivitäten unterstützt, welche relevante und nützliche Innovationen hervorbrachten, um Diskriminierung und Ungleichheit am Arbeitsmarkt vorzubeugen und zu bekämpfen?

EF3: Inwiefern hat die Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL Aktivitäten unterstützt, welche dazu führten, dass daraus Innovationen auf hoch politischer/institutioneller Ebene aufgegriffen wurden oder/und, dass ein Transfer von Innovation in unterschiedlichen Zusammenhängen stattfand?

EF4: Welche Langzeitwirkungen erwartet sich die Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL?

EF5: Was ist der zusätzliche Nutzen auf Gemeinschaftsebene von EQUAL?

Das Evaluierungsteam bestand aus einem Kernteam von EvaluatorInnen, das für die Entwicklung der Methodik und das Verfassen der Berichte verantwortlich war und einer Informationsgruppe bestehend aus Länder-Experten, welche für die Sekundärforschung und Feldforschung auf nationaler Ebene verantwortlich waren. Ferner waren eine Expertengruppe und eine Fokusgruppe bestehend aus ausgewählten Verwaltungsbehörden damit beauftragt, die Entwürfe des Zwischen- und Endberichts zu kommentieren sowie ihr Expertenwissen für diese Berichte zur Verfügung zu stellen.

### II. Methodische Herangehensweise

Die methodische Herangehensweise für die Ex post Evaluierung basierte auf Programmtheorie, um die Identifizierung der logischen Verbindungen zwischen Leistungen, Ergebnissen und

<sup>14</sup> 1.A. Zugang und Rückkehr auf den Arbeitsmarkt; 1.B. Bekämpfung von Rassismus und Fremdenfeindlichkeit auf dem Arbeitsmarkt; 2.C. Erleichterung der Unternehmensgründung; 2.D. Stärkung der Sozialwirtschaft; 3.E. Förderung des lebenslangen Lernens und einer integrationsfördernden Arbeitsgestaltung; 3.F. Förderung der Anpassungsfähigkeit von Unternehmen und Arbeitnehmern; 4.G. Erleichterung der Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf; 4.H. Abbau von geschlechtsspezifischen Diskrepanzen und Förderung einer Aufhebung der Geschlechtertrennung im Beruf; 5.I. Integration von Asylbewerbern.

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Wirkungen hinsichtlich der spezifischen Ziele des Programmes zu gewährleisten und um die Basis für die Identifizierung von potentiellen Langzeitwirkungen zu schaffen. Es wurden auch zusätzliche, unerwartete Wirkungen berücksichtigt. Die Informationssuche und Datenerhebung für die Ex post Evaluierung beinhaltete sowohl eine Sekundärforschung als auch Feldforschungen sowie zwei Treffen mit der Expertengruppe und eine Fokusgruppe mit Verwaltungsbehörden.

Die erste Phase der Evaluierung bestand aus einer intensiven Sekundärforschung zur Durchführung einer Bestandsaufnahme, welche die Hauptinformationsquelle zur Beantwortung der Evaluierungsfragen darstellte und welche ersten Schlüsselergebnisse brachte.

Vier Tabellen wurden entwickelt:

- Tabelle 1: Darstellung der Projekte
- Tabelle 2: Bestandsaufnahme von validierten Innovationen
- Tabelle 3: Bestandsaufnahme von erfolgreichem Mainstreaming
- Tabelle der Wirkungen

In der zweiten Phase der Forschung wurden Interviews in allen EU25 durchgeführt sowie neun Fallstudien – eine für jedes thematische Feld von EQUAL. Die Interviews wurden auf Basis eines Fragebogens durchgeführt, welcher sich auf die Evaluierungsfragen bezog und erfolgten vor allem mit Verwaltungsbehörden sowie Nationale Unterstützungsstrukturen und in einigen Mitgliedsstaaten auch mit individuellen Entwicklungspartnerschaften (EP).

Die letzte Forschungsphase bestand aus der Analyse der Ergebnisse der Sekundärforschung und der Feldforschung hinsichtlich der Antworten der Evaluierungsfragen sowie in der Auswertung von nützlichen Schlussfolgerungen und Empfehlungen.

### III. Die Ergebnisse der Forschung

Der Eindruck, welcher aus der Recherche und den Interviews entstand, war das EQUAL die Bedingungen zur Generierung einer beträchtlichen Anzahl von Innovationen schaffte, die gefährdeten Gruppen erreichte, Strukturen befähigte mit diesen gefährdeten Gruppen zu arbeiten und die Arbeit in Partnerschaften auf nationaler und sub-nationaler Ebene und innerhalb der EU verbesserte.

Die Evaluierungsergebnisse bezugnehmend auf die Evaluierungsfragen werden kurz gefasst unten dargestellt:

**Evaluierungsfrage 1: Inwiefern waren die getätigten Ausgaben der Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL darauf ausgerichtet, die Hauptziele, welche in der Europäischen Beschäftigungsstrategie und im Prozess der sozialen Integration festgelegt sind, zu erreichen?**

Die Aktivitäten innerhalb von EQUAL fanden in neun thematischen Bereichen<sup>14</sup> statt und waren in fünf Themen<sup>15</sup> gruppiert. Davon entsprachen vier Themen den vier Säulen der Europäischen Beschäftigungsstrategie<sup>16</sup>. Das fünfte Thema betraf die spezifischen Bedürfnisse von Asylbewerbern.

Die Erkenntnisse der Forschung zeigen, dass die Ausgaben von EQUAL auf alle fünf Themen und daher auch auf die Hauptziele der EBS ausgerichtet waren. Selbstverständlich gab es bedeutende Unterschiede hinsichtlich der Verteilung zwischen den thematischen Bereichen.

Thematischer Bereich 1.A (Zugang und Rückkehr auf den Arbeitsmarkt) verzeichnete den größten Anteil von geplanten und getätigten Ausgaben (fast 35%), gefolgt vom thematischen

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<sup>15</sup> Die fünf Themen sind: 1) Stärkung der Beschäftigungsfähigkeit 2) Ermutigung zur unternehmerischen Initiative 3) Ermöglichung von Anpassungsfähigkeit 4) Förderung der Chancengleichheit für Frauen und Männer 5) Integration von Asylbewerbern.

<sup>16</sup> Die vier Säulen sind: 1) Beschäftigungsfähigkeit 2) Unternehmergeist 3) Anpassungsfähigkeit 4) Chancengleichheit

Bereich 2.D (Stärkung der Sozialwirtschaft), 3.E (Förderung des lebenslangen Lernens und einer integrationsfördernden Arbeitsgestaltung) und 3.F (Förderung der Anpassungsfähigkeit von Unternehmen und Arbeitnehmern) mit einem Anteil von je 10%. Die anderen thematischen Bereiche hatten einen Anteil von unter 10%, was durch die Wahl der Politiken in den Mitgliedsländern und durch vorherrschende Arbeitsmarktmaßnahmen zur Förderung der Integration von gefährdeten Gruppen erklärt werden kann.

EQUAL erreichte die vorgesehene Zielgruppe. Die Hauptbegünstigten von EQUAL waren NGOs und öffentliche Verwaltungen, wobei dennoch alle Zielgruppen zumindest in einem der thematischen Bereiche erreicht wurden. Hinsichtlich der Verteilung von Personen in den neun thematischen Bereichen fällt auf, dass die Bereiche 1.A (Zugang und Rückkehr auf den Arbeitsmarkt) und 1.B (Bekämpfung von Rassismus) am meisten von Migranten/ethnischen Minoritäten abgedeckt wurden, während Menschen mit Beeinträchtigungen und benachteiligte Personen hauptsächlich dem thematischen Feld 1.A zuzuordnen waren.

Die Ausgaben von EQUAL hatten im Vergleich zu anderen Finanzierungsquellen einen geringeren Stellenwert was die Beteiligung an der Zielerreichung der Europäischen Beschäftigungsstrategie (EBS) und der Sozialen Integration in quantitativer Hinsicht betrifft. Ziel von EQUAL war es auch nicht mit dem regulären ESF und nationalen Fördermitteln zu konkurrieren, sondern innovative Lösungen hinsichtlich der wichtigsten Themen der EBS zu fördern. Dementsprechend wurden die spezifische Struktur, die Instrumente und Ziele von EQUAL, z.B. das Hervorbringen von Innovationen, die Verpflichtung in Partnerschaften zu arbeiten, das Netzwerken, das Capacity Building, etc. errichtet. Dadurch sollte ein Beitrag für die notwendigen Voraussetzungen geleistet werden, um die Ziele der EBS und der Sozialen Integration zu erreichen.

EQUAL leistete auch einen Beitrag zur sich entwickelnden Debatte über Beschäftigung, Soziale Integration und nachhaltige Entwicklung und hat dadurch die Entwicklung der wichtigsten EU Politiken und Strategien beeinflusst. EQUAL hat bei der Integration der EBS, der Sozialen Integration und Strategien zur nachhaltigen Entwicklung vor Ort mitgewirkt, nämlich durch die Stärkung der lokalen Dimension der EBS und durch die Integration von unterschiedlichen Ansätzen (z.B. lokale Beschäftigung und Entwicklungsinitiativen, lokale Wohlfahrtssysteme). EQUAL verdeutlichte, dass Wachstum und Beschäftigung notwendig waren, aber nicht ausreichend um Einkommensunterschiede, regionale Unterschiede, geschlechtsspezifische und ethnische Unterschiede oder Haushalte mit geringem Einkommen zu bekämpfen.

Um darüber hinaus die EBS zu unterstützen, hatte EQUAL nationale Politiken wirksam ergänzt, in dem eine zusätzliche politische Anstrengung unternommen wurde, um Regionen anzusprechen, in denen nationale Politiken fragmentiert waren oder bestimmte Ziel- oder Risikogruppen nicht gedeckt waren.

Konkret könnte gesagt werden, dass die EBS und der Prozess der Sozialen Integration die politischen Rahmenbedingungen schaffen, während EQUAL die geeigneten Instrumente zur Verfügung stellte, um Innovation zu stimulieren sowie gegenseitiges Lernen und Veränderung vor Ort zu fördern.

**Evaluierungsfrage 2: Inwiefern hat die Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL Aktivitäten unterstützt, welche relevante und nützliche Innovationen hervorbrachte, um Diskriminierung und Ungleichheit am Arbeitsmarkt vorzubeugen und zu bekämpfen?**

Das operative Ziel von EQUAL war es durch innovative Ansätze, soziale Ausgrenzung und Diskriminierung am Arbeitsplatz zu bekämpfen. In der Evaluierung wurden über 900 validierte Innovationen identifiziert. Ein wenig mehr als ein Drittel davon wurde in Politiken oder als Standard für Akteure integriert. Ferner wurden davon mehr als 200 Fälle mit Langzeitwirkungen identifiziert. Dieses bemerkenswerte Ergebnis ist ein guter Indikator dafür, dass im Rahmen von EQUAL „relevante und nützliche“ Innovationen entwickelt, getestet, transferiert und nachhaltig integriert („gemainstreamt“) wurden.

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Im Allgemeinen korreliert die Anzahl von Innovationen pro thematischem Bereich mehr oder weniger mit der Höhe von getätigten Ausgaben per thematischem Feld. Es entspricht auch der Anzahl von Entwicklungspartnerschaften, die an diesen Themen arbeiten. Es ist daher nicht überraschend, dass die meisten Innovationen (35%) aus dem thematischen Bereich 1.A (Zugang und Rückkehr auf den Arbeitsmarkt) hervorgingen und die wenigsten (5% beziehungsweise 6%) aus den thematischen Bereichen 5.I (Asylwerber) und 1.B (Bekämpfung von Rassismus und Fremdenfeindlichkeit auf dem Arbeitsmarkt). Interessanterweise ergibt der Vergleich zwischen der Anzahl von Innovationen und der Höhe der Ausgaben und/oder die Anzahl von EPs, die in diesen Bereichen arbeiten, dass die thematischen Bereiche 4.G (Erleichterung der Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf) und 5.I (Asylwerber) besonders gut abschneiden, z.B. wurden vergleichsweise mehr Innovationen entwickelt als in anderen Bereichen. Das könnte dadurch erklärt werden, dass Aktionen für Asylwerber und jene in den Bereichen work-life balance in einigen Mitgliedsstaaten relativ neu sind und es dort daher einen größeren Wirkungsbereich für Innovationen gibt. Der vergleichsweise geringe Erfolg im Bereich 3.E. (Lebenslanges Lernen) lässt sich dadurch begründen, dass bereits viele innovative Ansätze in diesem Bereich in der Vergangenheit umgesetzt wurden und, dass das Potential für mehr Innovationen geringer war, als in einem Bereich, wo noch sehr wenig umgesetzt wurde.

Betrachtet man die Typen von Innovationen die generiert wurden, so werden etwa 10% als solche eingeordnet, die mehr oder weniger aus anderen Kontexten eingeführt und implementiert wurden, 37% aktiv angepasst, welche sich in anderen Kontexten als nützlich erwiesen haben und die Mehrheit (53%) waren neu entwickelte Innovationen.

Die große Mehrheit (71%) der Innovationen betrafen die Entwicklung von neuen Ansätzen und Methoden sowie die Verbesserung bereits existierender Innovationen (prozessorientierte Innovation). Diese beinhalteten in erster Linie allgemeine „Capacity building“ Projekte, z.B. die Entwicklung neuer Trainingsmaßnahmen und Curricula. 20% der Innovationen nahmen Bezug auf politische und staatliche Strukturen sowie auf Systementwicklung und beinhalteten die Entwicklung neuer Kooperationsstrukturen (kontextorientierte Innovation). 11% bezogen sich auf die Formulierung neuer Ziele einschließlich der Identifizierung von neuen Qualifikationen, neuen Berufsprofilen und die Erschließung neuer Beschäftigungsbereiche (zielorientierte Innovation).

**Evaluierungsfrage 3: Inwiefern hat die Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL Aktivitäten unterstützt, welche dazu führten, dass daraus Innovationen auf hoch politischer/institutioneller Ebene aufgegriffen wurden oder/und, dass ein Transfer von Innovation in unterschiedlichen Zusammenhängen stattfand?**

Die Evaluierung verwendete eine strenge Definition von Mainstreaming im Sinne der Aufnahme in oder der Einfluss auf Innovation auf Politik und Praxis auf staatlich-politischer, regulativer oder administrativer Ebene. Es wurde zwischen unterschiedlichen Typen von Mainstreaming unterschieden:

1. Vertikales nationales Mainstreaming: Transfer von Lerninhalten (Lessons learnt) und Integration aller oder Teile von Ergebnissen in Politiken und Praxis auf staatlicher, politischer, regulativer oder administrativer Ebene. Hier suchten wir einen deutlichen Hinweis zur Übernahme auf nationale Ebene.
2. Horizontales nationales Mainstreaming: Transfer von Lessons learnt zu ähnlichen Organisationen auf nationaler oder regionaler Ebene. Der Transfer kann spezifisch sein (z.B. ein spezielles Instrument) oder umfassend (z.B. Beitrag zur Änderung einer Gewohnheit). In diesem Fall wird regional eher im nationalen als im transnationalen Kontext verstanden.
3. Horizontales transnationales Mainstreaming: Transfer von Lessons learnt und Integration der Ergebnisse oder Teile davon in Politiken und in die Praxis zwischen Mitgliedsstaaten, Sozialpartner und der Europäischen Kommission.



4. Vertikales transnationales Mainstreaming: Innovationen/Ergebnisse beeinflussen die staatliche, politische oder regulative Umwelt in anderen Mitgliedsstaaten oder auf Ebene der Europäischen Kommission.
5. Aufrechterhaltung/Fortführung: Ergebnisse von Innovationen werden fortgeführt oder aufrecht erhalten von den direkten Stakeholders.

Fast 500 Fälle von Mainstreaming wurden identifiziert und nicht alle davon standen in Verbindung zu spezifischen Innovationen. Genauer betrachtet konnten ungefähr 60% aller Mainstreaming Fälle eindeutig zu spezifischen Innovationen zugeordnet werden. Das verdeutlicht die Unterscheidung zwischen Aktion 2 (Projektdurchführung) und Aktion 3 (Mainstreaming) im EQUAL Leitfadens. Die Ergebnisse der Interviews zeigten eine große Unschärfe hinsichtlich des Umgangs mit dem Mainstreaming, besonders auf Seite der Projektträger aber auch auf Seite der Verwaltungsbehörden. Während die Beiträge und Ergebnisse klar definiert waren, blieben die Aktivitäten, die zu jenen Ergebnissen führten unklar, im Besonderen was die Unterscheidung zwischen Mainstreaming und Verbreitung betrifft. Angesichts dessen, dass kein analytischer Rahmen für das Mainstreaming vorliegt, welcher die Evaluierung desselben erleichtern würde, schlägt der Endbericht eine Anzahl von Kriterien für einen solchen Rahmen vor.

Die Mehrzahl der identifizierten Mainstreaming Fälle (39%) waren dem horizontalen Mainstreaming auf nationaler Ebene zuzuordnen, 25% dem vertikalen Mainstreaming auf nationalem Level, 20% der Aufrechterhaltung/Fortführung und 4% dem horizontalen Mainstreaming auf transnationaler Ebene. Eine vernachlässigbare Anzahl war dem vertikalen Mainstreaming auf transnationaler Ebene zuzuordnen und 12% konnten keinem speziellen Mainstreaming Typ zugewiesen werden. Hinsichtlich der Verantwortung für Mainstreaming stellte sich heraus, dass von individuellen EP nur erwartet werden konnte, dass diese Produkte zwischen Projektpartnern und Organisationen auf gleicher Ebene transferieren (horizontales Mainstreaming), während der Transfer von good practice in Politik (vertikales Mainstreaming) in der Verantwortung von Verwaltungsbehörden und Nationalen Unterstützungsstrukturen liegen sollte. In Wirklichkeit liegt die Verantwortung für vertikales Mainstreaming oft bei den EP, möglicherweise auf Grund der Annahme, dass wenn öffentliche Behörden als strategische Partner einbezogen werden, sie vertikales Mainstreaming umsetzen würden. Tatsächlich haben aber viele der *strategischen Partner*<sup>17</sup> eine eher passive Rolle. Indessen wurden in jenen Fällen, in denen öffentliche Behörden als *operative Partner*<sup>18</sup> involviert waren, bessere Mainstreaming Ergebnisse erzielt.

Die identifizierten Schlüsselfaktoren, welche Mainstreaming ermöglichten, waren:

- Politisches Engagement und „zu eigen machen“ (Ownership)
- Mainstreaming Pläne welche zu einem frühen Zeitpunkt der Projektlaufzeit entwickelt wurden
- Nationale thematische Arbeitsgruppen
- Das strategische Instrument der „Partnerschaft“
- Unterstützung von regionaler technischer Hilfe hinsichtlich der Operationalisierung des Mainstreamings

Die Evaluierung betrachtete die Ergebnisse des Mainstreamings als **mittelfristige Wirkung**. Verweise auf mittelfristige Wirkungen konnten bei 221 Mainstreaming Fällen identifiziert werden. Bei 141 (etwa 64%) dieser Fälle konnte ein Bezug zu einer Innovation und zum entsprechenden thematischen Bereich hergestellt werden, wobei 26% davon auf den thematischen Bereich 1.A (Erleichterung des Zugangs und Rückkehr auf den Arbeitsmarkt) und 11% auf 4.G

17 Die Rolle von strategischen Partnern ist es, einen Beitrag bei der Implementierung der Projekte zu leisten, indem sie Beratung und politische Unterstützung beim Design, bei der Koordinierung und der Entwicklung von Aktionen der EP zur Verfügung stellen. Ferner dürfen sie auch eine „Botschafter“ Funktion einnehmen.

18 Die Rolle von operativen Partnern ist es, das Management und die Implementierung der Projekte in ihrem jeweiligen Verantwortungsbereich sicherzustellen.



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(Erleichterung der Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf) fielen. Da einige der Mainstreaming Fälle mehrere Wirkungen hervorriefen, belief sich die Gesamtzahl der mittelfristigen Wirkungen auf 253. Darunter überwiegen die politischen Wirkungen mit einem Anteil von 41%, gefolgt von Wirkungen auf institutioneller Ebene mit 31% und Wirkungen bei Organisationen mit einem Anteil von 28%.

Hinsichtlich der **politischen Wirkungen** ist es schwierig, jene Änderungen im politischen und rechtlichen Umfeld direkt EQUAL zuzuordnen. Neue Gesetze oder Gesetzesänderungen wurden auf jeden Fall eingeführt. Auch wenn EQUAL alleine keine Gesetzesänderungen veranlasste, so hat es zweifelsohne diese verstärkt, z.B. durch das Angebot stärkere Nachweise und Argumente einzubringen oder durch die Steuerung der Änderungen. In vielen Fällen haben EQUAL Projekte und/oder thematische Arbeitsgruppen Lobbying für Gesetzesänderungen betrieben.

Das Design der neuen Operationellen Programme (OP) des ESF für 2007-2013 war eindeutig von EQUAL beeinflusst, da einige EQUAL Verwaltungsbehörden auch in dieser Programmperiode 2007-2013 mitgewirkt haben. ESF Verwaltungsbehörden, welche regulative Vorgaben transnationaler Kooperationen und Innovationen unter ihren Operationellen Programmen des ESF in bestimmte Abläufe übertragen haben, könnten davon folgendermaßen profitieren:

- Eine Anzahl an Aufzeichnungen für Leitfäden zur Umsetzung von EQUAL Schlüsselprinzipien, welche von einer Gruppe von ESF/EQUAL Verwaltungsbehörden verfasst wurden
- Erfahrung und Wissen, welche EQUAL Verwaltungsbehörden generieren könnten
- Politische Angebote, entwickelt von transnationalen Arbeitsgruppen, wurden häufig von Stakeholders aufgegriffen und durch ihre Beteiligung als Partner in die Programmprozesse der OPs eingeführt

Hinsichtlich der institutionellen Wirkungen konnten einerseits Veränderungen bei Bildungs- und Trainingssystemen und andererseits bei Vermittlungseinrichtungen des Arbeitsmarkts und deren Prozesse festgestellt werden. Diese machen mehr als 50% der identifizierten Fälle institutioneller Wirkungen aus. Im Gegensatz zu politischen Wirkungen haben mehr als die Hälfte der institutionellen Wirkungen auf regionaler und lokaler Ebene stattgefunden. Die häufigsten institutionellen Wirkungen im Bereich der Bildungs- und Trainingssysteme entstanden durch das Design neuer Veränderungen von bestehenden Curricula/Trainingsprogrammen; durch Änderungen im Inhalt und Prioritäten von Trainingsprogrammen – besonders hinsichtlich der Integration neuer Zielgruppen; durch neue Zertifizierungsmechanismen für berufliche Qualifikationen sowie durch neue Bildungs- und Trainingsstrukturen. Die häufigsten Wirkungen im Bereich Vermittlungseinrichtungen des Arbeitsmarktes stellte die verbesserte Koordination zwischen den Akteuren dar, besonders hinsichtlich der Zusammenarbeit der lokalen Arbeitsmarktservices mit anderen Sozialeinrichtungen; Veränderungen in der Arbeitsweise dieser Strukturen, z.B. betreffend der Prozesse; verbesserte Organisation der Arbeitsmarktservices; integrierte Integrationspfade und die Identifikation neuer Zielgruppen. Manchmal waren auch neu entstandene Arbeitsmarktunterstützungsstrukturen und Rahmenbedingungen direkte Ergebnisse der Arbeit der Entwicklungspartnerschaften.

In einigen Mitgliedsstaaten war EQUAL proaktiv was die Anpassung, Entwicklung und Verbreitung von Instrumenten für ESF Manager und Projektträger betraf. Manche davon wurden transnational „gemainstreamt“, entweder durch bilateralen Transfer oder durch ihre Integration in allgemeine Leitfäden und Abläufe (z.B. Instrumente für Einrichtungen des ESF um eine Mainstreamingstrategie zu entwickeln, oder Instrumente für Projektträger um Managementtechniken zur Anwendung innerhalb des Projektzyklus).

Betreffend der Veränderungen in den regulativen Arbeitsregelungen war EQUAL weniger erfolgreich, möglicherweise auf Grund der Zeit, welche derartige Änderungen bedürfen und der Komplexität der Prozesse, einen Konsensus der Sozialpartner zu finden. Im Bereich

Unterstützung bei der Unternehmensgründung, konnte in jenen Fällen ein Bezug zu EQUAL hergestellt werden, in denen gefährdete Gruppen besonders angesprochen wurden, z.B. durch neue Beratungsdienstleistungen.

Unter den **Wirkungen bei Organisationen** waren die Dokumentation und die jeweiligen Anzeichen für Veränderungen zumeist unvollständig. Wenn Wirkungen beschrieben wurden, bezogen sich diese auf Partner der EP, welche einige Methoden/Praktiken weiterführten. Allerdings gab es keine gravierenden Anzeichen, dass durch EQUAL Verhalten bei Arbeitgeber verändert werden konnte, außer möglicherweise bei Maßnahmen zum Gender Mainstreaming, wie dies von der österreichischen Fallstudie hervorging (POP UP GEM).

Sensibilisierungskampagnen, welche in einigen Ländern durchgeführt wurden, z. B. jene über „Fähigkeiten von Menschen mit Behinderungen“ könnten ebenso einige Änderungen herbeigeführt haben. Allerdings sind dies auf Grund fehlender Evaluierungen lediglich Spekulationen. Die geringe Anzahl an Wirkungen bei Organisationen und die wenigen Bezugspunkte, welche in der vorhandenen Dokumentation zum privaten Sektor vorliegen erlauben zwei unterschiedliche Interpretationen: entweder ein Versagen des horizontalen Mainstreamings im privaten Sektor oder mangelhafte Nachweise.

#### **Evaluierungsfrage 4: Welche Langzeitwirkungen erwartet sich die Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL?**

Im Zuge der Evaluierung wurden mögliche Langzeitwirkungen anhand von Interviews untersucht, welche in die Programme im Rahmen des ESF für die nächste Laufzeit aufgenommen werden können.

EQUAL hatte eine Wirkung auf ESF Programme in zweierlei Hinsicht: die durch EQUAL gewonnenen Erfahrungen führten zur Aufnahme einiger oder aller EQUAL Prinzipien in die Operationellen Programme für 2007 und 2013. Die häufigsten Prinzipien sind Partnerschaft, Transnationalität und Chancengleichheit für Frauen und Männer und in geringerem Umfang das Prinzip der Innovation, wobei Innovation schwieriger aufzunehmen ist, da diese eine systematische und rigorose Validierung oder das Experimentieren voraussetzen, was in den meisten OP nicht vorgesehen ist. EQUAL hat ebenso das Bewusstsein der relevanten Akteure und Entscheidungsträger hinsichtlich der Existenz und der Bedürfnisse bestimmter Zielgruppen, insbesondere Asylbewerber, Migranten und ethnische Minderheiten (speziell Roma) und ehemaliger Gefängnisinsassen gesteigert. Diese Gruppen wurden zuvor in einigen Mitgliedsstaaten nicht ausreichend angesprochen, da ihre Integration in Arbeitsmarktpolitiken und –maßnahmen durch rechtliche Rahmenbedingungen und Vorurteile verhindert waren. Trotzdem, mit Ausnahme einiger Länder, in denen weitangelegte Medienkampagnen durchgeführt wurden, gibt es keine allgemeine und nachvollziehbare Änderungen im öffentlichen Diskurs betreffend der gefährdeten Gruppen.

Die Erfahrung zeigt, dass das Erreichen von Wirkungen länger braucht, wenn diese eine Veränderung der Denk- oder Lebensweise betreffen und sie weniger Zeit beanspruchen, wenn lediglich „technische“ Veränderungen stattfinden. Ebenso brauchen Veränderungen mehr Zeit, wenn die Gesellschaft als Ganzes betroffen ist, als Veränderungen, welche sich auf bestimmte Sektoren beziehen.

Eine der Hauptfragen welche aufkam, bezog sich darauf, ob die Weiterführung der Politiken und Modelle, welche unter EQUAL entwickelt wurden, von der Fortführung ähnlicher Programme wie EQUAL abhängt, oder ob die Implementierung einiger weniger EQUAL Prinzipien in den Operationellen Programmen des ESF reichen würde. Es scheint eher alles darauf hinzudeuten, dass die Langzeitwirkungen von EQUAL hinsichtlich der Situation von gefährdeten Gruppen nicht so hoch sein werden, wenn bestimmte Provisionen für die Weiterführung von EQUAL-ähnlichen Aktivitäten oder deren Integration in nationale oder regionale Mainstream Programmen mit klaren Zielen sowie ein eigenes Budget gewährleistet wird. Darüber hinaus ist

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die Situation der gefährdeten Gruppen – und selbstverständlich aller anderen Gruppen am Arbeitsmarkt – vor allem durch den Wirtschaftskreislauf und die vorherrschenden öffentlichen Politiken in den entsprechenden Kontexten beeinträchtigt. Es wird daher in den meisten Mitgliedsstaaten davon ausgegangen, dass die Wirtschaftskrise besonders negative Wirkungen auf die Situation von gefährdeten Gruppen haben wird. Allerdings werden die durch EQUAL kreierten neuen Koalitionen nicht verschwinden, auch nicht in Zeiten der Wirtschaftskrise. Der Engpass an öffentlichen Fördermitteln und der Bedarf neue Lösungen für bestehende Probleme zu finden, könnte auch die Entwicklung, das Testen und Mainstreaming von innovativen Lösungen stimulieren und daher Veränderungen unterstützen und beschleunigen. Die meisten der bisher erfolgten Gemeinschaftsinitiativen wurden durch die Förderung von innovativen Lösungen in Zeiten des wirtschaftlichen Rückgangs angestoßen. Typische EQUAL Aktivitäten stellten Lösungen zur Verfügung, welche in der gegenwärtigen Rezession Langzeitwirkungen hervorrufen können.

#### **Evaluierungsfrage 5: Was ist der zusätzliche Nutzen auf Gemeinschaftsebene von EQUAL?**

Zusätzlicher Nutzen auf Gemeinschaftsebene (Community Added Value - CAV) ist ein zentrales Thema der Rechtmäßigkeit und der Legitimierung einer Politikmaßnahme auf europäischer Ebene, entweder in einer zentralistischen Form oder in der offenen Methode der Koordinierung, in welcher die EU eine aktive Rolle hinsichtlich der Förderung neuer Politik- und Governanceansätze einnimmt. Das war daher ein wichtiges Thema in der Ex post Evaluierung von EQUAL. Unserer Ansicht nach setzt CAV mehr als ein positives Ergebnis von Programmaktivitäten voraus. Es muss also ein zusätzlicher Gewinn sein, welcher in Verbindung steht mit dem was EQUAL ausmacht und sich daher von standardisierten Aktivitäten unterscheidet.

EQUAL hat zweifelsohne einen Meilenstein erreicht, indem konzeptionelle und finanzielle Rahmenbedingungen für gegenseitiges Lernen und Experimentieren im Bereich Politiken zu sozialer Integration in Zusammenhang mit dem Arbeitsmarkt zur Verfügung gestellt worden sind, nämlich hinsichtlich des Umfangs von Aktivitäten und der Struktur sowie Methoden der Leistungserbringung.

Die Anforderungen von EQUAL hinsichtlich Innovation, Partnerschaft und transnationaler Kooperation stellen einen ersten Schritt eines zusätzlichen Nutzens auf Gemeinschaftsebene dar, da sie die Entwicklungspartnerschaften dazu „gezwungen“ haben zu kooperieren und neue Ideen zu entwickeln. Die Auswahlkriterien und die Implementierungsvorgaben der EQUAL Leitlinien riefen einen zusätzlichen Gewinn hervor, welcher anhand der existierenden Ansätze der Arbeitsmarktpolitik oder Standards des ESF nicht möglich gewesen wäre.

Es waren grundlegende Unterschiede zwischen EQUAL und den meisten nationalen oder regionalen Programmen und Maßnahmen in den meisten Mitgliedsstaaten im Rahmen des ESF zu verzeichnen. Diese betrafen vor allem EQUALs Schwerpunkt auf Innovation und die strategischen Prinzipien der Partnerschaft, Transnationalität und Empowerment. Sie brachten einen völlig neuen Ansatz sich mit Ungleichheiten am Arbeitsmarkt zu befassen. Auf Grund der finanziellen Förderungen und den strategischen Zielen konnten durch EQUAL thematische Bereiche aufgegriffen sowie Projekte darin finanziert werden, welche ansonsten vernachlässigt gewesen wären.

Die zusätzliche Finanzierung von manchen Maßnahmen und Zielgruppen stellten einen zusätzlichen Nutzen als solches dar, im Besonderen in kleinen und ökonomisch schwächeren Mitgliedsstaaten (Nettoempfänger). Der neue und stärker integrierte Ansatz hinsichtlich der Durchführung von Dienstleistungen und Politikentwicklung anhand Innovation und Mainstreaming wurde oft als relevanter empfunden, als lediglich die Aufbringung von Mittel. Ebenso hoch geschätzt war die Möglichkeit, dass Organisationen unterschiedlicher Sektoren

und mit unterschiedlichen Verantwortlichkeiten auf Grund von EQUAL zusammenkamen, die zuvor nie miteinander kooperiert hätten.

Nicht nur die organisatorischen und verfahrenstechnischen Aspekte der Arbeit innerhalb von EQUAL boten die Möglichkeiten an zu lernen, welche ansonsten nicht stattgefunden hätten. Es wurden auch die Anwendungsbereiche von Politiken erweitert, nämlich durch Möglichkeiten (und Anreize) neue Zielgruppen zu erreichen (z.B. Migranten, Asylbewerber, ehemalige Häftlinge, Selbstständige, Sozialunternehmen, heimatlose Personen, Opfer von Menschenhandel, ehemalige Drogenabhängige), ihre Probleme sichtbar zu machen und Instrumente dafür zu entwickeln und anzupassen.

Die Schaffung neuer Aktivitätsbereiche und -arten sowie Verbindungen von Aktivitäten durch z.B. die öffentliche Verwaltung, NGOs und Individuen waren häufig auf EQUAL zurückzuführen. Unternehmensgründungen und Selbstständigkeit bei jungen Leuten, ethnischen Minderheiten und Frauen (letztere vor allem in isolierten ländlichen Gebieten) wurden oft auf neue Art unterstützt. Zum Beispiel wurde die Verbesserung der Arbeitsfähigkeit nicht nur mehr durch Innovation im Rahmen von Training und Wiederqualifizierungssystemen und -methoden, sondern auch durch eine Art von integrierten Aktivitäten (Training, Beratung, Seminare, etc.) umgesetzt, wobei dafür eine Bandbreite von benachteiligten Zielgruppen angesprochen wurde. Auch innerhalb der Säule Unternehmensgründung lag die Priorität auf den Dritten Sektor mit einer noch nie dagewesenen Teilnahme von NGOs.

Es stellte sich heraus, dass das Prinzip der Partnerschaft eines der effektivsten und beliebtesten Faktoren von EQUAL war. Auch die relativ hohen Koordinierungskosten wurden als akzeptabel betrachtet, da die positiven Effekte des Partnerschaftsansatzes, vor allem auf lokalem, regionalem und nationalem Level erkannt wurden. Die allgemeine Meinung hinsichtlich transnationaler Partnerschaften wurde ambivalent betrachtet, sie wurden aber trotzdem dahingehend bewertet, dass sie zusätzliches Know-how und Erfahrung sowie neue Arten, die Dinge zu betrachten, herbeiführte.

#### **IV. Schlussfolgerungen**

Die Schlussfolgerungen sind in zwei Abschnitte unterteilt: allgemeine Schlussfolgerungen zu dem Design und der Leistung und spezifische Schlussfolgerungen zu den fünf Evaluierungsfragen. Diese liefern zusammen die nötige Basis für die Empfehlungen.

##### **Allgemeine Schlussfolgerungen**

Die folgenden Schlussfolgerungen beziehen sich allgemein auf das Design und die Leistung von EQUAL:

1. EQUAL war äußerst erfolgreich darin, die Entwicklung und das Mainstreaming einer großen Anzahl von Innovationen anzustoßen, und lieferte durch diese Ergebnisse aber auch durch die innovative und partizipative Umsetzung seiner Aktivitäten einen Community Added Value.
2. Das Design von EQUAL erwies sich als besonders geeignet, die Bedürfnisse der Zielgruppen, Fachleute und politischen Akteure anzusprechen und zeigte die Wirksamkeit des Partnerschaftsansatzes.
3. EQUAL trug zur Gleichberechtigungsagenda bei, in dem es zeigte, wie wichtig ein ganzheitlicher Ansatz für die Bekämpfung sozialer Ausgrenzung ist.
4. EQUAL war ein wichtiges Befähigungsinstrument, insbesondere für die EU8/10.
5. Es besteht weiterhin der Bedarf, auf den im Rahmen von EQUAL gemachten Erfahrungen aufzubauen und weiterhin Innovationen zu fördern sowie Diskriminierungen am Arbeitsplatz zu bekämpfen.

### Spezifische Schlussfolgerungen

Die folgenden Schlussfolgerungen beziehen sich auf die Evaluierungsfragen:

**Evaluierungsfrage 1: Inwiefern waren die getätigten Ausgaben der Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL darauf ausgerichtet, die Hauptziele, welche in der Europäischen Beschäftigungsstrategie und im Prozess der sozialen Integration festgelegt sind, zu erreichen?**

1. EQUAL war effektiv auf die EBS und auf die Ziele der Sozialen Integration ausgerichtet:  
Die Analyse der getätigten Ausgaben bestätigt eine Ausrichtung der Mittel nach den Zielen der EBS. Demzufolge wurde EQUAL wie beabsichtigt eingesetzt und erzielte gute Ergebnisse.
2. Die Methodologie von EQUAL trug aktiv zur Koordinierung von Politikbereichen bei:  
EQUAL trug durch seine besondere Methodologie und strategischen Instrumente zu wirksamen Aktionen und zur Koordinierung von Politikbereichen bei.
3. EQUAL stärkte die lokale Dimension der EBS:  
Die EBS und der Prozess der Sozialen Integration lieferten den politischen Rahmen, während EQUAL ein geeignetes Instrument darstellte, durch das Integrieren verschiedener Ansätze (z.B. Beschäftigungs- und Entwicklungsinitiativen oder lokale Sozialhilfesysteme) Veränderungen an Ort und Stelle anzustoßen und zu unterstützen.
4. EQUAL stellte sowohl eine Verknüpfung mit nationalen Politikbereichen als auch einen gesonderten Politikbereich dar:  
EQUAL richtete sich an Bereiche, in denen nationale Politik fragmentiert in Erscheinung tritt oder wo bestimmte Zielgruppen nicht angesprochen werden.

**Evaluierungsfrage 2: Inwiefern hat die Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL Aktivitäten unterstützt, welche relevante und nützliche Innovationen hervorbrachten, um Diskriminierung und Ungleichheit am Arbeitsmarkt vorzubeugen und zu bekämpfen?**

5. EQUAL entwickelte eine hohe Anzahl an nützlichen Innovationen, insbesondere neue und prozessbezogene Innovationen:  
Die Gesamtzahl von 924 Innovationen, von denen ein erheblicher Anteil die Möglichkeit des Mainstreamings oder ein bereits erfolgreiches Mainstreaming aufwies, ist ein beachtliches Ergebnis und ein guter Hinweis darauf, dass etwas „sinnvolles und nützliches“ im Rahmen von EQUAL geschaffen worden ist.
6. Die strategischen Instrumente und insbesondere die Partnerschaften waren wichtige Einflussfaktoren für Innovationen:  
Besonders ist die wichtige Rolle der Partnerschaften für die Entwicklung, Validierung und das Mainstreaming von Innovationen hervorzuheben. Der Schwerpunkt von EQUAL lag auf den Innovationen und der Fähigkeit, durch die strategischen Instrumente die Bedingungen für den Anstoß und das Erfassen von Innovationen zu schaffen. EQUAL stellte ein Labor mit relativ geringem Risiko dar. Nichtsdestotrotz kann EQUAL nicht als ein „echtes“ Labor für soziale Innovationen (mit klaren Designparametern, Kontrollgruppen etc.) erachtet werden, sondern eher als innovativer Ansatz für das Lösen von Problemen mit dem gewünschten aber nicht zwangsläufigen Ergebnis für die Weiterentwicklung der Politik daraus zu lernen. Trotzdem hat EQUAL den Schwerpunkt auf das Identifizieren und Erfassen von Innovationen („Produkten“) gelegt und hat dadurch eine wertvolle Grundlage für politische Entscheidungsträger und Fachleute innerhalb der Union gelegt.

**Evaluierungsfrage 3: Inwiefern hat die Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL Aktivitäten unterstützt, welche dazu führten, dass daraus Innovationen auf hoch politischer/ institutioneller Ebene aufgegriffen wurden oder/und, dass ein Transfer von Innovation in unterschiedlichen Zusammenhängen stattfand?**

7. EQUAL hat ein hohes Niveau der Aufnahme und des Transfers von Innovationen entwickelt:  
Eine beachtliche Anzahl von Mainstreaming-Fällen fand auf horizontaler und vertikaler Ebene statt.
8. Es bestand eine gewisse Unsicherheit wie mit dem Thema Mainstreaming in der Praxis umgegangen werden müsse:  
Trotz der hohen Anzahl von Mainstreaming-Fällen und Anstrengungen der Kommission den Verwaltungsbehörden und Entwicklungspartnerschaften Anleitungen zu geben, weist die Analyse auch darauf hin, dass eine große Unsicherheit seitens der Verwaltungsbehörden und Entwicklungspartnerschaften bestand, wie mit dem Thema Mainstreaming in der Praxis umzugehen wäre. Das Fehlen eines Analyserahmens für Mainstreaming bedeutete gleichfalls, dass es schwierig war dies zu evaluieren.
9. Es wird als notwendig erachtet, Mainstreaming über den ganzen Zyklus hinweg, insbesondere zu Beginn, zu integrieren:  
Die Evaluierung hebt die Notwendigkeit hervor, Mainstreaming zu einem frühen Zeitpunkt zu integrieren sowie die Wichtigkeit des Engagements und der "ownership" der politischen Entscheidungsträger.
10. EQUAL erzielte eine signifikante Anzahl von mittelfristigen Wirkungen als Ergebnis des Mainstreamings der validierten Innovationen:  
EQUAL erzielte mittelfristige Wirkungen auf politischer, institutioneller und organisatorischer Ebene. Wirkungen auf Politikbereiche, zu denen die meisten der erzielten Wirkungen zählen, beinhalten Gesetzesänderungen, das Integrieren von EQUAL-Prinzipien in neue Politikbereiche oder in neue Operationellen Programme und neue fiskalische Anreize zur erhöhten Teilnahme der Zielgruppen am Arbeitsmarkt. Institutionelle Wirkungen beinhalten Änderungen der Aus- und (Weiter)bildungssysteme, Änderungen bei der Arbeitsvermittlung und bei den Unterstützungsstrukturen. Organisatorische Änderungen traten bei der Arbeitsvermittlung und beim öffentlichen Dienst auf und sind in der Privatwirtschaft schwieriger zu bewerten, was auf ein fehlendes Engagement der Privatwirtschaft bezüglich EQUAL hinweisen könnte. EQUAL trug ebenfalls dazu bei, die Qualität von Governance und die Professionalisierung von zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen zu erhöhen.

**Evaluierungsfrage 4: Welche Langzeitwirkungen erwartet sich die Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL?**

11. EQUAL wirkte sich eher auf Politikbereiche als auf den Arbeitsmarkt aus:  
Es lag in der Natur des Programmes auf die Förderung neuer Modelle hinsichtlich des Arbeitsalltags und des Zugangs zu Arbeit durch die Bekämpfung von Diskriminierung und Ausgrenzung abzu zielen, was sich stärker auf Politikbereiche und Strukturen als auf die Schaffung von Stellenauswirkte.
12. Langfristige Wirkungen von EQUAL auf Bewusstseinsbildung und veränderte Denkweisen:  
Der Grad der Diskriminierung, der sozialen Ausgrenzung und die Langzeitwirkungen von EQUAL sind auf Grund des Problems der Zuordnung äußerst schwierig zu messen. Die Initiative führte jedoch einen nützlichen Ansatz um Diskriminierungen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt durch das Empowerment seiner Akteure, das Sammeln einer



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kritischen Masse und das Hervorheben von Innovation zu bekämpfen. Dies hat zu einem sehr wichtigen Lernprozess seitens der Schlüsselakteure geführt und beeinflusste erheblich das Denken und Handeln der an EQUAL teilnehmenden Personen.

13. EQUAL kreierte eine gemeinsame Sprache und einen gemeinsamen Ansatz zur sozialen Integration in Europa:

Es ist eine EQUAL-Gemeinschaft mit einem gemeinsamen Vokabular für Anti-Diskriminierung und soziale Integration als auch für Konzepte wie Innovation und Mainstreaming entstanden. Dies stellt ein wichtiges Nebenprodukt des EQUAL-Prozesses dar, welches nicht in der kommenden Förderperiode verloren gehen darf, da die Mitgliedsstaaten und die Union bemüht sind, den Auswirkungen der derzeitigen Wirtschaftskrise zu begegnen. Dazu sind insbesondere neue und noch stärker konzertierte Ansätze sowie gemeinsame Aktionen erforderlich.

**Evaluierungsfrage 5: Was ist der zusätzliche Nutzen auf Gemeinschaftsebene von EQUAL?**

14. EQUAL führte den Gruppen Mittel zu, die sonst nicht Ziel von Mittelzuflüssen sind:

Mit Blick auf Inputs hatte EQUAL einen 'boosting' Effekt in dem Maße, dass es den Gruppen Mittel zuführte, die sonst nicht zu den Empfängern von Mitteln zählen – Asylbewerber, Exsträflinge etc. Die Finanzierung war deswegen nicht zusätzlich, sondern konditional, was wiederum die hohe Qualität der Outputs absicherte.

15. EQUAL stellte durch neue Mechanismen Ressourcen für neue Tätigkeitsbereiche zur Verfügung:

EQUAL bot neue finanzielle Ressourcen für die Sozialwirtschaft und das Unternehmertum. Zusätzlich war das Design der Partnerschaft im Form von Entwicklungspartnerschaften ein besonderer Input für die Organisation von EQUAL-Projekten. Der transnationale Aspekt bot Know-how und Erfahrungen und brachte Akteure miteinander in Kontakt um auf neue Art und Weise Dinge zu tun. Ebenso half er Veränderungen anzustoßen hinsichtlich der Denkweise und der Entwicklung von praxisbezogenen Problemlösungen.

16. EQUAL erzielte einen Mehrwert durch den Fokus auf Innovation, Komplementarität mit nationaler Politik und strategischen Instrumenten:

EQUAL hat Lücken in der nationalen Politik ausgefüllt und war deswegen eine wichtige Ergänzung zu nationaler sowie regionaler und lokaler Politik. EQUAL bereicherte die Inhalte (das Öffnen von bestehenden Programmen und Politiken für neue Zielgruppen) und passte deren Durchführung an um ihr Zielpublikum zu erreichen.

17. Der Fokus von EQUAL auf Gleichberechtigung von Mann und Frau und Mainstreaming hatte einen gemischten Erfolg:

Obwohl gender equality and gender mainstreaming nicht spezifisch zu EQUAL gehören, wurden sie stark durch die Initiative unterstützt. Die Ergebnisse<sup>19</sup> führen uns zu dem Schluss, dass obwohl ein neuer Impetus zu diesen Themen geliefert wurde, es auf Grund der hohen Verbindlichkeit der rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen nicht so erfolgreich gewesen ist, wie man gehofft hatte.

## V. Empfehlungen

Die Empfehlungen beziehen sich auf Aktionen, die in der aktuellen Programmperiode aufgenommen werden sollen und Aktionen, die in der nächsten Periode aufgenommen werden sollen, wobei die Empfehlungen für die jetzige Periode auch für die nächste gelten.

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<sup>19</sup> Gender mainstreaming als spezifisches Feld für die Analyse war nicht Teil der Anforderungen dieser Evaluierung und wurde als Thema erst später aufgenommen.



### Aktionen, die in der aktuellen Programmperiode 2007-2013 aufgenommen werden sollen

#### 1) Die Kommission sollte die Schirmherrschaft für die Definition und Operationalisierung des Begriffs „soziale Innovation“ übernehmen.

- 1.1. Die Kommission sollte die Richtung und Leitlinien für geeignete, durchführbare und annehmbare Instrumente zur Förderung der sozialen Innovation im Rahmen der aktuellen und künftigen ESF Programmierung herausgeben. Darüber hinaus sollte sie eine genaue Definition und Konzeptionierung des Begriffs der Innovation entwickeln.
- 1.2. Die Kommission sollte Leitlinien für das Monitoring und die Evaluierung von sozialer Innovation, inklusive einer Definition von Indikatoren für das Monitoring von Innovation und Kriterien für die Kosten-Nutzen-Analyse erstellen.
- 1.3. Die Kommission sollte die aktuellen Operationellen Programme bei der Entwicklung von guten Praktiken für die Validierung von Innovation beratend unterstützen und die Definition eines gemeinsamen Validierungsprozesses entwerfen.
- 1.4. Es gibt gute Gründe warum der Zugang zur Implementierung von EQUAL im Wesentlichen von unten nach oben war (bottom-up), z.B. die Vorteile des „Nahedranseins“ zum Problem, die Einbeziehung der lokalen und regionalen AkteurInnen in der Lösung von lokalen und regionalen Problemen, usw. Ein ergänzender Ansatz könnte sein, auf Basis einer SWOT Analyse und Interventionslogiken die Engpässe der Sozialpolitik zu identifizieren, in denen Innovation nützlich wäre.. Dieser Ansatz könnte dabei helfen, die Aktivitäten zu präzisieren sowie die Nützlichkeit der Innovationen zu garantieren. Er würde sich auch als Ausgangspunkt für Evaluierungen und für die Qualitätskontrolle anbieten.
- 1.5. Innovation ist, per Definition, ein riskantes Unterfangen. Das gibt ihr eine Dynamik, welche die Philosophie der Rechenschaftspflicht und der (positiven) Ergebnisgarantie, die die derzeitige Handhabung der Verwaltung der öffentlichen Mittel und deren Prüfung charakterisiert, widerspricht. Aber, um die Entwicklung von Innovation für die soziale Eingliederung praktikabel zu machen, ist es notwendig zu versichern, dass das Risiko geteilt ist und, dass die Last des potenziellen (und zu erwartenden) Scheiterns nicht nur den Endnutzern überlassen wird. Nun – im Falle der Innovationsentwicklung – müssen Erfolgskriterien und Definitionen der erwarteten Ergebnissen adäquat definiert werden, um das Risiko im Rahmen zu halten – insbesondere für kleinere und finanziell schwächere NGOs. Ansonsten werden wichtige Stakeholder entweder von vornherein ausgeschlossen, oder sie werden sich entscheiden, nicht teilzunehmen – mit dem entsprechenden Verlust an Innovationspotenzial. In dieser Hinsicht, die Kombination von nationalen Förderungen, die auf standardisierten arbeitsmarktpolitischen Maßnahmen (inklusive Erfolgsbenchmarks für TeilnehmerInnen) beruhen, mit EU Förderungen, die eine risikoreichere Innovationsentwicklung erlauben, kann das Potential für die Stimulierung von einem Maximum an Innovationen vielleicht einschränken. Verwaltungsbehörden sollten sich nun überlegen, wie die Kofinanzierung und andere Anforderungen die Teilnahme der Stakeholder sowie die allgemeine Qualität der Innovationen beeinflussen kann.
- 1.6. Die Kommission sollte auf das Kapital und Erbe von EQUAL sowie auf die bestehenden erfolgreichen Beispielen von Validierung von Innovation aufbauen. Unter anderem sollte sie die Definition eines gemeinsamen Validierungsprozesses als standardisierte Anforderung aufnehmen. Gute Beispiele von Validierungsprozessen und -ansätzen existieren bereits (insbesondere in Portugal) und diese können mit der Absicht analysiert werden, ihren Transfer und Adaptierung in andere Kontexte, Programme und/oder Länder zu erleichtern.

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**2) Verwaltungsbehörden sollten den ProjektpartnerInnen mehr Beratung in Hinblick auf die Entwicklung von Innovation zur Verfügung stellen. Sie sollten:**

- 2.1. Eine bottom-up Bedarfsanalyse (die in einem hohen Ausmaß die BürgerInnen und Stakeholder involviert und mobilisiert) in eine SWOT-Analyse integrieren, um das Bewusstsein 'uno actu' zu erhöhen.
- 2.2. Das Programm mit einer expliziten Interventionslogik entwerfen, die auf die vorangegangene diagnostische Arbeit beruht und die in die Ausschreibungsrichtlinien integriert wird. Obwohl bottom-up Ansätze gebraucht werden, müssen sie mit einer top-down Strategie ergänzt werden wie die Erfahrungen mit Gender Mainstreaming und Aktionen, die mit Gleichberechtigung generell zu tun haben, deutlich gezeigt haben. Die soziale Innovation braucht ebenfalls die Unterstützung eines starken "Befürworters" im Hintergrund.
- 2.3. Unterstützungsstrukturen schaffen und Aktivitäten implementieren um die traditionellen Barrieren zwischen den „Silos“ der Politik und den unabhängigen aber potenziell synergetischen Aktivitäten zu reduzieren. Der Erfahrungsaustausch und gemeinsames Lernen sind wesentliche Faktoren für die erfolgreiche Entwicklung von sozialen Innovationen.
- 2.4. Innovationen entwickeln, testen und validieren in einem transparenten und ganzheitlichen Verfahren.
- 2.5. Angemessene Formen der Kosten-Nutzen Analyse durchführen. Wo eine vergleichende Analyse des Programmerfolgs (im Sinne der Wirksamkeit und der Effizienz) vorgesehen ist, soll auch darauf geachtet werden, dass die Vergleichbarkeit der relevanten Kostenstrukturen auch gegeben ist. Die Kommission sollte nun Leitlinien zur Durchführung der einer Kosten-Nutzen Analyse im Rahmen der Evaluierung einführen.
- 2.6. Gute Evaluierungsmethoden entwickeln, inklusive experimentelle Designs, wo sinnvoll für ein rigoroseres Testen. Man sollte sich aber bewusst sein, dass nicht alle Innovationen auf diese Art und Weise getestet werden können und, dass das Testen durch „sanftere“ Prozeduren, wie Peer Reviews und Benchmarking ergänzt werden muss.
- 2.7. Aus den erfolgreichen Ansätzen eine Wissensbasis mit Beispielen guter Praktiken schaffen, die systematisch verbreitet werden.
- 2.8. Sicherstellen, dass Mainstreaming und die kontinuierliche Verbesserung von Maßnahmen, ein integrierter Teil des Innovationsdesigns und -entwicklung werden.

**3) Politikverantwortliche und Regierungen sollten die Aufmerksamkeit verstärkt auf Mainstreaming fokussieren und das Mainstreaming mehr operationalisieren.**

- 3.1. Die Kommission sollte Leitlinien zum Mainstreaming herausgeben, um deutlich zwischen Mainstreaming und Verbreitung von Informationen zu unterscheiden. Es sollte auch auf die verschiedenen Rollen der PartnerInnen und anderen AkteurInnen im Mainstreaming Prozess geachtet werden. Wo möglich, sollten Indikatoren für dessen Evaluierung entwickelt werden.
- 3.2. Verwaltungsbehörden sollten Mainstreaming-Strategien auf thematischer Ebene entwickeln, die mit den institutionellen Rahmenbedingungen übereinstimmen, die operationell sind und, die deutlich zwischen Verbreitung und Mainstreaming unterscheiden.
- 3.3. Verwaltungsbehörden sollten den ProjektpartnerInnen dabei helfen, Mainstreaming frühzeitig im Projektzyklus einzubauen (statt sie als getrennte Aktion zu betrachten). Dieses könnte durch eine Stakeholder Analyse passieren, welche die Stakeholder auf

Politikebene deutlich identifiziert und in die Projektarbeit einbezieht, entweder als PartnerInnen oder durch maßgeschneiderte Verträge (z.B. spezielle Briefings, Berichte usw.). Eine Mainstreaming-Strategie sollte frühestmöglich entworfen werden, das heißt parallel zur Entwicklung des Projektkonzeptes.

- 3.4. Verwaltungsbehörden sollten Leitlinien über die Vorteile des „horizontalen“ Mainstreamings entwickeln, insbesondere in Hinblick auf Unternehmen und Betriebe: wie kann man seine Innovationen/Ideen usw. an anderen Firmen/Organisationen „verkaufen“?

**4) Die Arbeit der thematischen Arbeitsgruppen sollte weitergeführt werden um die Erfahrung der aktuellen Programmperiode zusammenzuführen und zu konsolidieren.**

- 4.1 Die Kommission und die Verwaltungsbehörden sollten den Nutzen des thematischen Arbeitsgruppen-Ansatzes maximieren indem sie die Arbeit der Gruppen unterstützt und die nötigen Vehikel für die Verbreitung der Ergebnisse bereitstellt, insbesondere im Politikentwicklungskontext. Die Struktur und der Fokus der thematischen Gruppen kann die derzeitige Breite und Unterschiedlichkeit der Aktionen, die im Rahmen der derzeitigen Programmperiode stattfinden, reflektieren und zum „transnationalen“ Lernen beitragen, so dass das Schaffen von Politiken auf EU sowie auf nationaler Ebene weiterentwickelt werden kann. Aktionen, die in die nächste Programmperiode 2014-2020 aufgenommen werden sollen

**Aktionen, die in der nächsten Programmperiode 2014-2020 aufgenommen werden sollen**

**5) Auf Basis von den EQUAL Erfahrungen eine holistische und ausgewogene Herangehensweise sichern.**

- 5.1. Die Kommission sollte nun versichern, dass die Leitlinien (für die ESF Verwaltungsbehörde) für die neue EU 2020 Strategie spezifisches Augenmerk auf die Wichtigkeit der Förderung von innovativen Ansätzen im Prozess der sozialen Integration sowie spezifische Forderungen in Bezug auf die Konsultation mit staatlichen und zivilgesellschaftlichen AkteurInnen legt.
- 5.2. Die Verwaltungsbehörden sollten versichern, dass die Erfahrungen von EQUAL in der neuen Planungsperiode erfasst werden, sowohl in Hinblick auf den Ansatz, als auch auf die Ergebnisse im Sinne des good practice. Dieses sollte durch folgende Aktivitäten geschehen: a) die spezifische Einberufung von Feedback und Input von EQUAL AkteurInnen; b) das Aufbauen auf den Ergebnissen der nationalen und europäischen thematischen Netzwerke; c) die eindeutige Identifizierung einer Reihe von wesentlichen Lerninhalten (lessons learned) der EQUAL Erfahrung auf ex post Basis.
- 5.3. In Bezug auf das Obige sollten die Verwaltungsbehörden der neuen ESF Operationellen Programme die EQUAL Erfahrungen in effektive Infrastrukturen und Unterstützungsstrukturen für ProjektträgerInnen und für ESF AdministratorInnen übersetzen sowie auch die Ausschreibungsunterlagen und Fördervoraussetzungen. Dadurch sollten sie sicherstellen, dass die Erfahrungen aus EQUAL nicht nur theoretisch erfasst sind, sondern auch in die Praxis der neuen Förderungen und Unterstützungsstrukturen einfließen.

**6) Den Fokus auf die Schwächsten durch innovative Aktionen stärken**

- 6.1. Die Kommission sollte sicherstellen, dass ihre Richtlinien für den Entwurf der nächsten ESF Programme eine Reihe von thematischen Feldern identifiziert sowie auf einen neuen Strang innovativer Aktionen in allen EU Mitgliedstaaten, welche auf die Ergebnisse von EQUAL bauen. In diesem Sinne wird ein stärkerer Fokus auf die schwächsten Zielgruppen empfohlen, um die multidimensionalen Themen der sozialen

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Eingliederung und der sozialen Kohäsion in Übereinstimmung mit dem EU Charter der Menschenrechte anzugehen.

- 6.2. Die Kommission sollte überlegen, die Anzahl an thematischen Feldern zu beschränken (im Vergleich zu den neun in EQUAL) um sicherzugehen, dass eine kritische Masse in den Prioritätsfeldern erreicht werden kann.

**7) Raum für die Experimentierung bereitstellen**

- 7.1. Als Teil der Evaluierungsmodalitäten der bestehenden OPs sollten die Verwaltungsbehörden sicherstellen, dass folgende Bereiche gut abgedeckt sind: a) die Aufnahme vonseiten der schwächeren Gruppen und b) Innovation. Wo die Beteiligung niedrig ist, sollten die Verwaltungsbehörden sicherstellen, dass neue Aktionen den Raum für die Experimentierung und das Testen von Innovationen zur Verfügung stellen, z.B. durch die Verpflichtung einen gewissen Prozentsatz der Förderungen für innovativen Aktionen bereitzustellen.

**8) Wiedereinführen einer gemeinsamen Aktion für die Entwicklung und Mainstreaming von neuen Ansätzen**

- 8.1. Die Kommission sollte den Bedarf und die Chance für eine gemeinsame Finanzierungsmöglichkeit, die ein „neues Laboratorium für den sozialen Wandel“ ermöglicht, überprüfen. Diese sollte den Impuls und Ressourcen bereitstellen, um neue Politiken und Ansätze zu generieren sowie multilevel AkteurInnen involvieren und einen Fokus auf das Mainstreaming von validierten Innovationen haben. Merkmale dieses Laboratoriums sollten sein: ein Fokus auf Innovationen, multilevel Partnerschaften, ausgewählte thematischen Felder und Mainstreaming.

**9) Evaluierungspraktiken verbessern**

- 9.1. Die Kommission sollte ihre Leitlinien für die nationalen Behörden verbessern um sicherzustellen, dass die Evaluierung in Auftrag gegeben wird und rechtzeitig (damit die Evaluierungsergebnisse in die Programmierung einfließen können) ausgeführt wird. Sie sollte auch sicherstellen, dass standardisierte, detaillierte Zusammenfassungen für die multi-Länder Analyse verfügbar sind und, dass Innovation und Gender Gleichstellung (in Bezug auf Mitteleinsatz und Ergebnisse) konsequent im Auge behalten werden.
- 9.2. Die Verwaltungsbehörden sollten sicherstellen, dass eine Evaluierungsstrategie für die Programmperiode bereitsteht, die sowohl operationelle als auch strategische Evaluierungen mit klaren Zeitrahmen beinhaltet. Verwaltungsbehörden sollten auch sicherstellen, dass Evaluierungen rechtzeitig in Auftrag gegeben und abgeschlossen werden und, dass die Monitoring Daten (inklusive Finanzdaten) gesammelt, zusammengeführt und zeitgerecht, das heißt in Übereinstimmung mit der relevanten Strategie und Zeitplan, zur Verfügung gestellt werden.

**10) Die strategischen Prinzipien von EQUAL sollten in der Programmperiode 2014-2020 weitergeführt werden**

- 10.1. Die Kommission sollte sicherstellen, dass das Partnerschaftsprinzip in künftigen Leitlinien ausdrücklich hervorgehoben wird. Dieses könnte eine klare Definition und ein operationelles Konzept von Partnerschaft sowie good practice Beispiele beinhalten.
- 10.2. Die Kommission sollte sicherstellen, dass das Prinzip des Empowerments in künftigen Leitlinien ausdrücklich hervorgehoben wird. Dieses könnte eine klare Definition und ein operationelles Konzept von Partnerschaft sowie good practice Beispiele beinhalten. Gegebenenfalls könnten die Förderfähigkeitskriterien bestimmte Aktionen hervorheben, die das Empowerment unterstützt, z.B. die

Förderung von Fähigkeiten (damit Partner mehr zur Partnerschaft beitragen können) oder Netzwerkaktivitäten für NGOs.

- 10.3. Verwaltungsbehörden sollten sicherstellen, dass die Prinzipien der Partnerschaft und des Empowerments einen integrierten Teil der neuen ESF OPs werden.
- 10.4. Die Verwaltungsbehörden sollten überlegen, wie man am Besten die Privatwirtschaft in zukünftigen ESF Programmen involvieren kann, sowohl in der Konsultation und im Programmdesign, als auch in der Implementierung, z.B. als Partner in Projekten mit multiplen AkteurlInnen.

#### **11) Die transnationale Kooperation sollte als Chance und nicht als zwingende Auflage gefördert werden**

- 11.1. Die Kommission sollte die transnationale Kooperation als eine Chance zum Lernen, welche Vorteile und Nutzen mit sich bringt, fördern. Mehr Flexibilität und eine höhere Effizienz könnten erreicht werden, wenn die OPs so modifiziert werden würden, dass sie den EndnutzerInnen die Option anstelle der Auflage geben würden, eine transnationale Dimension hinzuzufügen. Dies würde aber bedeuten, dass die transnationalen Aktivitäten als förderfähige Kosten und nicht als strenge Anforderung akzeptiert werden. Leitlinien und good practice Lerninhalte aus der transnationalen Zusammenarbeit sollten verbreitet werden.

#### **12) Die Flexibilität in den Partnerschaften mit einem Minimum an Beteiligungsanforderungen verbinden**

- 12.1. Die Verwaltungsbehörden sollten sicherstellen, dass wenn ein partnerschaftlicher Ansatz in den Förderaktionen verlangt wird, die Partnerschaften, die zur Förderung ausgewählt werden in Hinblick auf Anzahl und Typus der TeilnehmerInnen flexibel sind und, dass im Rahmen der Partnerschaft die Beteiligung der einzelnen Partner sinnvoll ist. , Um dies sicherzustellen ist ein Weg dafür, Beweise für die Zusammenarbeit in der Projektkonzeption und im -vorbereitungsprozess zu suchen.
- 12.2. Die Verwaltungsbehörden sollten sicherstellen, dass Unterstützungsstrukturen und -dienstleistungen gewährleistet sind. Diese sollten darauf Acht geben, wie die Partner innerhalb der Partnerschaft ihre Tätigkeiten ausüben und Unterstützung und Beratung bereitstellen, wenn Probleme auftreten. Eine fortlaufende Evaluierung der Partnerschaften könnte zu wenig aktive oder zu wenig engagierte Partner identifizieren und Mechanismen/Anreize schaffen, um diese wieder zu integrieren oder letztendlich zu verabschieden.
- 12.3. Die Verwaltungsbehörden sollten Rückschlüsse in Hinblick auf good practice Beispiele von Partnerschaften, wo diese verwendet wurden, identifizieren und die Anforderungen für die nächste Runde entsprechend anpassen.

#### **13) Das Netzwerken auf EU Ebene weiterhin unterstützen**

- 13.1 Um relevante Rückschlüsse adäquat aus der aktuellen ESF Förderperiode zu erfassen und sie in die Politikentwicklung in anderen Ländern und auf Gemeinschaftsebene einfließen zu lassen, sollte die Kommission einen formellen Mechanismus auf EU Ebene etablieren um Nationale Thematische Netzwerke zu vernetzen, Erfahrungen und Lektionen zu teilen und Synergien zu entwickeln. Dies könnte auch auf den thematischen Arbeitsgruppen aufbauen, welche unter EQUAL etabliert und zum Teil noch in den neuen ESF OPs oder als Lernnetzwerken auf EU Ebene fortbestehen,
- 13.2. Neben der Einrichtung von flexiblen Austausch- und Lernplattformen sollte zusätzliche Unterstützung denjenigen zur Verfügung gestellt werden, die „mehr machen wollen“. Diese könnte in Form der Bereitstellung und Weiterentwicklung

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von Handwerkzeug und Methoden für das Netzwerken, die Validierung, das Mainstreaming, Lernen unter Peers usw. erfolgen. Das könnte eine breite und intensive Beteiligung und Austausch von Wissen (über gute und schlechte Praxis) sicherstellen und die Chance auf eine Beteiligung, einem breiterem Publikum als in formelleren Rahmen üblicherweise möglich ist, gewährleisten. Die Verwaltungsbehörden sollten die Unterstützung und Beratung, die den ProjektpartnerInnen zur Verfügung steht in Hinblick auf Innovation stärken.

## Introduction

This is the Final Report of the ex post evaluation of the EQUAL Community Initiative (2000-06) submitted by Metis GmbH in association with KANTOR and with MWH as sub-contractor. The ex post evaluation was carried out between July and December 2009 in the EU25 and involved both intensive desk research and fieldwork including both interviews and case studies, as well as two Expert Panel meetings and one Focus Group with Managing Authorities (MAs).

The results of the evaluation were overwhelmingly positive with a large number of innovations identified and generally very positive feedback on the value of the Community Initiative from interview partners. The picture emerging from the desk research and interviews was that EQUAL managed to create the conditions for the generation of a significant number of innovations, to reach the vulnerable groups it set out to reach, to empower the structures working with these vulnerable groups and to enhance working in partnership at national and sub-national levels and across the EU.

The Final Report draws together the results of the desk research (stage 1) and the fieldwork (stage 2). The first stage of the evaluation consisted of the finalisation of the methodology and the screening of the available documentation and websites. Four grids were developed (the first three corresponding to the inventories requested by the Terms of Reference and the fourth to provide information on impacts):

- Key Output 1: Account of projects
- Key Output 2: Inventory of validated innovations
- Key Output 3: Inventory of successful mainstreaming
- Impact Grid

The grids were submitted in the Interim Report as separate Excel files. We attach an updated version to this report. In the Annex, we present the tables with the aggregated information used in the chapters (see Annexes 1-3). The desk research enabled the evaluators to gain an overview of the number of innovations and cases of mainstreaming reported in the Member States. As could be expected, the reporting of innovations and of mainstreaming and impacts was very heterogeneous across the different Member States and – consequently – the data collected also. The inventories reflect the heterogeneity of the information found in the reports and are considered an important hermeneutically inspired methodological step in the evaluation process.

The way in which innovations, mainstreaming or impacts are described in the source reports, e.g. explicitly or implicitly, in detail or only at a general level, reveals a lot about the perception of EQUAL and about the extent to which the evaluation process itself addresses the identification of innovations, mainstreaming and impacts in the different EU Member States. This is in itself a very important finding because it provides the background and context for the subsequent analysis. Taking this into account, an attempt was made to update, cross-check and standardise the information on innovations and to classify the innovations in a typology.

The second stage of the research consisted in interviews in all the EU25 and nine case studies – one for each thematic field. The interviews were carried out by the national experts (information group) on the basis of a questionnaire (see Annex 4) dealing with the evaluation questions set out in the Terms of Reference and the results were fed back into the core team by three country coordinators. The interviews were mainly with the MAs and National Support Structures (NSS) but were also with individual Development Partnerships (DPs) in some Member States.

A selection of nine case studies (one per thematic field) was approved in the Interim Report. These are:

- 1.A.: e-Learning in the penal system - e-LIS
- 1.B.: Strategies to combat racism and xenophobia - BEMBEA



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- 2.C.: Helping micro-entrepreneurs set up and stay in business - PROXY
  - 2.D.: Support unit for local authorities - Work Waardig
  - 3.E.: Clare Life Long Learning Network
  - 3.F.: Let's build it together - Job Rotation
  - 4.G.: FORWARD! Family and Work Reconciliation Development
  - 4.H.: Policy and Public Service Push Gender Mainstreaming - POP UP GEM
  - 5.I.: Sustainable, protective and interconnected services towards asylum seekers - ANADRASI-ISTOS

The case studies involved interviews with both the DPs and the MAs in most cases. They have fed into the research findings in the chapters and are presented in Annex 5 of this report.

A Focus Group with a number of MAs was carried out in Brussels on the occasion of the ESF Evaluation Partnership Meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Although only a few MAs were represented, the results of the discussions were found to be very useful and have fed into the Final Report.

Likewise, the results of the discussions at the Expert Panels held in October on the Draft Interim Report and in December on the Draft Final Report have informed the conclusions and recommendations presented in the Final Report.

#### **The structure of the Final Report**

The structure of the Final Report is guided by the evaluation questions set out in the ToR and followed by the research. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the theoretical approach and the methodology as well as a number of figures mapping the intervention logic of EQUAL. Chapter 2 deals with Evaluation Question 1 on coherence between EQUAL and the European Employment Strategy (EES) and the Social Inclusion process. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the main findings with regard to innovation. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the main findings on mainstreaming and Chapter 5 on intermediary and long-term impacts. Chapter 6 deals with Evaluation Question 5 on the Community Added Value of EQUAL. The conclusions and recommendations – based on the findings from the desk research and interviews, the Expert Panels and the Focus Group with MAs – are then presented in Chapter 7. The annexes include the updated tables aggregated to thematic field level, the template for the interviews, the case studies, the glossary and the bibliography.

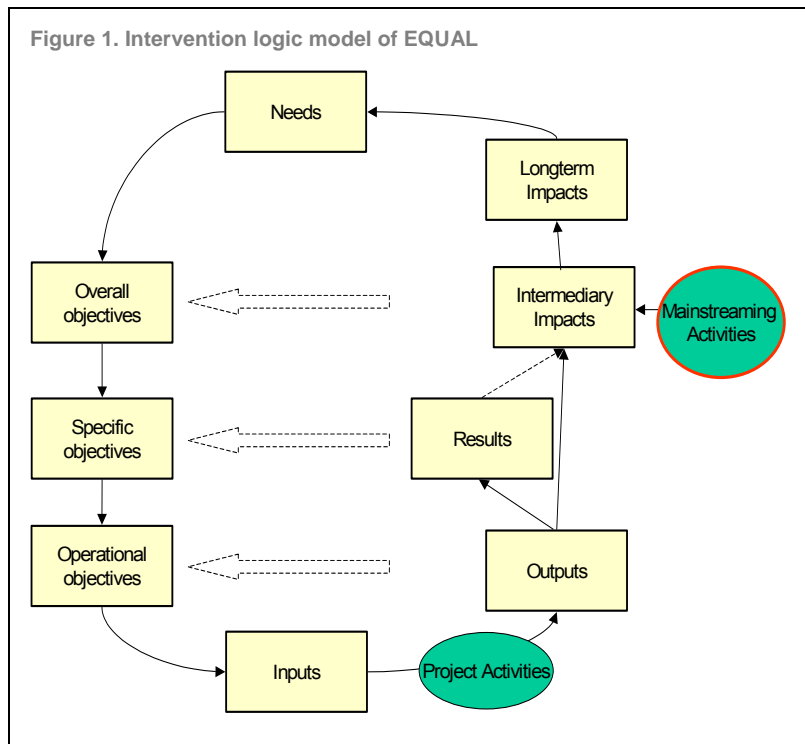
# 1 The theoretical approach and methodology

## 1.1 Theoretical approach

The approach taken to the EQUAL ex post evaluation is based on programme theory to allow us to identify the logical connections between outputs, results and impacts with regard to the specific objectives of the programme and to provide the basis for the identification of potential long-term effects and on 'goal-free' evaluation to allow us to identify additional, unexpected impacts. The definition we use of inputs are the financial or administrative resources; and of outputs the activities implemented to achieve the objectives of the programme. The results are understood as the change produced by the activities of the programme which correspond to the specific objectives whereas the intermediary impacts are understood as the change produced by the activities of the programme which correspond to the overall objectives.

The mainstreaming activities contribute to the achievement of intermediary impacts whereby the specificity of the programme lies therein that it aims above all at achieving impacts on structures and systems rather than on target groups.

The development of the intervention logic of the programme as a whole and of each of the nine thematic fields is a prerequisite for the overall assessment of the effectiveness of the Community initiative. We have thus tried to describe the intervention logics in figures (see below). These try to show the (assumed) causal linkages between inputs, activities, outputs, results and impacts.



### Description of the intervention logic for the EQUAL Community Initiative

#### 1. Colours in the diagram

- Activities**
- Outputs:** tangible products of project activities
- Results:** initial effect on the target groups or the target institutions
- Intermediary impacts:** medium-term effects on the target groups or the target institutions
- Long-term impacts:** long-term effects to which the EQUAL Community Initiative is contributing
- Cause-effect mechanism (if-then relationship) – different colours referring to different 'chains of impacts' (see below)

---➔ Pre-condition

➔➔  
←➔ Circle: in the case of circles the cause-effect mechanism works in both directions, e.g. thematic field 4H: if the human resource policies are changed and more women enter top positions, the vertical segregation is reduced; but it also works vice-versa, i.e. if more women are in top positions, it is likely that the human resource policies will be changed.

## 2. Introductory remarks

The aim of the logical models<sup>20</sup> drafted for the EQUAL Community initiative as a whole as well as for each of the thematic fields is to show the rationale of the programme. They do not describe reality, which always is far more complex, but rather seek to highlight the logical relations between the main programme elements. This way, implicit theories about how a programme should work and which effects could be achieved (i.e. the programme theory behind) are made transparent.

However, it must be kept in mind that all instruments used to present intervention logics – be it diagrams or matrices such as, for example, the log frame, always reduce complexity at the expense of a detailed description. In the case of large programmes such as the EQUAL Community Initiative, this reduction of complexity has to go even further because the models developed have to ignore national specificities with different focal points in the thematic fields. Thus the intervention logics presented on the following pages have to be seen rather as generic models depicting a general picture of the cause-effect mechanisms in each thematic field.

## 3. Structure of the diagram (bottom-up)

For the EQUAL Community initiative, like for many complex programmes, several ‘chains of impacts’ can be distinguished. They are shown in the diagram, albeit restricted to those elements that are relevant for the evaluation<sup>21</sup>. Two of the chains presented (impact chain 2 and 3) refer to what is usually called ‘non-intended impacts’, ‘secondary impacts’ or sometimes also ‘internal impacts’. We prefer the latter term, because effects on those responsible for programme management or project management respectively appear in all programmes. Thus, these effects are, though perhaps not intended, to be expected.

**1<sup>st</sup> chain of impacts (arrows in green ➔):** This chain of impacts represents what can be called the ‘classic’ intervention logic of goal-oriented projects in the social field aiming at impacts on the participants of certain measures/interventions. In the case of the EQUAL Community Initiative, these were the direct beneficiaries of the activities of the DPs. However, different to other programmes, in EQUAL the immediate results achieved for the ‘persons assisted’ and ‘assisted structures and systems’ were of minor importance. They rather served as a test or validation of the innovations developed – which were actually the main outputs of Actions 1 and 2.

**2<sup>nd</sup> chain of impacts (arrows in gold ➔):** This chain of impacts shows the effects of EQUAL on those responsible for programme management and implementation, i.e. in many cases the

<sup>20</sup> Further reading on logical models:

- Bickman, L. (Ed.) (1987), Using Program Theory in Evaluation, New Directions for Program Evaluation, 33, 5-18. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

- Funnell, S. (1997). Program logic: An adaptable tool for designing and evaluating programs, Evaluation news and comment, 6 (1), 5 - 17.

- Rogers, P., Hacsı, T., Petrosino, A., & Huebner, T. (Eds). (2000). Program theory in evaluation: Challenges and opportunities. New Directions for Evaluation, 87. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

- Rossi, P.H., Lipsey, M.W., Freeman, H.E. (2004). Evaluation: A Systematic Approach, 7th Edition. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

<sup>21</sup> In principle, for each chain of impacts many different impact levels could be distinguished. For example, the first chain of impacts referring to the participants of the activities of the DP could be complemented by medium-term impacts (e.g. better jobs) and long-term impacts (e.g. improved socio-economic situation). However, since the achievement of impacts on participants was not at the core of EQUAL, impacts are only shown up to the result level.

MAAs. It can be expected that the management/implementation of a programme as specific as EQUAL with its specific target groups and principles has various effects on those in charge. They are important, because they can lead to further impacts at policy level, such as the setting up of new programmes or the adaptation of existing ones.

**3<sup>rd</sup> chain of impacts (arrows in blue →):** This chain of impacts refers to those responsible for project management/implementation, i.e. the DPs. The principles of the EQUAL Community Initiative which had to be implemented by each DP also ensured learning processes at this level, e.g. the obligatory co-operation between operational and strategic partners. Though the chain of impacts ends at the level of results for the partners of the DP, further effects could be expected as regards especially joint projects in future.

**4<sup>th</sup> chain of impacts (arrows in red →):** This chain of impacts is finally **the central one** of the EQUAL Community Initiative. Here, the results on the participants of certain measures/impacts (see 1<sup>st</sup> chain of impacts) serve as inputs, as a means of validation, for the main outputs of EQUAL: useful (i.e. tested) and relevant innovative models, products, services, etc. The focus lies on intermediary impacts which are to be achieved through mainstreaming and dissemination activities.

Though mainstreaming and dissemination activities often overlap, their differentiation is of special importance in those thematic fields where general awareness raising plays an important role for triggering policy changes. This applies especially to the thematic fields 1.A, 1.B., and 5.I, but also to 2.D, 3.E, 4.G and 4.H. Only for 2.C and 3.F it is of minor importance.

#### Intermediary impacts

Three types of intermediary impacts can be distinguished:

- a) Policy impacts: Adaptation of existing or introduction of new employment, inclusion or anti-discrimination policies, changes in policy making processes or the adaptation of existing or the introduction of new programmes
- b) Institutional impacts: Changes in labour market intermediation structures and processes, changes in the education and training system, new/adapted structures, processes and measures for the support of business creation, changes in regulatory work arrangements, etc.
- c) Organisational impacts: these impacts refer on the one hand to changes in the human resources policies, such as changes in the recruitment policies, improved access to training, career advancement, pay structure, anti-discrimination policies, on the other hand to changes in the work organisation, especially the structure of jobs.

Among these intermediary impacts, policy changes in the form of adapting or introducing policies are of utmost importance because they are often a pre-condition for institutional and organisational changes – in the diagram this is shown by the dotted line. If, for example, legislation does not allow the employment of foreigners with a certain status or the financing of the training of foreigners with public money, institutional and organisational changes are not possible. Or, if equal payment of men and women is statutory, this will have an influence at organisational level. However, it must be kept in mind that the legal frameworks vary between countries. Thus, for some countries the dotted line in the diagrams indicating a pre-condition might not be correct.

#### Longer-term impacts

The longer-term impacts to be expected from EQUAL mirror the objectives of the European Employment Strategy, namely an increased employability and adaptability of the workforce, equal opportunities for men and women and an increased adaptability of firms.

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Together with a changed public discourse the achievement of these impacts would finally lead to reduced discrimination in the labour market, increased employment of vulnerable groups, a reduction in overall unemployment and, consequently, increased social cohesion.

However, there are also a lot of other factors, such as the overall economic situation, which will influence the achievement of these impacts.

#### **Description of the intervention logic for each of the thematic fields**

Since all measures implemented had to follow the EQUAL principles, the logic of intervention is basically the same in each of the nine thematic fields, i.e. the first, second and third chain of impacts are the same as shown for the EQUAL Community Initiative as a whole. Variations only appear at the level of the longer-term impacts.

For this reason, the second and third chain of impact, i.e. the ones referring to the effects on those responsible for programme management or project management respectively are not displayed in each intervention logic. The first one is included for a better overview.

However, what cannot be shown by separate impact diagrams are the relations and interdependencies between many of the thematic fields, which can lead to a reinforcement of certain impacts. Basically, it can be said that for each pair of thematic fields addressing the same EES pillar, mutual effects can be expected, e.g. the support of business creation (2.C) will influence the social economy (2.D) if the businesses set up belong to the third sector.

On the next pages the intervention logic of all thematic fields are presented according to their order in the EQUAL programming documents. Where additional information seems appropriate, this is provided under the Comments section afterwards.

Figure 2. Intervention logic for the EQUAL Community Initiatives

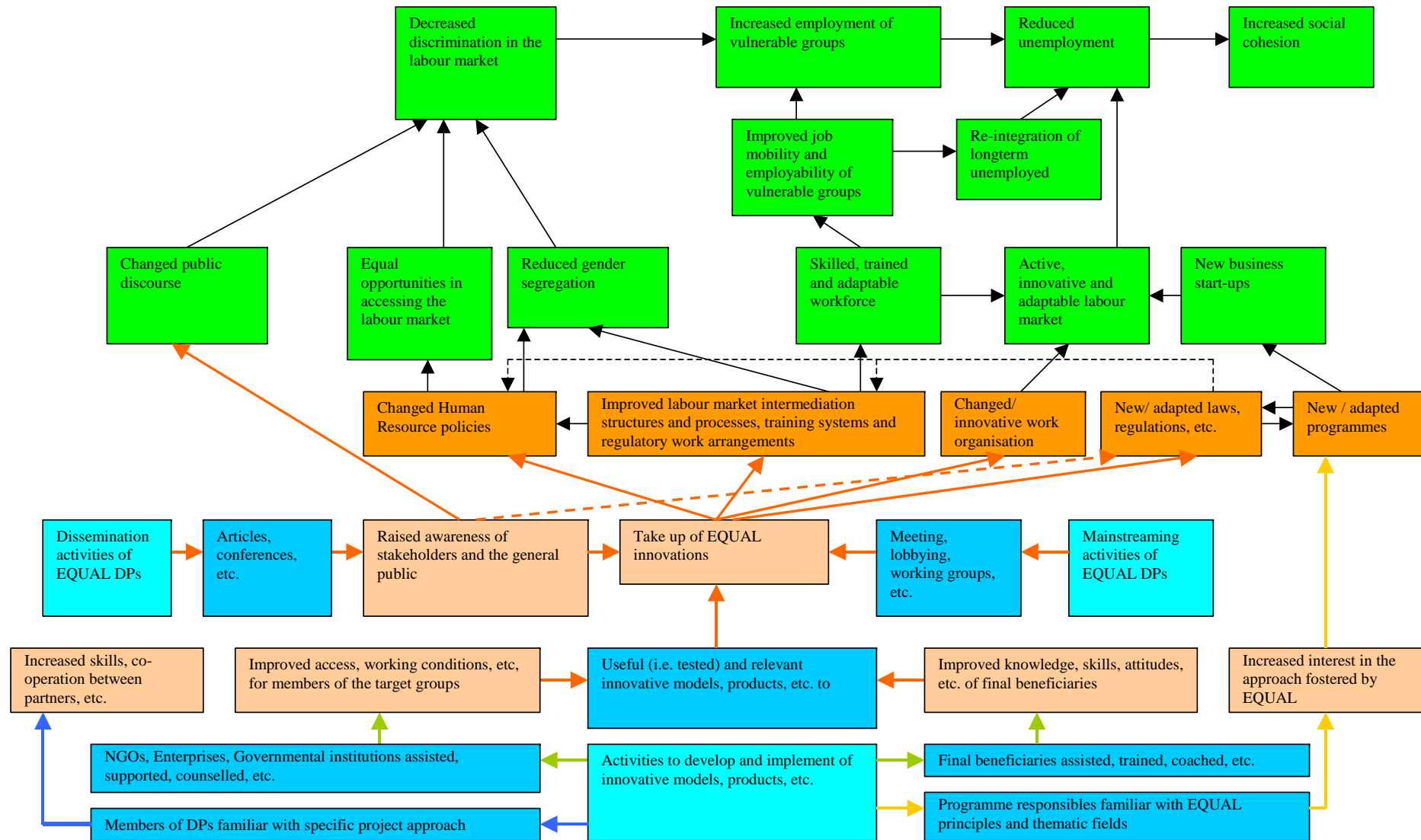


Figure 3. Intervention logic for thematic field 1A: Employability - Facilitating access and return to the labour market

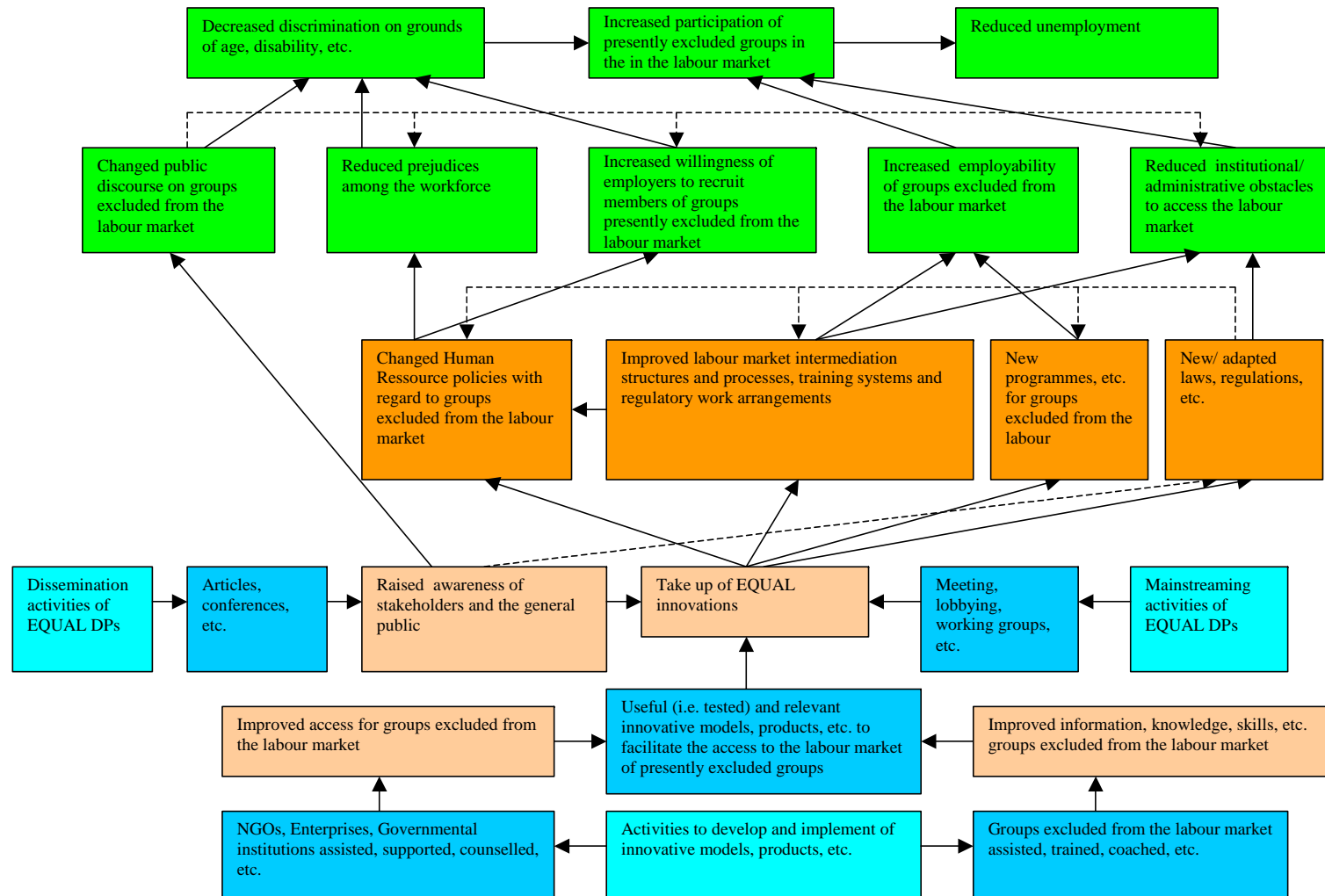




Figure 4. Intervention logic for thematic field 1B: Employability - Combating Racism and Xenophobia in relation to the labour market

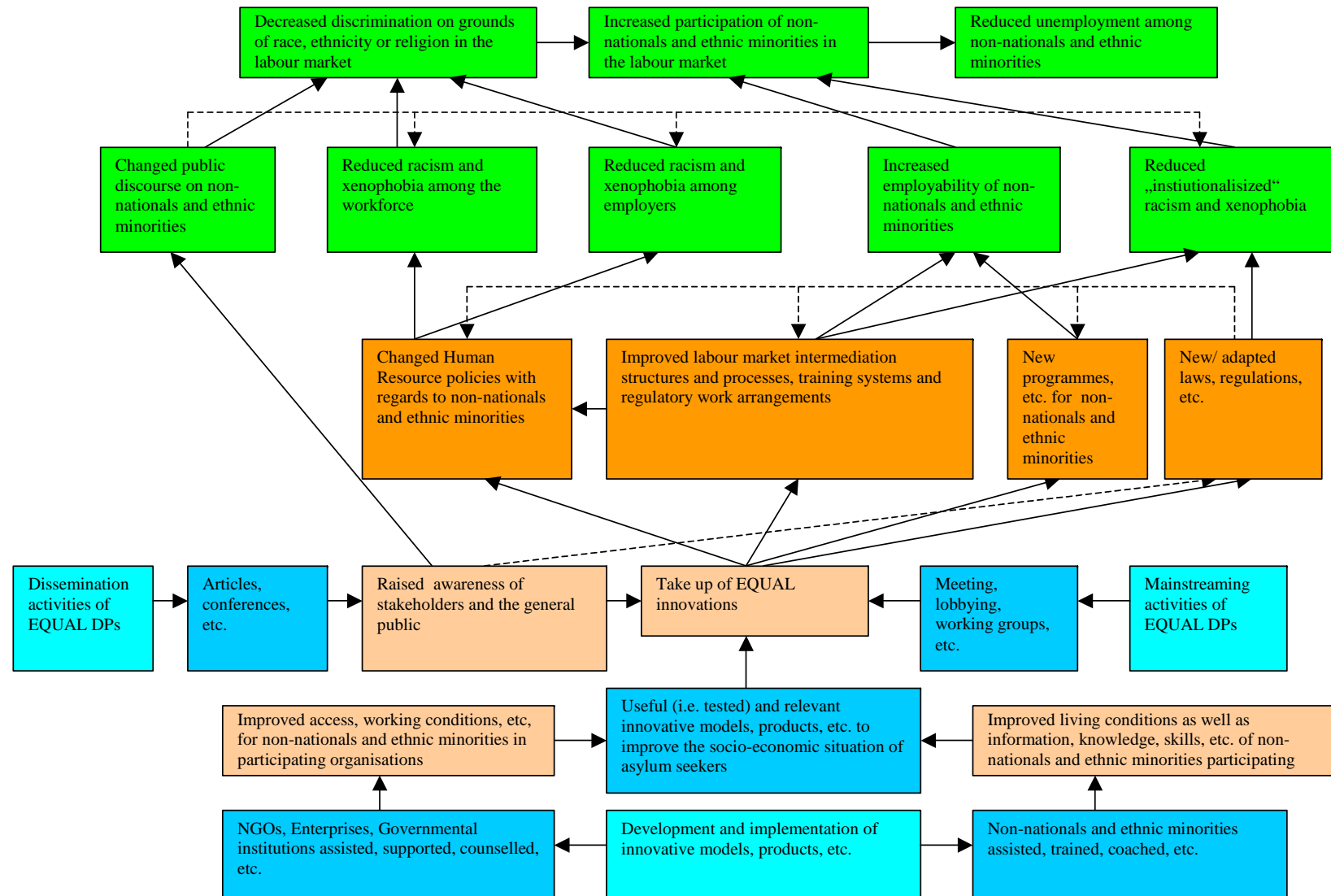


Figure 5. Intervention logic for thematic field 2C: Opening up the business creation process

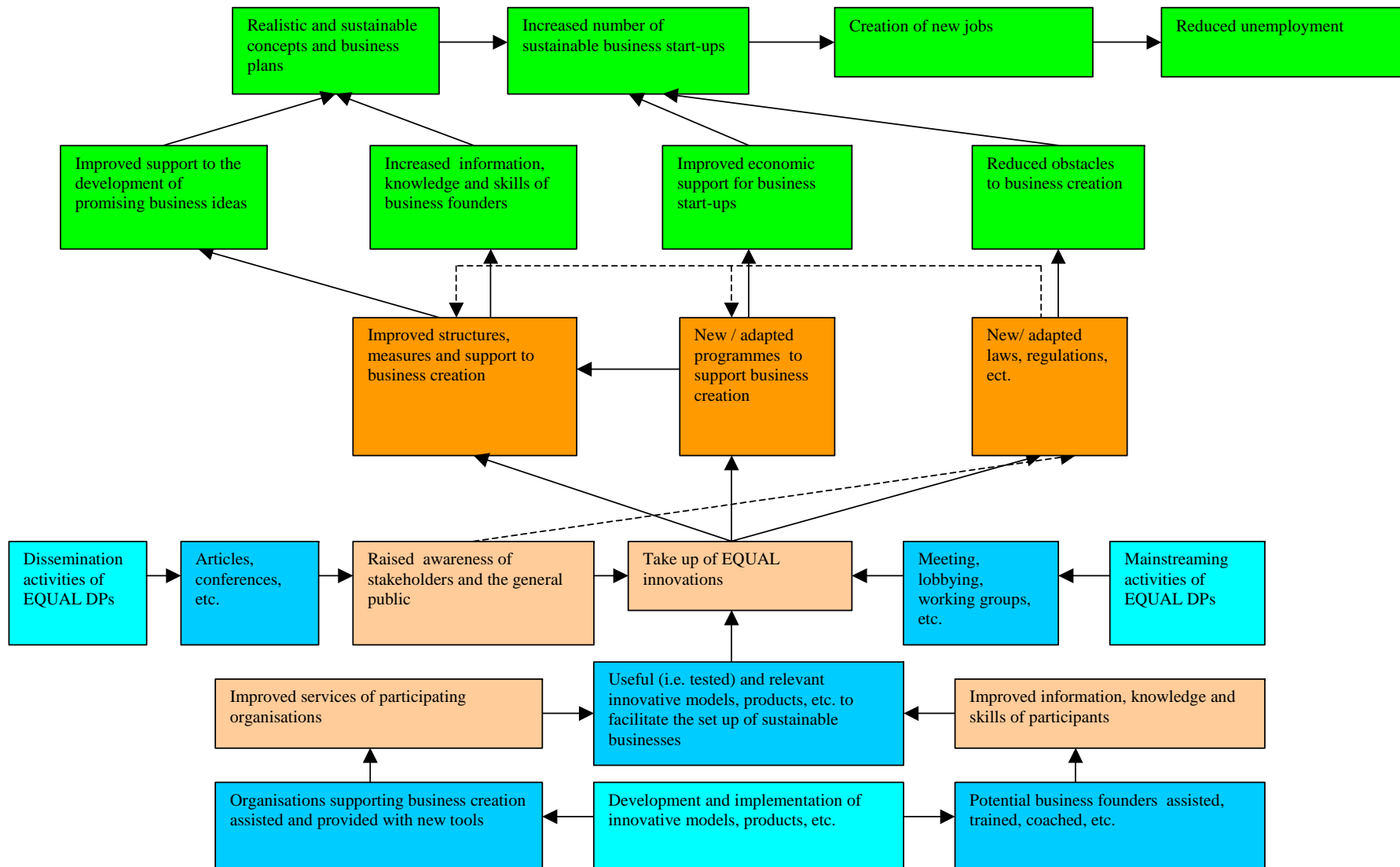


Figure 6. Intervention logic for thematic field 2D: Strengthening the Social Economy (SE)

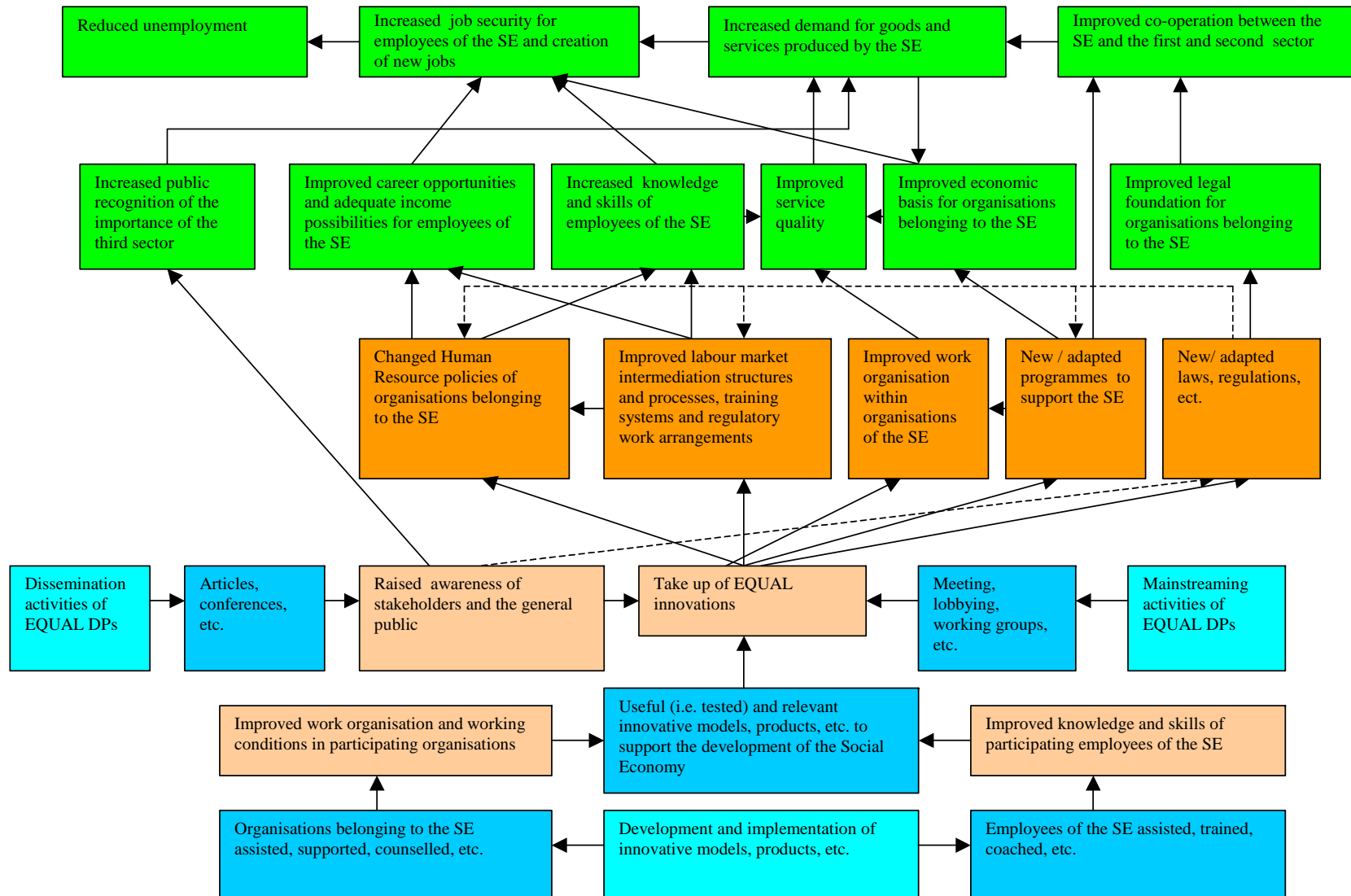


Figure 7. Intervention logic for thematic field 3E: Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices

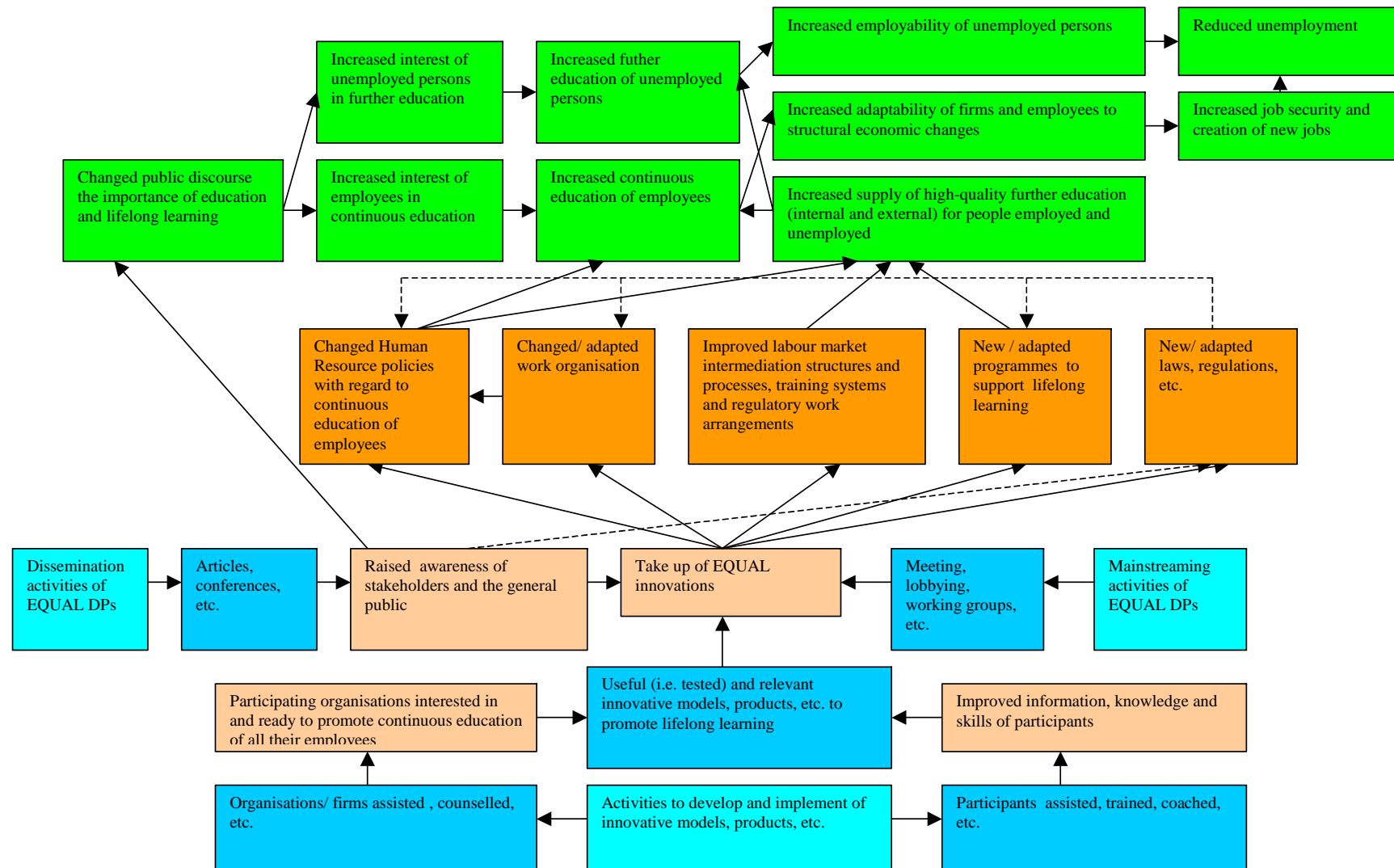


Figure 8. Intervention logic for thematic field 3F: Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees

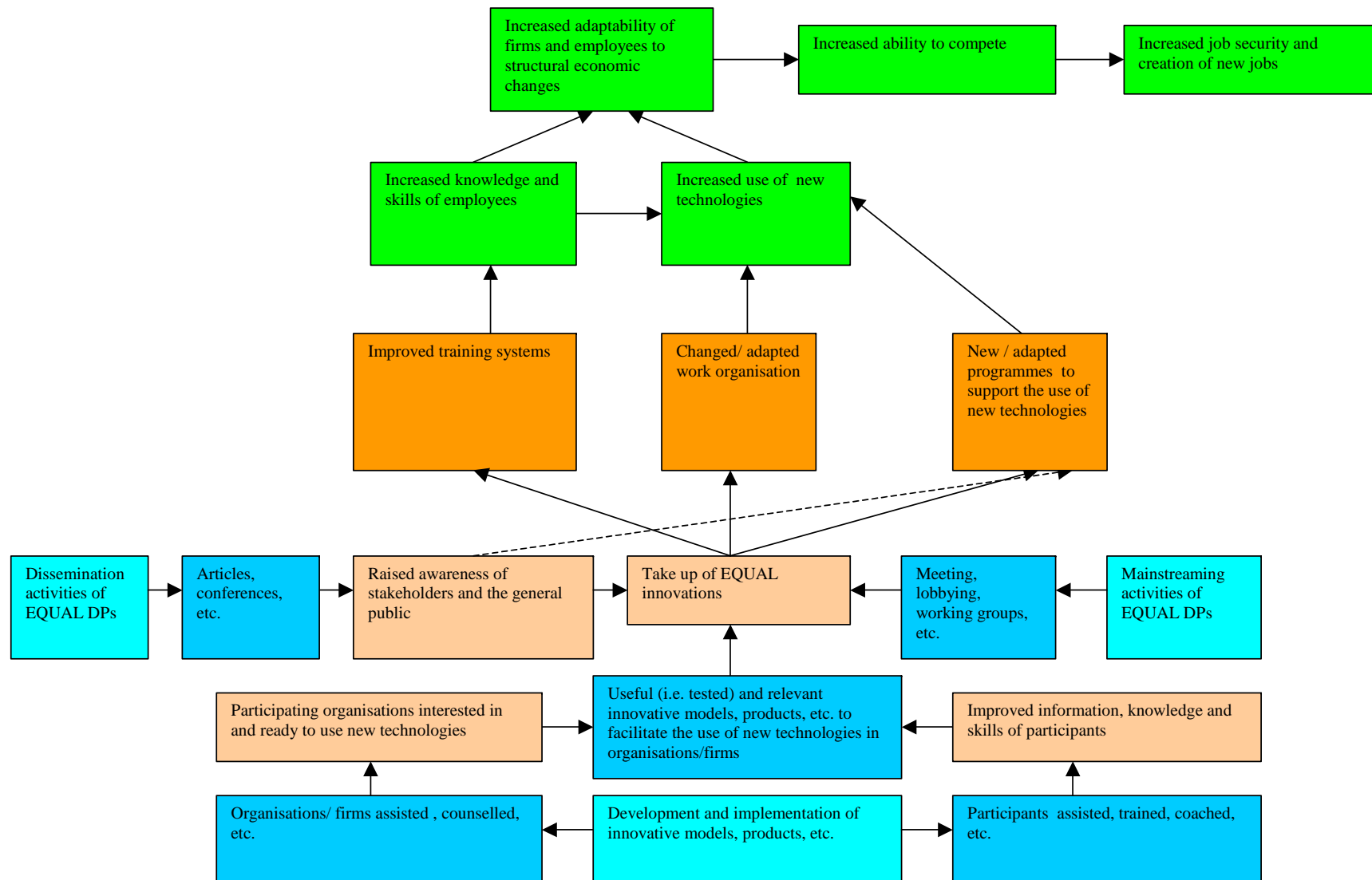


Figure 9. Intervention logic for thematic field 4G: Reconciling family and professional life

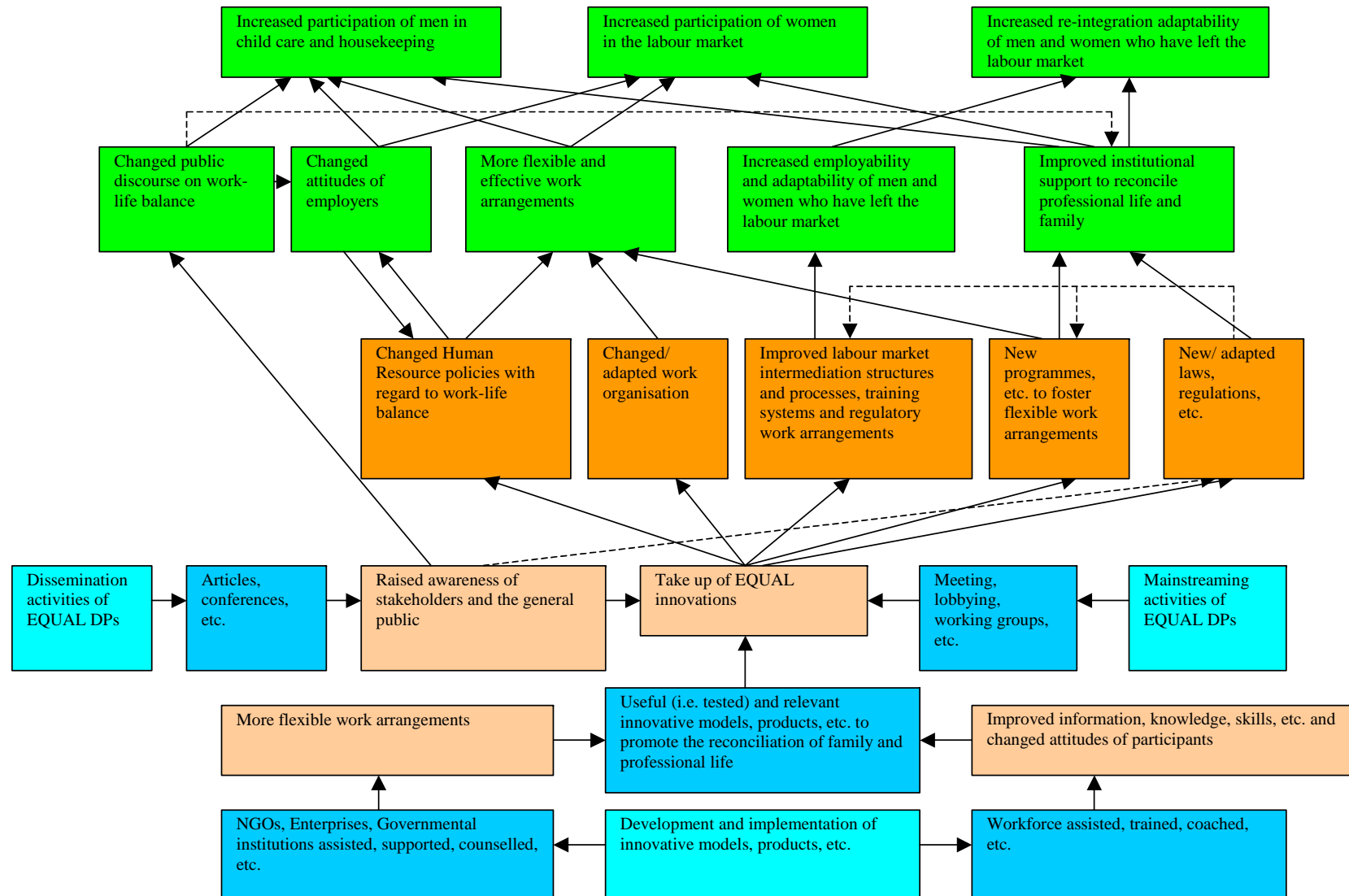


Figure 10. Intervention logic for thematic field 4H: Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation

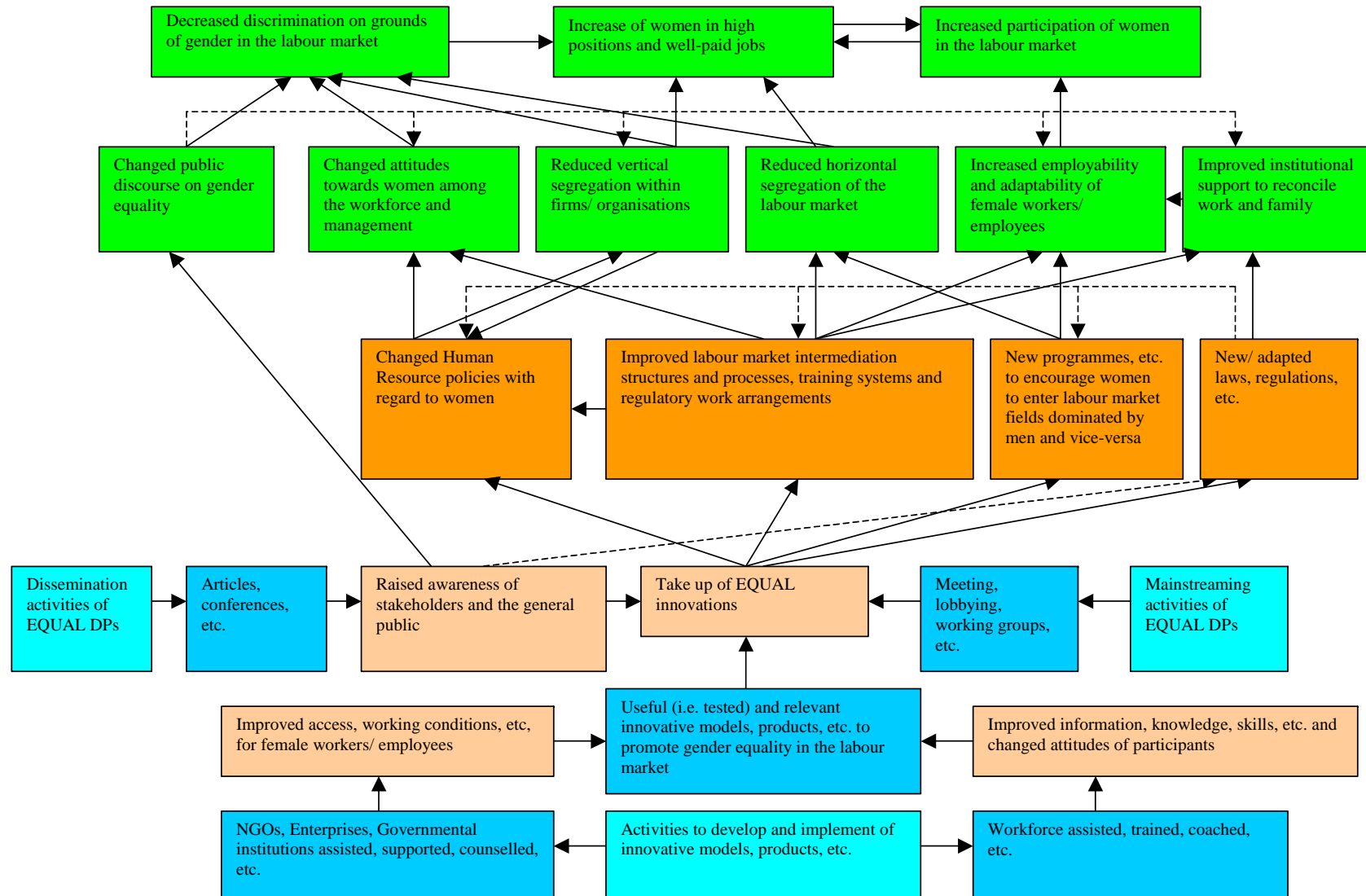
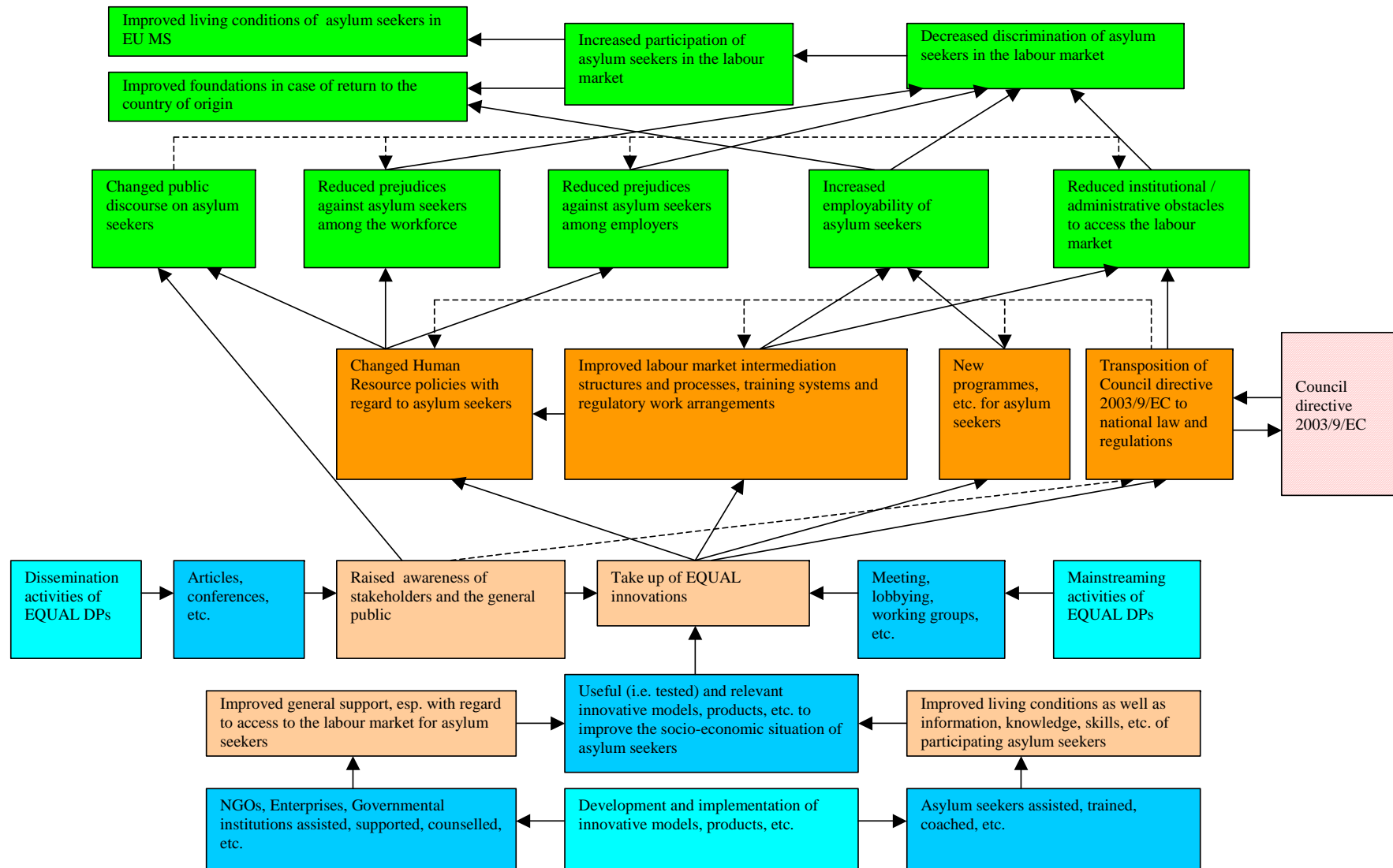




Figure 11. Intervention logic for thematic field 5I: Asylum seekers



## Comments

**Comment Figure 3:** Due to the layout, the target group of 1.A is addressed as ‘groups excluded from the labour market’ in the diagram. It does, however, also include those that are not fully integrated yet because of discrimination, especially physically and mentally impaired, ex-offenders/ people on probation, substance abusers and homeless people as well as people with migratory background or ethnic minorities (though these two groups are also specifically addressed under 1.B.)

**Comments Figure 4:** ‘Racism’ and ‘xenophobia’ are often used to describe a hostile, deprecatory attitude towards foreigners or people with a different nationality. However, since it is based on the subjective perception of ‘strangeness’ or ‘foreignness’ which usually is connected to certain external features (complexion, clothing, language), it often also concerns people who are not foreigners in a legal sense e.g. second and third generation migrants.

We thus decided to use ‘non-national and national ethnic minorities’ to refer to the final beneficiaries. This includes: legal foreigners, naturalised foreigners, second and third generation migrants born in the country or abroad and nationals with a different ethnic background.

The long-term impacts include ‘decreased discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity or religion in the labour market’. This refers mainly to anti-discrimination laws. ‘Religion’ in this context is related to the fact that belonging to certain religious groups and/or wearing certain clothes with a religious meaning (such as headscarf or turban) often provoke xenophobic attitudes.

**Comments figure 6:** Economies can be considered to have three sectors:

1st sector: business private sector, privately owned and profit oriented

2nd sector: public sector owned by the state

3rd sector: the social economy, that embraces a wide range of community, voluntary and not-for-profit activities.

However, though the term ‘Social Economy’ is known in all Member States of the European Union, the concept behind is not unambiguous, but usually coexists with other concepts (such as e.g. non profit sector).

For the purpose of this evaluation we use the definition of the report ‘The Social Economy of the European Union’ prepared by CIRIEC for the European Economic and Social Committee in 2007 ([http://www.ciriec.ulg.ac.be/en/telechargements/cese\\_en.pdf](http://www.ciriec.ulg.ac.be/en/telechargements/cese_en.pdf)). It defines the Social Economy as

“The set of private, formally-organised enterprises, with autonomy of decision and freedom of membership, created to meet their members’ needs through the market by producing goods and providing services, insurance and finance, where decision-making and any distribution of profits or surpluses among the members are not directly linked to the capital or fees contributed by each member, each of whom has one vote. The Social Economy also includes private, formally-organised organisations with autonomy of decision and freedom of membership that produce non-market services for households and whose surpluses, if any, cannot be appropriated by the economic agents that create, control or finance them”.

**Comments Figure 11:** In accordance with the guidelines of the Commission the term ‘asylum seekers’ is used for:

1. Those whose application is under consideration by the Member State concerned
2. Those who have been admitted under a humanitarian resettlement or evacuation programme or who benefit from a temporary protection arrangement

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3. Those who have not been granted refugee status, but benefit from another form of protection (complementary or subsidiary protection), because their individual situation prevents their return to their country of origin.

#### *Legal situation*

In 2003, the Council directive 2003/9/EC of January 27 2003 laid down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers.

Article 11 refers to employment and states that

1. Member States shall determine a period of time, starting from the date on which an application for asylum was lodged, during which an applicant shall not have access to the labour market.
2. If a decision at first instance has not been taken within one year of the presentation of an application for asylum and this delay cannot be attributed to the applicant, Member States shall decide the conditions for granting access to the labour market for the applicant.
3. Access to the labour market shall not be withdrawn during appeals procedures, where an appeal against a negative decision in a regular procedure has suspended effect, until such time as a negative decision on the appeal is notified.
4. For reasons of labour market policies, Member States may give priority to EU citizens and nationals of states parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area and also to legally resident third-country nationals.

The directive had to be transposed by 6 February 2005.

#### *Possible impacts of EQUAL*

The EQUAL Community Initiative had no influence on the obligation to transpose the directive to national legislation. However, there might have been some impacts on the transposition, since article 11 is of considerable flexibility with the Member States remaining in full control of the internal labour market as they can decide the kind of work asylum applicants may apply for, the amount of time per month or per year they are allowed to work, the skills and qualifications they should have, etc.

## 1.2 Methodology

The evaluation methodology was presented in detail in the Inception Report. Since then, it has been put into practice in the Member States and, on the basis of the initial experiences, refined in places. The main source of information for the answering of the evaluation questions posed in the Terms of Reference (ToR) are the three inventories (Key Outputs 1, 2 and 3) which have been compiled on the basis of the grids presented in the Inception Report. These grids were filled in by the information group and submitted to the core team for checking and analysing. Two core team workshops were held on 21/22 September and 22 October to discuss the preliminary findings and next steps.

Minor changes were made to the grids and the latter sent back to the information group experts for updating. On the basis of the revised grids (see Annex 1-4) the analysis of the information relevant to the evaluation questions was carried out. In relation to these findings, the fieldwork was then planned in greater detail and carried out. This chapter presents the different stages of the work and the methods and tools used.

### 1.2.1 The grids

The main tools for gathering data were the grids which also corresponded to the Key Outputs 1 to 3 (K1: Account of projects, K2: Inventory of validated innovations, and K3: Inventory of successful mainstreaming). A tool for measuring impacts was also developed. With the exception of K1 which was filled in by the MAs under the guidance of the core team, the grids were completed by the information group – also with the support of the core team. The information group were supplied with the template (see Annex 5) and a guidance note on how to fill in the grids. The information group were asked to derive their information from desk research only in the first stage of the research as it was deemed necessary to distinguish clearly between the information available in the reports<sup>22</sup> and that collected in interviews and case studies for methodological reasons.

#### 1.2.1.1 Key Output 1: Account of projects

Key Output 1(K1): Account of projects was coordinated centrally by a member of the core team. The MAs were asked to fill in the requested data in the K1 grid to the best of their ability based on the available information. It was found that the reporting systems differed substantially between the Member States and in some cases, there was no reporting of expenditures according to beneficiaries as defined in the EQUAL Common Database – which is the definition of target groups we also used for the evaluation. Some Member States did not report beneficiaries by thematic field, but only in total and in other cases, they only reported by Axis (not thematic field). The monitoring system in some Member States also did not report Action 3 expenditure at all.

#### 1.2.1.2 Key Output 2: Inventory of validated innovations

For the Inventory of validated innovations, we took a pragmatic approach to the definition of validation. At the lowest level, validation is a 'mention' in the reports, followed by 'acknowledged as innovation by external evaluators or experts' which includes being reported as innovation in evaluation and implementation reports, by mixed working groups and validation by peers but excludes self-assessment by the respective DP alone. The highest 'level' of validation is that done through a systematic overall validation procedure which may include controlled experimental design. In order to capture innovations that may have been missed by these

<sup>22</sup> The reports used were first and foremost the Annual Implementation Reports, the Updates of the Mid-Term Evaluations, the Annual Evaluation Reports 2007 and the Final Reports 2007 or 2008. National experts were also encouraged to check for national publications, brochures or websites which may also include innovations.

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validation procedures, we also considered innovations which have been successfully taken up by others or vertically mainstreamed to be implicitly validated even if no formal validation statement is available. Since we found gaps in the reporting of innovations, we were also prepared to consider innovations reported by experts and stakeholders in interviews. However, the latter were not considered as robust as those reported in the official documents. It was also our understanding that the ex post evaluation should not concentrate on collecting new information, but rather extract the essence of the existing data provided by preceding evaluation and monitoring activities at national and European level.

Given these conditions, we are confident that the grids contain all the innovations mentioned in the reports and other sources of documentary evidence (national websites/databases, brochures, minutes of meetings etc.) as well as from the EU-wide publications where a number of country specific innovations were also described.

The practical experience of filling in the K2 grid revealed a number of issues of overall importance for the evaluation as well as specific aspects which affected the filling in of the grids per se. It was found that formal validation only existed in very few countries. These were Portugal, French-speaking Belgium (Wallonia) and tentative efforts in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Poland. In Flanders, a validation method was introduced based on the Portuguese model, but at a very late stage. It is now used in the new OP 2007-13. This meant relying on the reporting of the innovation as a source of validation whereby the reporting of innovation also varied widely with some Member States barely mentioning innovation and reporting instead products and projects. There was very little information on the emergence of the innovation, i.e. whether it was imported, adapted or newly developed. If innovations were not explicitly referred to or did not fit into one of our categories of validation, it was challenging for the information group experts to know how to classify the project descriptions, in particular if there was no explicit recognition of the project/product constituting good practice. In order to remain methodologically sound, we asked the experts to omit products with too little evidence or where the description was too vague or related to the programme rather than a specific innovation.

#### **1.2.1.3 Key Output 3: Inventory of successful mainstreaming**

Regarding the mainstreaming inventory, the initial concept, in accordance with our understanding of the Terms of Reference, was to record cases where the validated innovation recorded in the Inventory of validated innovations had been successfully mainstreamed. However, the screening of the reports revealed that a significant number of cases of mainstreaming could not be directly linked back to the reported innovations. Mainstreaming was often described in general terms or at programme level. When mainstreaming was not linked to a specific innovation in K2, it was decided to include the DP code or project name (if available) for ease of identification and to give the mainstreaming cases a separate Mainstreaming ID which could then be carried forward into the Impact Grid.

A further finding from the screening was that the mainstreaming was quite often announced in the reports but it was not clear if it had been carried out. As the Terms of Reference require 'confirmed successful mainstreaming' we decided to record both those cases of mainstreaming which really had been confirmed successful and those which had been started/announced/carried out but had not been specifically recorded as successful.

In a number of cases, there was more than one instance of mainstreaming per DP. These were recorded separately.

#### **1.2.1.4 Impact grid**

The Impact Grid was created firstly in order to provide further details on the intermediary impacts listed in K3, and secondly, to collect information on intermediary and long-term impacts which

were reported to be directly related to the EQUAL Community Initiative but could not be linked to any specific innovation.

'Impact' in this context is defined as changes in policies, institutional structures, and organisations or, in the longer term, in the socio-economic situation of the EQUAL target groups. It is, however, not any change that might occur, but one that makes a real difference compared to the situation before.

As the impacts were rarely linked to a specific innovation, the DP code or project name was recorded (if available) in order to be able to identify/trace back the impact. Sometimes the impacts were also related to more than one DP or to the Community Initiative itself.

Very little mention of long-term impacts was found in the reports and these represented a challenge to the evaluators both because it was not always clear the extent to which new policy measures introduced were the result of EQUAL or of ESF actions in general and because the implementation was recent.

### 1.2.2 Further methods of data collection

The grids and inventories represented the main tools for gathering and presenting data and constitute self-standing mini-outputs in themselves in accordance with the Terms of Reference. However, they did not provide all the qualitative information needed to answer the Evaluation Questions. They were therefore complemented by further methods of data collection, primarily in-depth interviews and case studies.

#### In-depth interviews

The purpose of these interviews was to get information especially with regard to

- Innovations
- Success of mainstreaming activities
- Intermediary and long-term impacts and
- Community Added Value

The interviews were carried out using an interview template (see Annex 4) based on the Evaluation Questions presented in the Inception Report. In addition to the MAs, the NSS, Thematic Networks and national evaluators were also interviewed. However, given the number of Operational Programmes (27) in 25 Member States, we proposed to carry out in-depth interviewing in approximately half the Member States and only carry out one or two interviews with the main stakeholders in the others. This ensured coverage of all EU25 Member States while allowing more thorough analysis in selected cases. It was thus expected to get a more complete overall picture. A preliminary selection of Operational Programmes was made by the core team on the basis of the following general criteria:

- Size of the Operational Programme
- EU10 Member State
- Geographical location: North/South/Central

And the EQUAL specific criteria:

- Validation approach
- Mainstreaming success
- Conditions for implementation (new laws, national co-finance, ...)

The application of these criteria resulted in a preliminary selection of Operational Programmes as follows:

Table 1. Selection of MS for interviews: Criteria for selection

		General Features			Special Features		
		Size of EQUAL Op	EU10	Geographical location: North /South/Central	Validation approach	Mainstreaming Success	Conditions for implementation (new laws, national co-finance...)
In-depth interviewing	BE/FR			N	x	x	
	CZ		x	C	x		
	DE	x		C	x		
	ES	x		S		x	
	FR	x		C			
	GR			S		x	x
	IE			N		x	x
	IT	x		S			
	PL	x	x	C			
	PT			S	x		
	DK			N			
	LT		x	N		x	
	UK	x		N		x	
	Less 'in-depth' interviewing	BE/NL			N		
SE				N			
FI				N			
NL				N			
UK/NI				N			
LU				C			
EE			x	N			
LV			x	N			
LT			x	N			
HU			x	C			
AT				C			
SI			x	C			
CY			x	S			
MT			x	S			

Source: EQUAL core team meeting 21/22.09.09

The interviews were carried out by mid-November and the results fed into the Draft Final Report.

### 1.2.2.1 Case studies

As the second component of our fieldwork we carried out nine case studies of EQUAL DPs – one per thematic field. They involved site-visits and interviews with a broader range of actors, from project partners to government officials and beneficiaries. Rather than using large samples and following a rigid protocol to examine a limited number of variables, the case study method involved an in-depth, longitudinal examination of a single instance or event: a case. Case studies were particularly valuable to capture individual differences or unique variations from one project experience to another. In the context of EQUAL, they were especially important for the analysis of cause-effect mechanisms.



### Selection of the case studies

The selection of case studies was made on the basis of information gathered in the grids and, in part, confirmed by interviews. The main criteria for the selection of the case studies was a clear linkage between an identified innovation, mainstreaming and impacts which could be identified in the grids using the innovation ID, and the quality of the DP. On the basis of these criteria three potential case studies were chosen per Operational Programme. A selection of DPs was then made according to the availability of documentation and geographical spread. A selection of nine case studies (one per thematic field) was approved in the Interim Report. These are listed below.

Table 2. Case Studies

Thematic Fields	Country	DP
1.A.	DE	e-Learning in the penal system - e-LIS (DE-EA-91661)
1.B.	ES	Strategies to combat racism and xenophobia - BEMBEA (ES93)
2.C.	FR	Helping micro-entrepreneurs set up and stay in business - PROXY (FR-NAT-2004-42471 )
2.D.	BE/NL	Support unit for local authorities - Work Waardig
3.E.	IE	Clare Life Long Learning Network (IE-34 )
3.F.	PL	Let's build it together - Job Rotation (FO642)
4.G.	LT	FORWARD! Family and Work Reconciliation Development (EQ/2004/1130-23)
4.H.	AT	Policy and Public Service Push Gender Mainstreaming - POP UP GEM(AT-5-18/212)
5.I.	EL	Sustainable, protective and interconnected services towards asylum seekers - ANADRASI-ISTOS (GR-200906201006)

## 2 The coherence of EQUAL with the EES and the Social Inclusion process

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to offer final findings to the first evaluation question, EQ1: 'To what extent has the actual expenditure of the EQUAL Community Initiative been targeted at achieving the main objectives set in the European Employment Strategy (EES) and the Social Inclusion process?'

The Interim Report of the ex-post evaluation analysed the results obtained from the K1 account of projects inventory and answered some preliminary questions in relation to the distribution of EQUAL support amongst thematic fields and target groups. These questions reflect questions 1-3 in the original set of sub-questions to EQ1 as defined in the Inception Report (see table 3 below):

Table 3. List of questions pertaining to the analysis of K1

<p>Sub-questions pertaining to the level/status of the indicators</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Have the planned expenditures/actual expenditures of EQUAL been distributed equally between the nine thematic fields?</li><li>2. Have the planned expenditures/actual expenditures of EQUAL been distributed equally between different target groups?</li><li>3. Have the planned expenditures/actual expenditures of EQUAL been distributed equally between activities targeting 'assistance to persons' and activities targeting 'systems and structures'?</li><li>4. How was the link between integration of EQUAL with standard national policies? Was EQUAL simply complementing these (co-financed by specific national budgets for EQUAL) in an extra policy strain or was EQUAL mainly used to upgrade standard policy instruments with EQUAL specific features?</li></ol>
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The main findings from the analysis of questions 1-3 are summarised as follows:

- Not very high absorption rates of funding. For both EQUAL Rounds, total actual expenditure (as expressed by certified expenditure figures) did not exceed in the majority of cases 90% of planned funding. In Round I, the only exceptions were thematic field 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market), the equal opportunities thematic fields (4.G and 4.H) and the asylum seekers thematic field (5.I) which achieved absorption rates of 100%. In Round II, the best absorption rates were achieved by the equal opportunities thematic fields with as much as 88%.
- The absorption rates for ESF expenditure were generally better than the rates for total expenditure. This is an indication of better capacity to absorb ESF funds than to absorb national co-finance.
- All thematic fields were targeted by EQUAL expenditure, however, not all of them with a financial allocation of at least 10%. Thematic field 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market) had the highest share of planned and of certified expenditure (close to 35%), followed by the thematic fields 2.D (Social economy) and 3.E and 3.F (Adaptability) with a 10% allocation. All other thematic fields had an allocation of below 10%.
- The absorption rate of transnational cooperation was generally low in Round I, with a significant improvement in Round II, due to experience implementing the EQUAL programme. Very high absorption rates of transnational cooperation in Round II was also an indication of the dissemination efforts of the transnational component of EQUAL which brought its fruit in the second Round, with partners willing to invest more in this aspect.
- Action 3 was generally low for most thematic fields especially in Round I, with a few of exceptions where it exceeded the foreseen funding due to the financial contributions of the DP partners, notably in Round II.

- NGOs and public administration formed the categories of direct beneficiaries most intensively addressed by several thematic fields, with the exception of thematic field 3.F (Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees) which, due to its nature/content, addressed enterprises more intensively than the other categories of beneficiaries. Thematic fields 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market) and 3.F (Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees) absorbed the bulk of direct beneficiaries.
- All target groups were addressed by at least one thematic field; in fact, they were supported by all thematic fields to varying degrees.
- Overall, there was a more or less equal distribution of employed and unemployed people, with the employability, entrepreneurship and asylum seekers pillars focusing more on the unemployed, and the adaptability and equal opportunities pillars focusing more on employed people. This is to be expected since the first two pillars facilitated access to the labour market either through capacity improvements or through business promotion, which is particularly pertinent for unemployed people. In contrast, pillars 3 and 4 dealt with the adaptation of capacities to new knowledge and technologies and to structural changes in the economy and with reconciliation and gender issues, which were especially relevant for people already in the labour market (employed), but under threat of exclusion.
- Regarding the distribution of individuals in the nine thematic fields, it appears that migrants/ethnic minorities were covered in larger numbers by thematic fields 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market) and 1.B (Combating racism), while people with impairments and discriminated people were covered chiefly by thematic field 1.A.
- The analysis of policy goals does not present any surprises since the thematic fields targeted the policy goals they were designed to address. In this context, it can be confirmed that EQUAL thematic fields are in coherence with the EES as they address the main objectives set out there.

During the interview phase of the evaluation, clarifications were obtained to some of the above findings, while sub-question 4, directly addressing 'coherence' was the main focus.

**Table 4. List of questions pertaining to the analysis of coherence**

<p><b>Sub-questions pertaining to the analysis of coherence (sub-question 4)</b></p> <p>4.1 What national policies was EQUAL linked to?</p> <p>4.2 Was EQUAL used as an instrument to complement national policies in an extra policy strain? If so, which ones?</p> <p>4.3 Was EQUAL mainly used to upgrade standard policy instruments? And if so, which ones?</p> <p>4.4 What are the three most important reasons why the EQUAL expenditure contributed to the achievement of the European Employment Strategy objectives?</p>
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Feedback on these questions is the subject of this chapter so as to complement the analysis of the K1 grid and reach overall conclusions on the coherence of EQUAL with the EES and the Social Inclusion process.

The rest of the chapter is structured in the following way: section 2.2 presents the national policies that EQUAL was linked to and the way in which they were linked; section 2.3 argues through specific examples how EQUAL was used to complement national policies in an extra policy strain; similarly, section 2.4 argues through specific examples how EQUAL was used to upgrade standard policy instruments; finally, section 2.5 states the most important reasons why

EQUAL contributed to the achievement of the EES objectives, with a reference to its limitations and successes.

## 2.2 National policies to which EQUAL was linked

The **design** of EQUAL corresponded to the EES as suggested by both its objectives and its thematic fields of activity which were conceived to mirror the EES pillars (employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability, equal opportunities). It also supports the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers/refugees (an additional pillar of EQUAL) in coherence with the social inclusion process, whose principal aim was the eradication of poverty and social inclusion. By promoting the participation of actors such as NGOs, social partners and local and regional authorities, EQUAL emulates the Social Inclusion process which also builds on the participation of these actors.

**In practice**, EQUAL was generally linked to the key national policies. However, what was actually funded by EQUAL in each country reflected the realities on the ground. EQUAL can be characterised as a **demand-led programme** operating within the structure of the EES pillars. This is what explains the finding from the K1-Inventory of projects that financial allocations in some thematic fields were below 10% of the total funding. Decisions on how to allocate funding were driven more by political priorities at the time which in turn were driven by socio-economic realities in each country. It is obvious that the vocational and social integration of asylum seekers and combating racism and xenophobia were on the agenda but not generally major priorities. This is reflected in the near absence of national policies targeted specifically at asylum seekers, in the security rather than the social inclusion focus of immigration policies and consequently in the small allocation of EQUAL funding to these thematic fields.

Some distinctions are possible between countries based on the extent to which EQUAL was adapted to reflect national policies. In some countries it was adapted more to reflect key policy priorities at the time such as age management in France (see Box 1 below), while in others, it was implemented without any strong or causal links to national priorities (such as Ireland). We have identified three predominant clusters of countries depending on how EQUAL was linked to national policies, depicted in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Clusters of links between EQUAL and national policies

Cluster	Countries	Examples
EQUAL was adapted to reflect national priorities – ex ante links	UK	New Deal Programme. Jobcentre Plus. Small Business Service. DWP Employment Programme. Basic Skills Agency and Social Economy sector policies. Pensions.
	FR	Lifelong learning focused on age management. Adaptation focused on redeployment of traditional know-how towards skills shortages jobs and trades. Gender gap became a cross cutting theme. Ethnic discrimination a priority both in the EU and FR (however, not a major one as evidenced by the low levels of funding allocated to it). No link or very weak link in the case of asylum seekers, social economy, traditional know-how and preservation of local heritage.
	DE	Business start-ups as a way out of unemployment. The third sector. Ex-prisoners. Gender mainstreaming. Migrants and asylum seekers.

Cluster	Countries	Examples
	PT	National policies in the fields of social urban renewal, equality and policies that address disadvantaged groups.
	AT	Labour market policy
National policy was driven by EU priorities - direct links	DK	The goal was to raise employment levels. Focus on ethnic equality and gender equality and other marginalized groups. Asylum seekers were targeted but as a last priority.
	EU-10	EQUAL was linked to programmes and plans that were developed in line with the EES: National reform programmes National Development Plans National policies and action plans in the field of Employment and Social Inclusion Actions Plan for Growth and Jobs in EE Equal opportunities in CZ, MT LLL and asylum seekers in CZ Child poverty and education in LT Poverty and social exclusion policies in SI, MT, CY In some countries, EQUAL also fostered the development of new policies (e.g. innovation in LV).
National policy sought solutions from EQUAL – ex post links	IE	Several policies in the fields of labour market, social inclusion, equality, work-life balance, adaptation to change at company level, promotion of lifelong learning. Conscious effort for EQUAL to focus on systems change, i.e. to investigate how systems could be improved to support equality of access to labour market opportunities. EQUAL proposed a 'learner' and 'enterprise' centric approach to education and training rather than 'service-led' provision, gender equality (reflected in the National Women's Strategy) and policies for combating and preventing long-term unemployment and enhancing labour supply.
	LU	The National Reform Plan elaborated national policies which EQUAL was linked to in the fields of flexible child care structure, integration of prisoners, supporting homeless people.
	IT	Constitutional reform that resulted in devolution of decision making power to the regions took place during the implementation of EQUAL. As a result, the scope of policies changed: immigration and education in general falls under the remit of the State, while vocational training, social affairs and labour policies fall under that of the regions. Another legislative reform during EQUAL envisages the involvement of institutional bodies (regions and local authorities) in programming social and health services at local level through Zones Plans. New themes covered by EQUAL such as social cooperatives and the third sector (under entrepreneurship) and immigration (under employability). They were not part of national policies and results were used to inform them.
	GR	Fragmentation of existing policies implied that EQUAL was used to bring them together and provide new solutions.

Note: the table was elaborated with feedback from the interviews. Countries that are not represented here are not excluded from any of these categories. There was simply not enough information provided so as to classify them in this way.

Since EQUAL operated as a laboratory to test new ideas and solutions to discrimination problems in the labour market, it was used **as a means to inform the policies it was linked to**. Even in the cases where there was an ex ante link, these were reinforced as projects exhibited

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results and in the later stages of action 3 and mainstreaming, certain themes became more strongly interrelated with priority policy objectives (illustrative here from France are themes 1.B (Combating racism), 3.E (Age management) and 4.H (Reducing the gender gap)).

EQUAL demonstrated the **capacity to contribute positively to priority policy objectives**, especially in the cases where there was a lot of synergy between national priorities and EQUAL. An illustrative example comes from France.

**Box 1. Strong synergies between EQUAL and national priorities in France**

The high priority of fighting **ethnic discrimination** (TF 1.B) in France is reflected in the 2001 law against ethnic discrimination and the creation of an agency (ACSE) in 2005 and a fund (FASILD). It is also reflected in the National Actions Plans for Inclusion and Employment and in the Government Plan for Social Cohesion. Many innovative EQUAL projects have been developed under this theme in connection with these policy instruments and with a strong involvement and co-funding of ACSE/FASILD (regional branches were partners in 28 DPs out of the 44 on this theme).

The focus on **age management** stemmed from the low employment rate (31% in 2003 compared to 39% EU average) for the 55-64 years group. In order to reach the EES objective of increasing the employment rate by 5%, the government set up a national plan for retention and increased employment of the ageing population. This became a policy priority and a strong incentive to launch EQUAL projects in this field (TF 3.E). This topic was reinforced during the 2nd Round of EQUAL, as both an EU and national priority. The coordination and synergies between EQUAL projects (63 projects) and both EU/EES and national policies were very high.

**Reducing the gender gap** (TF 4.H) was a high priority in EU and national policies. In France, this theme was defined as a cross cutting objective for all themes and did not appear as a specific theme. Many projects under theme 4.G (reconciliation between family and professional life) were directly related to this objective. It was the subject of special attention during the 2nd Round. Incentives and information were provided by MAs and by the local branches of the Délégation au Droit des Femmes (belonging to 'Préfectures', national services at local and regional level). Half of the DPs received special briefing or awareness-raising training sessions on this subject. Gender issues were fully taken into account within EQUAL and closely linked with national policy in this field.

Identifying synergies between EQUAL and national policies was not always easy for the following reasons:

- Most projects were to some extent managed in parallel to national policies. In addition, one of the value added features of EQUAL, i.e. its closeness to the real needs of target groups on the ground, was a result of its projects being designed at the local or regional levels, addressing local problems. This was particularly true in large and decentralised countries like France, Spain or Italy or federal states like Germany. By contrast, employment and social inclusion policies – as stated in National Action Plans for Employment and National Action Plans for Inclusion - were centrally designed (in decentralised countries training policies were designed at regional level).
- The experimental nature of EQUAL projects made it more difficult to identify links with national policies which did not involve any experimentation.
- The longer term dimension of many EQUAL projects (for example on ethnic discrimination), compared to more short/mid term scopes of national policies.

The links with national policies were stronger when national – employment, social inclusion, training, equality, etc. – agencies or their regional branches were partners within DPs and actively involved in project implementation. One conclusion stemming from this is that

partnership – as a strategic instrument of EQUAL – influenced the coherence of the programme. We may speak of coherence both with national policies through the inclusion of strategic national partners in EQUAL partnerships and with local and regional priorities and needs through the inclusion of key territorial actors.

### 2.3 EQUAL as an instrument to complement national policies in an extra policy strain

EQUAL was used to complement and upgrade the above mentioned national policies rather than to develop new policies. In countries with decentralised public administration and decision making powers in the regions (e.g. Italy, Spain), EQUAL also complemented regional policies in the fields of employment, entrepreneurship, training, equal opportunities, etc. Demonstrating complementarity was a prerequisite for EQUAL projects as they were asked in their applications to justify complementarity with local/regional/national policies.

However, in some instances this complementarity was more 'formal' than real. For some countries e.g. UK, Ireland, Italy, Greece or Spain, the focus was on improving the delivery of existing policies, and the value of EQUAL was seen mainly in its ability to access groups that were previously difficult to access. In these countries, the value of EQUAL was in learning how to maximise benefits in terms of delivery mechanisms in local and regional environments. For instance, in a tight labour market and where policies were considered correct and appropriate, there was a need to know which delivery mechanisms work to implement national policies and objectives. The main issue was how to deliver policies and getting them to people on the ground. This was not always the case and there are plenty of examples of EQUAL projects with actors that would not traditionally be seen as vulnerable or marginalized, for example women lecturers in the UK or women in middle management positions in Denmark. An extra 'policy strain' involved the targeting of specific target groups for whom particular policies did not exist before (i.e. they were addressed in the overall context of employment and social inclusion programmes or were not addressed at all). Examples of the extra 'policy strain' can be found in Spain and Portugal where the social integration of ex-prisoners, asylum seekers or victims of human trafficking was addressed through specific targeted EQUAL interventions. Thus, EQUAL offered more opportunities for inclusion to certain target groups, therefore complementing existing policies in an extra 'policy strain'. In some cases where EU and national priorities had already been fixed by the time EQUAL was launched, it also provided a separate 'policy strain'. In the EU10 there was only one country (Estonia) where EQUAL was used exclusively to complement national policies and did not offer a new policy strain or upgrade standard instruments.

Specific examples of how EQUAL was used as an extra policy strain can be grouped as follows:

- i. **Where EQUAL addressed the fragmentation of national policies:** In Greece, EQUAL brought together distinct policies previously working in similar fields in an uncoordinated manner. Although it was not a mainstream programme it offered the opportunity to work on new problems/issues in a coordinated way.
- ii. **Where EQUAL complemented national policies for target groups that were not yet covered:**
  - In most EU10 countries, EQUAL allowed asylum seekers and the social economy to be addressed for the first time. For instance, Cyprus and Malta fomented the empowerment and the promotion of the social rights of asylum seekers. Although these countries offered reception, basic services, accommodation and provision of state medical care and services for asylum seekers before EQUAL, vocational training and work placements/job opportunities for asylum seekers were not addressed before EQUAL (in Cyprus asylum seekers were not allowed to work before EQUAL). In Poland, EQUAL addressed target groups for which there were no national programmes (only NGO support at local/regional level). More specifically, EQUAL was used to upgrade tools and methods mainly through



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the enhancement and innovative nature of the interventions with regard to e.g. targeting vulnerable groups, many of which had not yet been included in any policies and programmes. As a result, EQUAL introduced systemic approaches to recognise/include these groups.

- In Portugal, the work of EQUAL projects on victims of human trafficking, refugees and asylum seekers and ex-prisoners has influenced several levels: new support networks, an amendment to the Portuguese penal code, and new methodologies for social integration with civil society involvement.
- iii. **Where EQUAL identified new risk groups:** In the EU8 countries, several new risk groups were identified and the EQUAL projects were mainly targeted at them (for example, one project was targeted at gamblers and this project was very successful and continues its activities to this day). National practices did not have specifically targeted policy instruments, for example for gamblers, prostitutes, victims of human trafficking, farmers, etc, and in some cases new methods/training courses were developed for the risk groups.
- iv. **Where EQUAL put more emphasis on equality for certain target groups than national policies:** e.g. not equality for the unemployed but equality for unemployed women or unemployed immigrants, thus taking into account the multiple disadvantages that certain groups may have for entering the labour market. In Denmark for instance, starting from the main goal to raise employment levels, different vulnerable groups were identified focusing on ethnic equality and gender equality. Ethnic equality was also addressed in France by involving training, employment and social inclusion agencies in an integrated approach to manage discrimination.
- v. **Where EQUAL thematic fields brought in new topics that were not adequately addressed by national policies:** In Germany for instance, EQUAL was treated as a separate policy strain, in particular in the fields of gender mainstreaming, training for prisoners, third sector, asylum seekers, and start-ups. In Italy, the entrepreneurship theme was addressed to social cooperatives and the third sector not specifically targeted before by other instruments. The same was the case with immigration in Italy, which was not included in national policies. Therefore EQUAL was the first public intervention dealing with it. In Finland, the social economy and social entrepreneurship were promoted, while emphasis was also put on the employability of (ex-)offenders and young people.
- vi. **Where EQUAL achieved complementarities in the dissemination phase of project results:** In some cases, complementarities appeared when projects exhibited and experimented with innovative results in some priority policy areas.
- In France, importance given to dissemination and capitalisation platforms at national level on some themes (employment for older workers, ethnic segregation) and more active involvement of PES and regional employment services (attending seminars, using instruments produced, etc.) confirm the function of EQUAL as complementary to some national policy measures.
  - In Portugal, EQUAL complemented an 'Initiative for qualification and urban re-insertion of critical neighbourhoods' (IBC). The initiative was conceived as an integrated socio-territorial intervention in urban neighbourhoods with high social disadvantages. It combined the renovation of buildings and social intervention (prevention of teenage motherhood, prevention of drug abuse, social skills development, increase of educational success, etc.). EQUAL complemented the initiative by ensuring that solutions were transferred and integrated in the territories of the IBC. This was structured initially around 15 innovative products (which account for 21 sub-products) from seven EQUAL projects. The dissemination process involved approximately 40 public and private organisations (participation of a wide range of different entities, including public authorities and policymakers and other organisations that, through their intermediation capacity, influenced change).

On the issue of financial complementarity, EQUAL was clearly not an initiative to contribute in financial terms to mainstream national programmes. EQUAL complemented national policies and the programmes that were used to implement them by offering the possibility to develop new solutions to existing problems. It also highlighted new areas of concern that national policies should take into account, while at the same time offering tools for doing it. What matters is not whether EQUAL funding was significant compared to national funding or whether it was split evenly across thematic fields, but that it introduced a new way of working and experimented with innovative solutions for combating discrimination in the labour market (in fact, some of the thematic fields with the least funding produced some of the ‘richest’ results in terms of innovation and mainstreaming). No other national programme offered this, thus **EQUAL complemented national policies with an experimentation platform that would not otherwise have been supported.**

## 2.4 EQUAL as a means to upgrade standard policy instruments

As mentioned above, EQUAL was used to both complement and upgrade national policies. Upgrading implies the **delivery of the policy** rather than influencing the content of policies. EQUAL improved the delivery of existing instruments by boosting their implementation processes through the involvement of stakeholders, the empowerment of beneficiaries and linking the implementation of policy measures to an arena of innovation and creativity. From the experience of mainstreaming, influence on policy processes at national (or vertical) level would appear to be more limited. In countries with a regional dimension (in particular, France, Spain, Italy), EQUAL helped to link national policies with regional conditions/demand.

EQUAL went beyond traditional social policies to adopt a multi-actor and multiple intervention model (the ‘EQUAL model’). It was used to upgrade policy instruments through coordinated and serious dialogue. EQUAL can therefore be also seen as a ‘forum of dialogue and action’. EQUAL partnerships have enriched policies in terms of content (more adjusted to local demands), in terms of new methods or tools and in terms of management (growing role of evaluation) which may have been used to improve standard policy instruments. In Spain for instance, the ‘EQUAL model’ was adopted by the local administration. A distinguishing feature is that those local administrations that adopted the EQUAL way of working are still using it, thus indicating sustainability. This was not necessarily a conscious process or the unique influence of EQUAL; however, the result is that EQUAL had a strong influence on the adoption of this new way of working.

Illustrative examples of how EQUAL was used to upgrade policy instruments include:

- i. **Through mobilisation of a large range of stakeholders around a common theme.** In France, for example, on TF !.B. (Combating racism, fighting ethnic discrimination to use the national terminology), a topic which had not received enough attention in France until the end of the 90s. Innovative EQUAL projects succeeded in mobilising a large range of stakeholders (especially from enterprises), pointed out the key role of attitudes and cultural representations and convinced the government to engage in a more advanced level of activities in this field, with new instruments more focused on workplaces and on barriers within firms. This mostly happened when national agencies or the public administration were directly involved in national projects.
- ii. **Through the provision of opportunities to implement the stated policy.** An interesting example is Ireland where the value of EQUAL was on learning how to maximise benefits in terms of delivery mechanisms in local and regional environments. Assuming that policies were appropriate, there was a need to know which delivery mechanisms work best to implement them. The issue was how to deliver them and reach people on the ground. With respect to equality in the labour market for instance, the rhetoric of equality was there in

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national policy and legislation but it needed opportunities to be implemented. EQUAL provided precisely these opportunities.

- iii. **Through the provision of NGO-led support.** EQUAL introduced a systematic approach to recognise/include vulnerable groups which had not yet been included in national programmes. The empowerment of NGOs as organisations that are close to and understand the needs of target groups on one hand, and as lobbying mechanisms towards policy makers on the other, was a fundamental feature of EQUAL. In Germany for instance, EQUAL achieved improvements in certain fields, e.g. asylum seekers, not as a policy goal but because the NGOs were empowered through EQUAL and put pressure on the government to change things.

## 2.5 Contribution of EQUAL expenditure to the achievement of the European Employment Strategy objectives

EQUAL expenditure was not significant enough compared to other funding mechanisms to produce a major contribution to the EES objectives in terms of funding. However, the special features of EQUAL, namely its structure, instruments and objectives, e.g. the production of innovation, the obligation to work in partnership, the networking, the capacity building, etc. produced better conditions for the ultimate achievement of the EES objectives. In the current recession, it is ever more pertinent to identify what public policy can do to address the situation. The lessons learnt from EQUAL may offer an alternative to traditional risk-averse, mono-thematic and one-sided approaches.

The reasons why EQUAL contributed to the achievement of the EES objectives are perceived in different ways in each Member State. Notwithstanding the size of funding in comparison to other programmes, there are some overarching factors that render EQUAL an appropriate instrument for combating discrimination and inequalities for disadvantaged groups in the labour market. There was only one country (Germany) where EQUAL was focused on social cohesion rather than labour market policy. We analyse these factors in relation to the four EES pillars.

- i. In relation to pillar I – employability objectives: EQUAL improved employability not only through innovation in training and requalification systems and methods, but also through a range of integrated activities (training, mentoring, advice, seminars, etc.) focused on a wider range of disadvantaged target groups (the EES refers mainly to the long-term unemployed and the young unemployed) to enhance their social and labour market inclusion.
- ii. In relation to pillar II – entrepreneurship objectives: EQUAL promoted enterprise creation and self-employment which was particularly relevant in some countries for young people, unemployed people, ethnic minorities and women (the latter especially in isolated or rural areas). Also, within this pillar, priority was given, in some countries for the first time, to the social economy and the third sector.
- iii. In relation to pillar III – adaptability objectives: EQUAL dismantled prejudices with regard to some vulnerable groups such as ex-offenders, migrants, former drug users and made entrepreneurs aware of the fiscal and other advantages of hiring disadvantaged people. It most probably also contributed to creating more jobs as it tested and encouraged innovative approaches to flexible working arrangements.
- iv. In relation to pillar IV – equal opportunities objectives: EQUAL emphasised equality and equal opportunities. Equality in Spain for instance has become a very strong principle in the 2007-2013 period (stronger than under EQUAL). In Malta, not only gender projects but also other projects treated this concept since they targeted socially disadvantaged groups and strived to integrate them in society. In Ireland, EQUAL increased participation rates of women and other groups in the labour market. In some of the EU8 countries reconciliation and family life became new fields of public policy.

EQUAL complemented the main EU policies and strategies by contributing to the debate on employment, social inclusion and sustainable development. In recent years, the employment strategy was incorporated into the Lisbon strategy; the four pillars of the Lisbon strategy were adapted progressively and influenced by EQUAL. The social inclusion strategy moved in parallel with EQUAL and became the Social Inclusion process and the Sustainable Development strategy also developed during the same period. EQUAL moved independently of these three main EU strategies but contributed with regard to the bottom up connection between the strategies and in the process of integration of the strategies.

EQUAL also showed the limits of programmes to fight social exclusion and poverty through employment and jobs alone. It demonstrated that growth and jobs were necessary but not enough to combat, for instance, income disparities, regional disparities, gender and ethnic disparities or household hardships. EQUAL also strengthened the local dimension of the EES and the integration of various approaches (e.g. local employment and development initiatives, local welfare systems). In this it showed a certain continuity with regard to previous programmes. Finally, EQUAL contributed to 'Active Inclusion' policies (e.g. EQUAL and the ESF quoted by the EU Commission (COM(2006)44)) in at least to two pillars: links to labour markets (e.g. jobs and training opportunities); access to quality services (e.g. employment, social support, health, childcare, housing, etc.); the third pillar being income support to the most vulnerable persons and groups.

## 3 The contribution of EQUAL to the production of relevant and useful innovation

### 3.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings on the second evaluation question EQ2: 'To what extent has the EQUAL Community Initiative supported activities that produced relevant and useful innovation for preventing and combating discrimination and inequality in the labour market?'

This main question was complemented and further specified by three sub-questions:

- Has the principle of partnership (composition, distribution of responsibilities, active versus non active partners, etc.) contributed to the production of innovation?
- Which factors facilitated/inhibited the production of innovation?
- Have the 'strategic instruments', i.e. partnership, empowerment and transnational cooperation contributed to the production of innovation? Which measurable targets have been developed for these principles and to what extent did they relate to innovation?

These questions address two key issues:

1. To what extent has relevant and useful innovation been produced at all?
2. Which factors positively or negatively influenced the production of innovation and which role did the strategic instruments play in this?

The first issue has been largely tackled using a quantitative approach in the K2-Inventory of innovations. In addition – like all the evaluation questions – it was subject to interviews with stakeholders and one of the topics of the Expert Panels held in October and December 2009.

The second issue was mainly handled within the interviews and the Expert Panels, but as a side-product also integrated in the collection of information and data for the inventory.

For the purpose of interviews, the questions were further broken down and specified.

Table 6. Evaluation Question 2 and related sub questions

<p><b>2 TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE EQUAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES THAT PRODUCED RELEVANT AND USEFUL INNOVATION FOR PREVENTING AND COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITY IN THE LABOUR MARKET?</b></p> <p>2.1 The EQUAL Community Initiative differed from other ESF programmes in that the Development Partnerships had to fulfil several formal requirements, also called 'strategic instruments'. These were partnership, i.e. the inclusion of operational and strategic partners, the empowerment of participants and transnational cooperation with other Development Partnerships.</p> <p>2.1.1 In your view, have these instruments influenced the innovative nature of the outputs produced by the Development Partnerships?</p> <p>2.1.2 If so, in which way? Could you mention any examples to illustrate this influence?</p> <p>2.1.3 Were there any aspects of each of these principles that were of special importance to the production of innovation (e.g. composition of partnership, distribution of responsibilities, active versus non active partners, etc.)?</p> <p>2.2 How have these principles been evaluated/articulated/interpreted at national level? Have any targets been formulated (e.g. minimum number of partners in a partnership, etc.)? If so, which targets?</p> <p>2.3 Did any other factors affect (inhibit or stimulate) the generation of innovations?</p> <p>2.4 In what ways was innovation useful, i.e. reliable, practical and easy to use/apply in the project contexts? For instance, was there sufficient testing (i.e. tested on a critical mass of beneficiaries) of innovative results so they are proven to be useful in combating discrimination and inequality in practice? Can you mention any illustrative examples?</p>
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- 2.5 In your view, did EQUAL have any effects on the management of innovation development processes in the social field? If so, which effects? If not, why?
- 2.6 Was there an overall approach to validate the innovations produced? If so, please describe it. Was it applied to all projects or just to a sample?

Before coming to the findings on the issues from the grids (cf. 3.4 below), the concept of innovation (cf. 3.2 below) and the practical approach to creating the inventory (cf. 3.3 below) are briefly described.

### 3.2 Definition

Innovation can be defined in a very open and general way as a change in

- Goals or scope of actions chosen
- Ways of producing /delivering related output
- Organisational arrangements and structures set up
- etc.

These changes or newly introduced approaches, principles, and structures should by some evidence, prove to be superior to what has so far been used or applied as a standard in the respective field of interest. In other words: we consider as crucial characteristics for any supposed innovation, that there is evidence for its

1. Novelty and
2. Superiority

These two aspects are the cornerstones for our understanding of innovation in this evaluation exercise and for our screening of the available documentation.

In other – business economic or engineering – contexts, market success is considered a condition sine qua non for the definition of innovation. In EQUAL terminology, this would mean innovation has to be successfully mainstreamed to be recognised, thus taking the mainstreaming process as a market-substitute. We do not consider this appropriate as in the core of market-processes is a bilateral agreement of seller and buyer, which in an ideal way are independent of each other and thus free in their decision to exchange money and goods. In the context of EQUAL there was no such bilateral independence – which is reflected in the whole concept of EQUAL and its principles. There was multi-polarity and that is why principles like partnership and empowerment were introduced. The decision on superiority alone is a very tricky one when it comes to reality and when taking into consideration not only the funding bodies' interest in 'getting value for money' but also the target recipient's perspective. With EQUAL we were not on a market but in a policy arena with multiple perspectives. Thus – and this was also a result from the interviews – it is clear that not only superiority or novelty were the decisive factors for mainstreaming but rather more political priorities that can dramatically change no matter how good an innovation was or not. Accordingly, we searched for evidence of these two issues in the desk research into innovation.

### 3.3 Methodology

The research was broadly divided into desk research in which all available reports at programme (not DP) level were analysed and field research in which interviews and case studies were carried out. The document screening was supported by several grids, amongst these, a specific grid for innovation.

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With the innovation grid the evaluation pursued several specific goals:

- a) To draw up a list of innovations with a short description of content,
- b) To link each innovation to the thematic field under which it had been created,
- c) To document the respective source of information with the use of some subcategories (multiple choices possible):
  - Evaluation/Annual Implementation Report
  - NTN/ETG reported
  - Database
  - Other sources
  - No explicit identification

The last category was included for innovations not explicitly identified, e.g. a report mentions 'a lot of successful innovations in the training systems'; we do not know anything about the single innovation but have information at a very general level. In such cases, the respective information was included under 'description' as well as the source.

- d) To get an assessment of the extent of information available for a more in-depth follow-up where deemed interesting (or necessary) by using predefined options (single choice) that contribute to the overall assessment of the credibility of the innovations reported:
  - Basic mention with no further details
  - Mention with some information on the DP/beneficiary
  - More detailed description
- e) To collect explicit or implicit information on mainstreaming results<sup>23</sup> which have been reported with the use of four categories (multiple entries were possible)
  - Explicit mainstreaming
  - Implicit mainstreaming
  - No successful mainstreaming recorded
  - Unknown
- f) To collect information describing novelty as specified by two aspects of the innovation assessed:
  - Emergence, i.e. how the innovation was created:
    - o Import/take-up of method or activity from a different context (region, member state, sector etc.) with very little adaptation
    - o Active adaptation from a different context
    - o New development.

This differentiation takes into account the clear statement of EQUAL that innovation should not be confused with invention. The replication or active adaptation of a successful model from another national, regional or sectoral context can be as good an innovation as a completely new development. In particular with regard to the partnership principles of EQUAL, the idea of transfer of knowledge and exchange of experience was considered central.

  - Dimension, i.e. whether the innovation was Goal, Process or Context-oriented. These categories were first used in the evaluation of the Community Initiatives Employment

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<sup>23</sup> The evaluation used a strict definition of mainstreaming as the take up into or the influence of innovation on policy and practice at the institutional political, regulatory or administrative levels. This is clearly distinct from dissemination activities which may of course lead to mainstreaming results but is not the focus of the research.



and are useful for categorising the innovation. Process-oriented innovation covers the development of new approaches and methods and the improvement of existing ones and is therefore a good measure of superiority. Goal oriented innovation refers to the formulation of new objectives including the identification of new qualifications and the opening up of new areas of employment and Context oriented innovation relates to political and institutional structures and systems development.

In practise these 'ideal forms' of Emergence and Dimension only rarely appear. Therefore, the national experts were asked to record the strongest aspect, allowing however for multiple entries when deemed necessary.<sup>24</sup>

g) To retrieve information on the kind of validation approach underlying the reporting of innovations, i.e. used by the sources, two aspects were considered central:

- Who did the validation? The major potential 'validators' were offered in a drop-down list (single choice)
  - o Self-assessment by DP
  - o Managing Authorities
  - o National evaluator
  - o NTN /ETG
  - o Others (e.g. university)
- How was it done? This was not focussed on how the validation was done in the sense of describing a specific methodology but rather on the question whether there was a general and transparent approach applied in principle to all innovations throughout an OP, or whether a clear framework for validation existed – at least for specific innovations, or nothing of the sort. The categories (single choice) provided were:
  - o Systematic overall validation procedure,
  - o For selected innovations on ad hoc basis,
  - o No clear framework.

Because of the fixed set of answer options an additional open field was provided for complementary notes on additional relevant aspects.

h) To identify whether mainstreaming has taken place:

What is the value of innovation without mainstreaming? This question was inspired by the experience of the ESF before EQUAL where model projects and innovative actions were short-lived, limited to their original environment and 'died' when the funding was phased out. Under EQUAL, mainstreaming was an explicit theme underpinned by a specific Action (Action 3) as well as by Guidance Documents, and supported by special organisational provisions like the National Thematic Networks (NTN) and European Thematic Groups (ETG). Although the evaluation team prepared a specific grid on mainstreaming, a section was also foreseen within the innovation grid to deal with the sustainability and mainstreaming of the respective innovations. Following the established categorisation of horizontal and vertical mainstreaming, and taking into consideration the specific focus of EQUAL on transnational partnerships, the following set of options was provided to register and classify mainstreaming activities linked to specific innovations (multiple choices possible):

- vertical national mainstreaming
- horizontal mainstreaming/take-up national
- horizontal mainstreaming/take-up transnational

<sup>24</sup> As will be shown later under the respective sections the multiple choice option has been used for a relatively small number of cases.

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- vertical transnational mainstreaming
  - continuation/maintenance
- i) To estimate the existence of certain prerequisites necessary for successful mainstreaming. One major prerequisite is the availability of a good documentation of the innovation and of the conditions of its successful application as shown by experience from the development context. That is why in the last column of the innovation grid we asked for an assessment of the documentation available with respect to potential users' needs. Under the header 'Completeness of documentation for mainstreaming?' a simple ranking (high, medium, low) of the quality and extent of the kind information provided by the sources was requested from the screening experts (for results cf. Table 10). More than 80% of all reported innovations have been rated regarding that specific question and only for 22% of these (166) a high availability or quality of the necessary information/documentation was stated. Another 179 (37%) was rated 'medium' on the scale).

### 3.4 Findings

The main findings of the ex-post evaluation in relation to innovation were:

1. It was impossible to find some necessary information on the link between the innovations and the thematic fields of EQUAL as there was no systematic documentation available for at least some of the OPs. This was mainly due to the fact that the monitoring systems did not provide innovation-related information systematically. Likewise, the issue of innovation had a very different relevance for the standard documentation (AIRs, Evaluation Reports).
2. The concept of innovation and its relevance for funding decisions and, in particular, the assessment of innovation development as a crucial aspect of success, were perceived in very heterogeneous ways across the EU. This made it difficult – even with the general and open categories used in the grids – to find sufficient reliable and specific information on this issue which was presentable in a statistical summary.
3. Other elements of the information on innovation show a lack of coherence with other information found in the relevant documents. There are obvious inconsistencies in the fact that reported mainstreaming often cannot be unambiguously linked to specific innovations and information on mainstreaming activities reported on specific innovations often cannot be verified by corresponding statements from systematic reporting on mainstreaming.
4. Likewise it was necessary to view the results of the quantitative data analysis against the background of the additional information available on the evaluation questions from the grids and interviews with stakeholders.

#### 3.4.1 Innovation identified and sources of identification (topics a – c)

To keep the presentation of data in the tables manageable and to ensure readability the official numbering of the thematic fields (TF) is used. An overview of the thematic fields and their link to the Pillars of EES is given below:

Table 7. EQUAL Thematic Fields and related Pillars of the EES

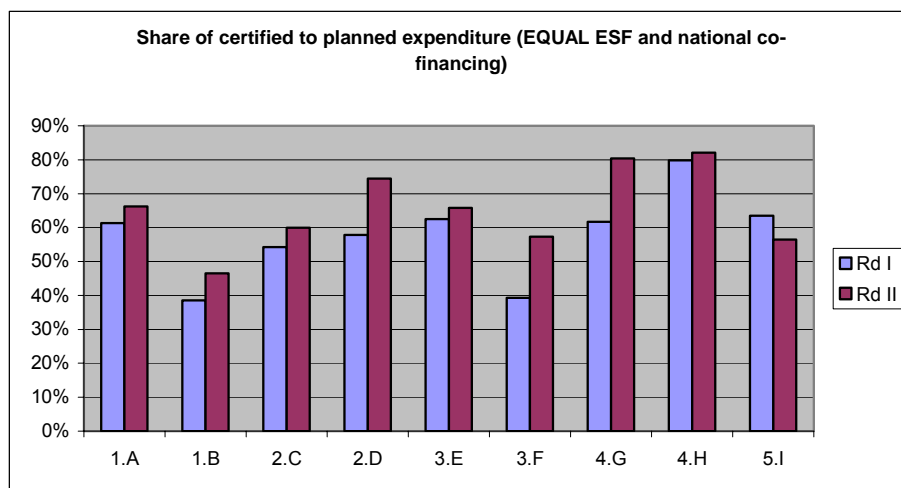
EES Pillars	TF	Thematic Field Topic
I Employability	1.A	(Re-)integration to the labour market
	1.B	Combating racism
II Entrepreneurship	2.C	Business creation
	2.D	Social economy
III Adaptability	3.E	Life long learning
	3.F	Adaptation to structural and economic change, especially ICT
IV Equal Opportunities	4.G	Reconciling family and professional life
	4.H	Reducing gender gaps and desegregation
	5.I	Asylum seekers

The production of innovation in the field of social integration into the labour market was the operational goal of EQUAL. Altogether 924 cases of innovations were reported in a sufficiently specific and detailed way in the available reports at the time of writing to be taken on board within the inventory thus more than fulfilling the expectations.

This is an encouraging result given the number of DPs (3,178) and taking into account the fact that in addition to those innovations that were reported in the national or EU-wide documentation, a lot of small scale innovations presumably did not make their way into the documentation<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, developing innovation is a risky undertaking and not all attempts can be expected to be successful – not even the majority of attempts. A share of 20% might even be considered a fairly good result.<sup>26</sup>

All the more this can be considered satisfactory when taking into consideration the partially medium and sometimes low absorption rates of funding by Thematic Fields.

Figure 12. Certified versus planned expenditure by Thematic Fields



<sup>25</sup> The counting and presentation of innovations in the reports and documentation analysed is an issue in its own right: In some cases, complex innovations, entailing several small but independently working innovations are reported as one, in other cases each sub-innovation will have been counted and reported separately. This could not be controlled by our screening experts. The only way to overcome this kind of problem is a commonly agreed method of innovation validation and reporting across the EU – which was not available during EQUAL.

<sup>26</sup> We are aware that the strategic goal of EQUAL was innovation mainstreaming and not just production. Nonetheless, without innovation production, there would have been nothing that could have been mainstreamed.

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The low absorption rates can be taken as an indication of substantial problems in implementation either due to economic and financial context conditions or to problems handling the novelty and complexity of the EQUAL approach and its principles. For example, principles of national co-financing could cause problems due to a general lack of availability of funding for the specific purpose (e.g. integration of asylum seekers into a programme), or specific eligibility rules, or the link with other national programmes that were not compatible with EQUAL. In other words, with more experience and more adequate implementation conditions, one might have expected even more innovations to emerge from EQUAL.

Comments from MAs in interviews had a tendency to blame DPs alone for low absorption:

- Delays of some partners had repercussions as projects/DPs were not able to spend funding respecting all norms in the time available.
- Management problems of DPs.

These are relevant factors, but the background was more complex. EQUAL was designed in a much more complex way than traditional programmes and public institutions held greater responsibility – be that as partners, as managing bodies, or as policy stakeholders. The provision and stability of national co-funding and the legal framework were key factors as are the appropriateness of co-funding compared to the needs of risk-funding for innovation<sup>27</sup>, administrative flexibility, proper timing in the programme implementation and its relevance for transnational partnership.

To consider EQUAL a systemic programme where not a single partner/stakeholder could be held responsible for delivery but the combination and co-operation of different bodies and institutions involved in different roles from DP partner to MA and NSS and beyond made it difficult to clearly assign accountability but also provided more opportunity for learning. As one Finnish interview partner stated, there is a steep 'learning curve' in EQUAL.

The **quality of innovations** produced varied from project to project. Reasons for this were the composition of the DPs and the projects' 'level' at the start. Especially in the second Round, the stronger DPs were in a better position to produce innovations because they had experts from the first Round on board. Also, different projects targeted groups differently and combined things differently within their DP.

Amongst the innovations found, 81% could be assigned to one of the thematic fields, either by tracing the innovation via a related DP to the respective thematic field or as the innovation could be directly linked from the reporting context to one of the thematic fields.

The clear majority (259) of innovations was assigned to TF 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market). This is followed by those not attributable (180) to any thematic field.

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<sup>27</sup> For example, on account of the German way of co-financing the partnerships (by paying the subsistence costs of the target groups), these were sometimes too big and unwieldy for true innovation. Had the co-financing been 100% national then these problems would not have occurred.

Table 8. Innovation – number & relevant sources for identification<sup>28</sup> (multiple choices)<sup>29</sup>

Thematic field TF	Count Cases	Innovation was identified by us via one or several of the following sources								
		Evaluation/ Annual Implementation Report	NTN /ETG reported	Database	Other sources	No explicit identification	Match cases	[%] match	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	212	0	43	64	1	259	100%	320	124%
1.B	47	33	2	10	12	2	47	100%	59	126%
2.C	60	51	0	12	15	0	60	100%	78	130%
2.D	56	39	0	19	15	1	56	100%	74	132%
3.E	79	67	2	9	24	1	79	100%	103	130%
3.F	64	52	0	30	19	0	64	100%	101	158%
4.G	73	68	0	11	6	0	73	100%	85	116%
4.H	68	46	0	19	12	1	68	100%	78	115%
5.I	38	26	0	9	13	0	38	100%	48	126%
not specified	180	82	0	12	87	7	180	100%	188	104%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.134</b>	<b>123%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>127%</b>
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>81%</b>		<b>83%</b>	
<b>Share of matches</b>		<b>73%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>1%</b>				
<b>Share of ticks</b>		<b>60%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>1%</b>			<b>100%</b>	

Source: Innovation inventory

The next table shows the **spread of innovations (and expenditure) by thematic fields**. Not surprisingly, the bulk of innovations (35%) came from TF 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market) and the lowest numbers were related to TF 5.I (Asylum seekers) (5%) and 1.B (Combating racism) (6%). The remaining thematic fields constituted a middle group from 8% to 11% of all innovations assignable.

When looking at how the funding (spread of total expenditure) and innovations created were related to each other, the result seems to be relatively balanced, although there were relative differences (cf. last column) that – in particular for smaller thematic fields – might be considered significant. However, any judgement has to keep in mind that:

1. The comparison is only possible for 80% of the innovations generated (20% were not assignable to any thematic field).
2. The expenditure was not directly linked to the 'production' of innovation but to all the project activities, and there was no information available on the cost-structure related to innovation and other activities respectively.
3. On the other hand, we know that depending on the type of activities and the very specific types of national co-financing, no generally

Table 9a. Innovation by thematic fields – compared with expenditure

Thematic field TF	Share of Innovations (I)	Share of actual total expenditure (II)	(I - II)/II
1.A	35%	32%	9%
1.B	6%	4%	58%
2.C	8%	8%	1%
2.D	8%	12%	-37%
3.E	11%	16%	-34%
3.F	9%	9%	-4%
4.G	10%	7%	40%
4.H	9%	10%	-9%
5.I	5%	3%	70%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: Innovation inventory, Inventory 'Account of DPs'

<sup>28</sup> The 'no explicit' item is explained above under 3.3.

<sup>29</sup> The subsequent tables always show at least two analytical columns: {Ticks} and {[%] of all cases}, indicating how many items have been chosen altogether. In cases where multiple-choice was possible, tables show in addition two columns {match cases} and {[%] match}, indicating the number of innovations that are actually assigned to one or more of the specific items available and the respective share compared to all innovations under the TF. Besides, there is always a bottom row {share of ticks}, indicating the relative weight of the specific item's ticks compared to the total of all ticks. In case of multiple choice again, this is complemented by a row {share of matches}, indicating how many of the innovations qualified at all for at least one item have been qualified with that specific item.

applicable distribution of cost/expenditure can be assumed.

4. Last but not least, not all financial data were made available at the level of thematic fields but at pillar level – the spread in relation to thematic fields in these cases had to be based on estimations.

Taking these factors into consideration, the deviances actually seem to be not that conspicuous, especially when comparing on the basis of Pillars (I-IV + Asylum Seekers) instead of thematic fields alone.

Another – quite similar – comparison could be more conclusive: Share of innovations and share of DPs.

This comparison is not influenced by the unclear assignments of expenditure to Pillars instead of thematic fields and it confirms – based on the relative differences displayed again in the last column – the outstanding performance of 4.G (Reconciling family and professional life) and 5.I (Asylum seekers) as well as the relative under-performance of 2.D (Social Economy) and 3.E (Life Long Learning). There is no generally valid explanation for this but different potential contributing factors had to be taken into consideration. For asylum seekers, it was plausible to refer to the overall novelty as a scope of policy: like rain in the desert there might have been a tailback of needs and ideas finally receiving a chance for realisation. This might also be valid for 4.G, although a more generally accepted policy goal but not yet underpinned by broader scale programmatic support. These were aspects that could equally apply to the Social Economy (2.D), but the results are completely different here. Life Long Learning (3.E) – at least in the EU15 – already had some tradition (e.g. in the CIP ADAPT, but also in ‘standard’ ESF programmes) and it could be simply that there was nothing new that was of interest for the enterprises as a target beneficiary.

‘Evaluation Reports and Annual Implementation Reports’ by far constituted the major source for the identification of innovations (73% of all match cases and 60% or nearly two thirds of all explicit answers or ‘ticks’). Nonetheless – as we had expected from our knowledge on the ESF monitoring systems in general as well as from former experience with the EQUAL implementation in particular – there was no general approach to documenting innovation within the monitoring systems.

Second were ‘other sources’ (not further specified) with about 24% of ticks and 29% of all match cases. Amongst these were leaflets and anything else that was included in the documentation package provided to the screening experts. Finally, national and EU-wide databases built the third strongest source of information, but with only about 15% of ticks and 19% of match cases.

Reports from the NTN/ETG did not provide much information on innovations. This might be related to a lack of available documents, but could also indicate that these sources were not specific enough for the purpose of the inventories.

Besides information sources, also the **extent of information** provided was recorded to get an estimation of its usability.

Table 9b. Innovation by thematic fields – compared with number of DPs

Thematic field TF	Share of Innovations (I)	Share of DPs (II)	(I - II)/II
1.A	34,8%	33%	5%
1.B	6,3%	6%	15%
2.C	8,1%	9%	-6%
2.D	7,5%	11%	-34%
3.E	10,6%	14%	-25%
3.F	8,6%	10%	-12%
4.G	9,8%	6%	66%
4.H	9,1%	9%	6%
5.I	5,1%	3%	69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: Innovation inventory, Inventory ‘Account of DPs’

Table 10. Innovation – Extent of information provided

Extent of information provided							
TF	Count Cases	n.a.	basic mention with no further details	mention with some information on the DP/beneficiary	more detailed description	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	4	107	69	79	255	98%
1.B	47	1	19	13	14	46	98%
2.C	60	0	27	15	18	60	100%
2.D	56	0	17	12	27	56	100%
3.E	79	2	44	15	18	77	97%
3.F	64	0	20	22	22	64	100%
4.G	73	1	37	18	17	72	99%
4.H	68	3	16	22	27	65	96%
5.I	38	1	10	16	11	37	97%
not specified	180	22	51	92	15	158	88%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>98%</b>
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>81%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>82%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>39%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: Innovation inventory

For nearly all (98%) innovations an assessment of the extent of information provided was given. For a little over a quarter (28%), the information found in the documents was rated as a 'more detailed description'. For the majority of innovations (39%), the rating was 'a basic mention with no further details', and the last third (33%) was rated 'mention (complemented) with some information on DP and/or beneficiaries'. This quite clearly showed the limited base of information that was available throughout the standard EQUAL documentation.

This gap could be partially closed with the results from the interviews. By definition, the interview questions and the information collected in the grids were not identical. The purpose was different and the interviews were explicitly not conducted to fill in gaps in the grids. Vice versa, the grids could however be considered to complement and substantiate the interview findings.

With regard to this operative goal, the answers were very clear and unambiguous in all Member States: yes, EQUAL was an innovation-generator also by national standards.

In particular the results of the interviews on Evaluation Question 2.1 and its sub-questions (cf. above Table 6. Evaluation Question 2 and related sub-questions) showed the high esteem in which EQUAL was held on the whole and in particular the partnership principle. The transnationality principle was also appreciated although opinions relating to it were generally more ambivalent. It was often felt that the problems related with working transnationally were systematically underestimated by the Commission. Cooperation was considered to boost the capacity for innovation development, notwithstanding concrete problems in implementation. However, these problems were considered mainly transitory and due to a lack of experience at the start. In particular in the EU10 the new opportunities were initially felt to have been 'imposed' but were welcomed once actors became more familiar with them and recognised their potential and actual benefits. Transnationality was more positively rated by some of the EU10 as it 'widened the horizon' and offered – as was the intention – new space for inspiration, exchange of experience and the comparison of underlying frameworks and their meaning for working with disadvantaged groups.

The most ambiguous rating was on the effects of the empowerment principle that was considered 'difficult to operationalise' and thus difficult to implement.



Representative for the overall esteem in which EQUAL was held is summarised in the interview remark from Hungary below.

**Box 2. Attitude towards partnership in Hungary**

In Hungary, the projects started to cooperate out of necessity at first but gradually came to appreciate the value of exchanging ideas and know-how. Particularly cooperation at the national level – often between partners who had never cooperated before – contributed to innovation by widening the perception of problems and their solution. Partnership between organisations in different sectors gave new knowledge and new ideas how to approach problems and stimulated the generation of innovation. If there is only one organisation dealing with some kind of problem, then it has a specific approach to solve the problem, but when there are several organisations involved in the project then new approaches and new ideas may be found how to solve the problems.

**3.4.2 Identification and classification of innovation by Emergence and Dimension (topic f)**

As was outlined above, the way in which innovation was mainly created or the dimension of activities the innovation was mainly targeted at were not considered as criteria for the validation and ranking. Nonetheless, it was considered relevant for understanding processes of innovation and for describing them at an aggregated level using common terms.

For nearly 60% of the innovations (540), no choice on the **emergence of innovation** issue was made. For the remaining 384 (match cases), 429 types of emergence were selected. Both types of descriptive information allowed for multiple choice by principle, for the **emergence** issue this was only used exceptionally in 12% of all matches (three cases with three and 39 cases with two choices). About 10% of all innovations were assessed as a ‘simple’ take-over or ‘import from other contexts’, 37% were imports but with ‘more active adaptation’, and the majority of 53% were ‘newly developed’ innovations – which might also have included cases of integration and new combinations of already established innovations which proved useful in other contexts.

Table 11. Innovation – Reported novelty by emergence (multiple choices)

Thematic field TF	Count Cases	Reported novelty by typologies I						
		Emergence					Ticks	[%] of all cases
		Import /take up	Active adaption	Newly developed	Match cases	[%] match		
1.A	259	8	51	65	111	43%	124	112%
1.B	47	2	6	8	16	34%	16	100%
2.C	60	1	6	16	19	32%	23	121%
2.D	56	2	5	8	14	25%	15	107%
3.E	79	2	5	11	16	20%	18	113%
3.F	64	8	13	23	31	48%	44	142%
4.G	73	4	15	16	32	44%	35	109%
4.H	68	4	7	29	37	54%	40	108%
5.I	38	7	9	7	18	47%	23	128%
not specified	180	3	42	46	90	50%	91	101%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>112%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>115%</b>
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>77%</b>		<b>79%</b>	
<b>Share of matches</b>		<b>11%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>60%</b>				
<b>Share of ticks</b>		<b>10%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>53%</b>			<b>100%</b>	

Source: Innovation inventory



Considering the **dimension of innovation**, i.e. the principal field of its application, the outcome was much more explicit and also the coverage of innovations assigned to dimensions was much higher (96%) than for the **emergence** issue (42%). Only for 36 cases no choice was made and compared to **emergence** only a little more use was made of the multiple choice option (five cases with three and 57 cases with two choices).

Table 12. Innovation – Reported novelty by dimension (**multiple choices**)

Thematic field TF	Count Cases	Reported novelty by typologies II						
		Dimension						
		Goal	Process	Context	Match cases	[%] match	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	44	177	53	252	97%	274	109%
1.B	47	9	26	9	43	91%	44	102%
2.C	60	14	28	17	51	85%	59	116%
2.D	56	8	35	15	51	91%	58	114%
3.E	79	15	50	16	76	96%	81	107%
3.F	64	6	42	8	55	86%	56	102%
4.G	73	24	34	12	67	92%	70	104%
4.H	68	17	42	12	63	93%	71	113%
5.I	38	13	20	10	37	97%	43	116%
not specified	180	24	124	12	157	87%	160	102%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>916</b>	<b>108%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>109%</b>
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>82%</b>		<b>83%</b>	
<b>Share of matches</b>		<b>20%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>19%</b>				
<b>Share of ticks</b>		<b>19%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>18%</b>			<b>100%</b>	

Source: Innovation inventory

The vast majority of ticks (71%) were given to the process dimension, applying to three quarters (76%) of all match cases. Next – but with only 20% of all ticks - came 'context', while 'goal' got only 11%.

The process dimension is an interesting aspect in as much as an increase in efficacy and/or efficiency could have provided a good basis for the measurement of superiority – our second analytical categorisation relevant for the identification and validation of innovation. In other words, success is more easily operationalised and quantified with regard to process-optimisation than with regard to e.g. context innovation. However, in accordance with the documentation available, a real test of efficacy and efficiency in this form did not take place, neither in a comparative approach nor in an experimental design. Approaches used for assessing/validating innovation – if in place at all – had to be considered rather as ex-ante assessments based on concepts and their discussion in peer-review-like contexts (cf. below 3.4.3).

But even without measuring such effects, information could be extracted on what has been done under those dimensions. Based upon the descriptions available, a classification was developed to give a condensed insight into the type of activities under the different dimensions. For the most important dimension 'process', seven categories for grouping could be extracted; for the other two dimensions we received five types each. The subsequent tables provide a corresponding overview ordered by the relevance of the dimension according to number of assignments given.

Starting with the process dimension: 677 innovations out of 924 were assigned to that dimension and over 90% of all assignments could be later specified using a catalogue of seven 'types of innovation' (plus one for those not specifiable).

Not surprisingly, the clear majority (nearly 40%) could be characterised as general '**capacity building**' related innovation, including the setting up of new contents for training measures through new curricula.

Table 12a. Innovation – Types under Dimension PROCESS<sup>30</sup>

Innovation-Dimension 'Process' - Types:		
Priority 1	Count	Share
capacity building	266	39,3%
communication & data storage	21	3,1%
employment paths	26	3,8%
finance (microcredits)	9	1,3%
incentives and support tools to enterprises	91	13,4%
information, advice & awareness raising	93	13,7%
personalised support to target groups	113	16,7%
not specified	58	8,6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>100%</b>

Capacity building was followed by the following dimensions:

- 'Personalised support to target groups' (16.7%) denoted innovations (other than capacity building) that contributed to employability and empowerment (including mentoring, career development, assessment of competences tools, support services to facilitate employment of disadvantaged groups, facilitation of innovative working methods such as home-based work).
- 'Information, advice and awareness raising' related activities (13.7%) are self-explanatory and covered related tools, methods and models.
- 'Incentives and support tools to enterprises' (13.4%) include awards, codes of conduct, quality standards, guides, new management and monitoring tools and concepts for e.g. Gender Equality, Diversity Management but also activities related to entrepreneurship of disadvantaged groups, and the necessary local/regional strategies to promote such concepts.

Of minor quantitative importance (clearly below 5% each) were:

- 'Employment paths' (3.8%), including links between economic and social actors (public /private) and enterprises and likewise the local/regional strategies needed to promote these linkages.
- 'Communication & Data Storage' (3.1%), e.g. websites, databases, internet based portals.
- 'Setting up micro-credit systems' (1.3%).

Related to the context dimension, the general picture is similar but on a much smaller scale with 181 assignments and with a weaker amount of specification: 19% could not be categorised.

'**Setting up cooperation structures**' is the leading topic with nearly 36% corresponding to the EQUAL-specific approach of fostering partnership and cooperation.

Table 12b. Innovation – Types under Dimension CONTEXT

Innovation-Dimension 'Context'		
	Count	Share
changes in the legislative/policy context	5	2,8%
cooperation structures	65	35,9%
information /counselling offices/centres	42	23,2%
Observatories	9	5,0%
Support service centres	26	14,4%
not specified	34	18,8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

<sup>30</sup> This is the 1<sup>st</sup> priority assignment result. All in all maximum three categories could be assigned under the dimension 'Process' to properly classify the respective innovations. But only 56 assignments had been made with priority level 2 (again led by 'Capacity Building' with 52%) and just 'a handful' of 8 innovations got a third priority assignment.

This is followed by a middle group of two types of services, including:

- Information/counselling offices/centres (23.2%) which might be exemplified by a concrete project: the information and counselling centre for Austrian and migrant prostitutes (SILA) which was devoted in the 2nd Round of EQUAL to the further education and qualification of prostitutes (project SOPHIE).
- Support service centres to individuals or enterprises (14.4%), e.g. housing, training, finance, business incubators.

Of minor quantitative importance (5% or less) were:

- Observatories (5.0%) with the aim of building/improving the information pool on employment, training, or on more specific issues, e.g. human trafficking
- Activities directly targeted at changing the legal framework of policy (2.8%) as distinct from mainstreaming the results of innovation development, illustrated by a DP targeting the development of a new policy framework for the integrated care of young children.

The least emphasis was found on the goal dimension. Just 97 innovations were assigned to this dimension. The general picture was not so clearly dominated by just one type but the coverage of specifications was better: only 5.2% could not be categorised.

**‘New qualifications & roles’** was the most common type but with less than 30%. One example of the type of activity it covers was the qualification of immigrants for future work as intercultural vocational counsellors and trainers.

Table 12c. Innovation – Types under Dimension GOAL

Innovation-Dimension 'Goal' - Types	Count	Share
new objectives / areas of employment	17	17,5%
new professional profile	20	20,6%
new qualifications & roles	27	27,8%
new target groups	20	20,6%
new working arrangements and models	8	8,2%
not specified	5	5,2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

This was followed by ‘new professional profiles’ (20.6%) as exemplified in a project from Flanders which drew up and described a profile of entrepreneurial competency. The same number of innovations addressed ‘new target groups’ – in particular asylum seekers. This is an issue that also played a role under the assessment of Community Added Value as will be seen later. ‘New objectives/areas of employment’ (17.5%) came next with projects such as the development of a new profession in rural areas: ‘nanny (m/f) on a farm’ with childcare on farms as a new possibility to earn a living for farmers;.

‘New working arrangements and models’, with only 8.2%, covered e.g. organisational development: creating new flexible work organisation; using incentives and ensuring employees’ influence; changing the physical and psychological working environments. In France, innovation or the capacity of EQUAL to foster innovation development was a specific evaluation activity on a national scale and is presented below.

### Box 3. The innovation capacity of EQUAL projects in France

In France, evaluators questioned four groups of stakeholders on the innovation capacity of EQUAL projects: DP members, officers of the public employment service; support structures of technical assistance and members of a panel of experts involved in the evaluation and capitalisation networks (the survey mostly referred to the 1st Round of EQUAL, the evaluation was finalised before the end of 2nd Round Action 2). The results are summed up below:

- 94% of DPs said they produced innovations.
- These were mostly process/content/approach-oriented (56%), related to partnership and - especially for projects on entrepreneurship and social economy - strongly related to local development.
- Innovation also concerned new methods (23%) and innovative products (20%).

- In terms of area scope, innovation was seen as having a local (54%), regional (56%), national (about 60%) and EU (43%) scope.
- It was assumed that innovation was fostered by technical assistance (41%), experts (29%) and MAs (25%).
- Technical assistance structures also thought that almost all DPs had been innovative and this innovation was more related to approach and process than to products.
- Only 55% of public employment service representatives thought that EQUAL was innovative and that the innovation was mostly process-oriented, related to partnership dynamics.

A panel of experts was asked to assess innovativeness on the basis of three criteria (newness and high value added, strong EQUALity of opportunity content and added value by transnational cooperation). From a sample of 72 projects (1st Round) they identified 27 innovative projects (1/3).

### 3.4.3 Innovation – The validation approach chosen by the relevant stakeholders

There are a number of ways of approaching validation. It could for example have been approached in a systematic manner by a specially convened expert panel on national scale or by a DP itself or by the DP-specific evaluation. This section looks at the validation approach, if any, in the Member States based on three questions:

- 1 Was innovation validated in a structured way?
- 2 Was this a generally applied procedure?
- 3 Who was the competent body to perform the validation?

Information on validation was provided for over 90% of all innovations identified. For nearly half of them (46%) 'no clear framework' for the validation was stated. For a third (30%) the validation was considered an ad-hoc procedure, i.e. there was a procedure but this was not applied systematically throughout an EQUAL OP. For only a quarter was a systematic approach reported to have been applied.

Table 13. Innovation – Validation approach used /referred to by sources

Validation approach for developed innovations used by sources							
How was it done?							
TF	Count Cases	n.a.	for selected innovations on ad hoc basis	no clear framework	systematic overall validation procedure	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	13	69	135	42	246	95%
1.B	47	2	12	29	4	45	96%
2.C	60	10	9	35	6	50	83%
2.D	56	8	16	27	5	48	86%
3.E	79	5	17	56	1	74	94%
3.F	64	2	32	27	3	62	97%
4.G	73	1	22	19	31	72	99%
4.H	68	8	17	27	16	60	88%
5.I	38	6	12	14	6	32	84%
not specified	180	34	42	12	92	146	81%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>93%</b>
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>81%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>83%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>30%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: Innovation inventory

In addition to the question about the character of the validation procedure it was also considered of interest *who* actually provided the validation. In principle, a number of different actors could have been assigned the task of setting up a framework for validation:

- The MAs in their monitoring & control function (keyword: service delivered)
- Evaluators at national level
- The NTN (or even ETG)
- Third parties, e.g. universities etc.
- The DP partners themselves in the context of quality management and self-assessment or by delegating to the DP's own evaluators (external or internal)

Table 14. Innovation – Who managed the validation?

Validation approach for developed innovations used by sources									
Who did it?									
TF	count cases	n.a.	managing authorities	national evaluator	NTN /ETG	self-assessment by DP	others (e.g. University)	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	13	42	109	34	47	14	246	95%
1.B	47	3	10	23	1	4	6	44	94%
2.C	60	13	8	30	0	5	4	47	78%
2.D	56	8	11	24	0	1	12	48	86%
3.E	79	4	22	34	1	16	2	75	95%
3.F	64	2	17	34	1	2	8	62	97%
4.G	73	2	9	35	19	5	3	71	97%
4.H	68	6	7	31	3	6	15	62	91%
5.I	38	7	3	14	2	6	6	31	82%
not specified	180	20	7	56	85	0	12	160	89%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>81%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<i>16%</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>100%</i>	

Source: Innovation inventory

For about 92% of all registered innovations, information was provided on **who was the competent body for validation**. For about 8% (78 out of 924 cases) no 'validator' was identifiable. For the remaining 846 cases, in 16% the MAs and in another 11% the DPs themselves were responsible for the validation. NTN/ETG (17%) played a role comparable to that of the MAs. In another 10% this was assigned to third parties (e.g. universities). The relative majority (46%) was made up of the national evaluators.

At a first glance, this seems to correspond to the results related to the main sources of information where in 73% of all cases these were assigned to the MA and the evaluators. On the other hand, it could also indicate an artefact, simply resulting from a biased reporting structure or information base.

These different regimes for validation are on the one hand very likely to be rooted in specific national contexts and more clarification is not to be expected from an overall statistical analysis approach but would require detailed on-the-spot analysis. On the other hand, there were some countries that applied or tried to apply specific procedures for the validation of innovation, mainly following the model developed in Portugal that can be described as a systematic peer review approach which was applied to all innovations.

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#### Box 4. The Portuguese model for product validation

The Portuguese model for product validation was supported by a grid containing seven quality criteria (innovation, empowerment, suitability, usefulness, accessibility, equality and transferability). The product was presented by its promoters to their Thematic Network and was then discussed and evaluated on the basis of the above criteria. The product was then rated according to the evidence found and recommendations as to how it could be improved were put forward.

In the validation process the evidence was collected at various times (to assure the quality of the experimentation). This was the first filter. The second was the dissemination (extended/widened validation).

There were several attempts or at least intentions to adopt and adapt the Portuguese approach, e.g. in

- Francophone Belgium: A database with all innovations is in the process of being completed and the innovations are being re-evaluated. This process was in line with the objectives set out in the programme. However, the final evaluation of the programme had already been completed when the validation process was put in place. The process also includes a help desk.
- Czech Republic (optional for DPs).
- Hungary – a three stages model; however, the validation process was not fully successful because the last phase (i.e. the synthesis of the results and lessons drawn) did not happen.
- Latvia – the Thematic Working Group which included representatives from the ministries was responsible for the validation process and the dissemination and mainstreaming of innovative approaches and solutions.
- Poland (cf. below. The Polish approach to innovation validation).
- In Estonia, the idea and methodology of validation was taken over from Portugal for the next programming period but was not applied under EQUAL.
- BE/NL reported a validation method in place based on the Portuguese model; however, it was put in place at a very late stage. It is now used in the new OP for projects that produce innovations and products.

Other countries tried – more or less successfully - to establish at least a framework that could be implemented with adjustments/adaptations by e.g. national Thematic Working Groups (TWG) or National Thematic Networks (NTN).

- In Spain, there was a document developed on validation of innovation with guidelines on how to do it. However, it has not been used.
- In Lithuania, the government groups tried to find out whether there were useful things that could be carried forward but not to validate innovation as such.
- In Slovenia, an overall approach for validation was planned but it could not be applied due to a lack of experts.
- The Greek model e.g. provides an interesting concept for the identification of 'good practice'.

**Box 5. Good practice identification in Greece**

The overall approach first involved the definition of criteria (innovation, effectiveness, impact, transferability potential, potential for wider application, coherence, empowerment, accessibility by target groups, usefulness, efficiency). Then the DPs had to fill in an assessment form and this was followed by a field visit (phone or interviews) to assess 'potential good practice'. No specific guidelines were given to the TWGs by the MA for this exercise. The main guidance came from the EQUAL principles. The aim of the identification of good practice was not to leave the outputs on the shelf. The emphasis was on assessing horizontal mainstreaming (from one DP to another and between members of each DP since DPs had not worked together before). TWGs offered them the opportunity to come together and learn from each other.

Criteria and assessment forms were adapted to the needs/specificities of each TWG. The content of a typical assessment form comprised:

- Basic data on the DP and its territorial coverage
- Project measure(s) to which the good practice responded
- Transnational cooperation and transnational action related to the good practice
- Description of the good practice
- Characteristics of the proposed good practice
  - Target groups, characteristics of beneficiaries, assessment of difficulties faced, identification of needs (e.g. advisory, financial needs)
  - Problems and needs: did the proposed good practice fit into a local plan (e.g. for entrepreneurship and endogenous development)? Did the proposed good practice involve local socio-economic actors?
  - To what extent did the proposed good practice offer solutions not provided by traditional actors/structures?
- Results from the implementation of the good practice
  - Results expected by the DP from the implementation of the good practice
  - Innovative elements introduced by the proposed good practice (e.g. did it support all the stages of enterprise creation?)
  - Did the good practice differ from the services offered by existing support structures?
  - Did the proposed good practice imply changes in the regulatory framework at local, regional or national level?
  - The cost of the good practice
- The contribution of the EQUAL principles to the achievement of results: partnership cooperation, empowerment, trans-nationality, equal opportunities.
- Possibility of wider application of the good practice
  - Margin for continuation of the good practice after the end of the programme
  - Opportunities for transfer and implementation of the good practice in different sectors, target groups and spaces; reference to difficulties and prerequisites
  - Did the DP foresee on time a detailed strategy for the incorporation of the good practice in current policies? Was there a timeframe, a dissemination plan for results, were decision makers to whom the good practice would be addressed identified at local and general level?
  - Did members of the DP commit to incorporate the elements of good practice in their organisations? Did members of the DP have the political power and willingness to incorporate these elements?



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Latvia and Poland too provided some interesting approaches.

**Box 6. The Latvian approach to innovation validation**

In Latvia, the validation process based on the Portuguese model ensured wide participation of key stakeholders and interested partners. The composition of the Thematic Working Group responsible for the validation process and the dissemination and mainstreaming of innovative approaches and solutions included representatives of the ministries concerned: welfare, education, economics, internal affairs, social integration; the State Employment Agency; the social partners: employers, trade unions; and NGOs representing the target groups of EQUAL. The Mainstreaming Policy Management Group included top decision makers of the ministries concerned, relevant departments and social partners. Both groups assessed all 25 products developed within the framework of the EQUAL projects, the majority of which (18) were products of vertical integration. The products were assessed based on 12 criteria defined in the Mainstreaming Strategy.

The established validation system ensured the high quality of the innovative products as their assessment in the validation process encouraged a 'healthy competition' in designing and implementing the products. A further added value of the validation process was that in the framework of the meetings of both groups, direct cross-sectoral contacts and partnerships were developed that also continued in other activities addressing the needs of the target groups. To support the validation and dissemination process, a number of informative events were organised at the end of each project and programme.

**Box 7. The Polish approach to innovation validation**

In Poland, the results produced by DPs were validated by National Thematic Networks (NTN). The validation process was based on the basic criteria set up for each NTN, and the results were evaluated on their quality and their potential for mainstreaming. Each NTN had the freedom to apply some additional validation criteria. The validation process was obligatory for each Action 2 DP and commenced relatively early on when the outputs were still being developed. This gave the DPs the possibility to modify their outputs.

Each validation session consisted of a few stages. First, the NTN secretary nominated a number of thematic experts and representatives of other DPs' (peer review) who examined the usefulness of the results. The potential result users/beneficiaries (e.g. 50+employees) were occasionally asked to take part in the validation process. There was also a possibility for the members of the Monitoring Committee and the MA to participate in the validation of DPs' results. Secondly, during the NTN meetings, the results were presented by the DP, summarised by peer review and evaluation experts. They were discussed, validated and eventually recommended for Action 3 implementation.

It was very difficult to assess the validity and reliability of the above described activities and approaches. In principle, a comparison of those OPs with and those without such a procedure with regard to mainstreaming success could give some indication. Such a comparison was prepared but a simple comparison of all OPs that claimed to have applied such a systematic approach with those that did not would have been misleading as from the information gathered it was not clear which OPs really implemented it throughout the programme.

The charm of the Portuguese and related approaches (including the Greek model) is that they (tried to) establish peer reviews involving competent stakeholders working together in a benchmarking-like environment, thus taking up EQUAL's characteristic as an Open Method of Coordination (OMC) like programme. But was this enough to give the necessary evidence to judge the superiority of an innovation? After all and despite the approaches described, it seems that innovation validation was a weak point, the Achilles' heel of the innovation strategy.

Of course, there was some testing under EQUAL but this focused on general 'functionality' and did not use control-group based experiments. The latter would have been quite difficult to establish methodologically but would also have looked 'suspicious' from the European Social Model perspective which tends to be against the inherent discrimination against the control-group members who necessarily do not benefit from the programme's activities in order to provide a comparison base.

The question remains if more evidence based approaches for validation that would be less disputable from outside the (interested) peer groups should be established. Experimental designs, i.e. controlled experiments could be an interesting alternative or at least a good complement, even if not at the large scale of a programme like EQUAL. This would require additional rigour in defining terms and definitions as well as a more controlled context of funding, implementation and monitoring/evaluation. At least for the sub-group of process-oriented innovations – which was the main group – such a testing environment with clearer criteria could have been an achievable option.

### 3.4.4 Extent and orientation of reported mainstreaming (topic e and h) and preparedness for mainstreaming (topic i)

Although Chapter 4 of this report is devoted to mainstreaming and underpinned by an Inventory of its own, the innovation inventory also recorded mainstreaming directly related to innovations.

Table 15. Innovation – Extent of reported mainstreaming (multiple choice)

Thematic field TF	Count Cases	Extent of any reported mainstreaming							
		Explicit main-streaming	Implicit main-streaming	No successful main-streaming recorded	Unknown	Match cases	[%] match	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	60	31	31	82	180	69%	204	113%
1.B	47	8	7	0	11	25	53%	26	104%
2.C	60	11	4	4	17	27	45%	36	133%
2.D	56	12	4	2	21	37	66%	39	105%
3.E	79	15	4	3	21	38	48%	43	113%
3.F	64	21	9	13	37	52	81%	80	154%
4.G	73	37	7	9	17	61	84%	70	115%
4.H	68	19	8	2	24	48	71%	53	110%
5.I	38	11	6	5	10	26	68%	32	123%
not specified	180	25	55	16	61	157	87%	157	100%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>114%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>118%</b>
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>76%</b>		<b>79%</b>	
<b>Share of matches</b>		<b>34%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>46%</b>				
<b>Share of ticks</b>		<b>30%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>41%</b>			<b>100%</b>	

Source: Innovation inventory

The information provided covers 70% of all innovations (match cases). However, for 301 of these 651 innovations (46%) the reports did not provide any information regarding mainstreaming (cf. column 'unknown'). For nearly half (354) of the ticks, the reporting on mainstreaming activities is either qualified as 'explicit' (219 cases) or 'implicit' (135). For 85 (13%) of the match cases a failure regarding mainstreaming was stated.

We provided five categories for the further classification of mainstreaming in order to cover all relevant aspects and also to take into consideration that the mainstreaming implementation was not always the central focus of the actors. Nonetheless, we had a rather strict concept of mainstreaming, i.e. as innovations that specifically influence or are taken up into policy and

practice at the institutional political, regulatory, or administrative levels. This concept specifically excludes dissemination alone as a variant of mainstreaming.

For less than a third (29%) of all innovations, explicit mainstreaming information was found. As can be seen in table 16, the coverage of innovations is very dispersed related to the thematic field and ranges from 19% (TF 1.B /3.E) to 60% (4.G).

- Mainstreaming was broadly understood in terms of continuation and maintenance within the sectoral or regional innovation development context: 31% of all qualifications (ticks) were related to this and it had 65% of all matches.
- Horizontal mainstreaming/take-up on national (33%) or transnational scale (9%) constituted the biggest block of ticks with 42%, covering 70% respectively 19% of all qualified innovations.
- Vertical mainstreaming, which can be considered more demanding, had 27% of all ticks. Related to the national scale, 42% of all innovations which qualified for having been mainstreamed were assigned to this type and 15% to transnational vertical mainstreaming.

Table 16. Innovation – Sustainability and mainstreaming orientation (multiple choice)

Thematic field TF	Count Cases	Sustainability/mainstreaming via								
		vertical national main-streaming	horizontal main-streaming /take-up national	horizontal main-streaming /take-up trans-national	vertical trans-national main-streaming	continuation/maintenance	Match cases	[%] match	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	33	58	14	11	47	75	29%	163	217%
1.B	47	1	8	0	0	8	9	19%	17	189%
2.C	60	7	4	2	4	8	13	22%	25	192%
2.D	56	6	17	1	1	7	18	32%	32	178%
3.E	79	7	9	4	3	8	15	19%	31	207%
3.F	64	18	18	14	13	8	29	45%	71	245%
4.G	73	19	29	5	4	6	44	60%	63	143%
4.H	68	10	8	5	2	9	18	26%	34	189%
5.I	38	5	8	4	3	5	12	32%	25	208%
not specified	180	5	26	2	0	66	32	18%	99	309%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>211%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>198%</b>
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>88%</b>		<b>82%</b>	
<b>Share of matches</b>		<b>42%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>65%</b>				
<b>Share of ticks</b>		<b>20%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>31%</b>			<b>100%</b>	

Source: Innovation inventory

The transnational components covered altogether 16% of all ticks and applied to more than a third (34%) of all mainstreamed innovations. This could be a relevant hint regarding the Community Added Value of EQUAL and its transnational partnership (TNP) principle, but has to be seen against the background of results from the explicit mainstreaming grids later on in this report.

Last but not least, successful mainstreaming involves preparing the ground for those who want to implement it, i.e. the target group of innovation-users. We asked for an assessment of the information provided on the innovation and the result was quite meagre with only 28% (248 out of 890) having a 'more detailed description' (cf. above Table 10. Innovation – Extent of information provided).

This result is confirmed by the table on the completeness of the documentation on innovation for the purpose of successful mainstreaming.

More than 80% of all innovations were rated regarding this specific question and only for 22% of these (168) was a high availability or quality of the necessary information/documentation stated. Another 279 (36%) was rated 'medium' on the scale.

Table 17. Innovation – Completeness of documentation for mainstreaming

Completeness of documentation for mainstreaming?							
TF	Count Cases	n.a.	low	medium	high	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	28	129	49	53	231	89%
1.B	47	8	16	15	8	39	83%
2.C	60	4	35	14	7	56	93%
2.D	56	7	16	18	15	49	88%
3.E	79	5	51	12	11	74	94%
3.F	64	0	20	30	14	64	100%
4.G	73	15	14	19	25	58	79%
4.H	68	14	17	17	20	54	79%
5.I	38	8	10	10	10	30	79%
not specified	180	65	15	95	5	115	64%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>88%</b>
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>81%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>85%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>42%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: Innovation inventory

## 4 The mainstreaming of innovation under EQUAL

### 4.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings in relation to the third Evaluation Question, EQ3: 'To what extent has the EQUAL Community Initiative supported activities that resulted in the take up of innovation at high policy/institutional level or/and the transfer of innovation in different contexts?'

The question addresses two issues: the process of mainstreaming and the resulting intermediary impacts. Though they are closely related, for analytical reasons we tackled them separately. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into two parts, each dedicated to one of the issues.

### 4.2 Mainstreaming

#### 4.2.1 Definition

According to the EQUAL glossary, mainstreaming is "a process which enables activities to impact on policy and practice. This process includes identifying lessons, clarifying the innovative element and approach that produced the results, their dissemination, validation and transfer. More specifically, mainstreaming also defines the phase of transfer and the way in which other actors take account of the results, approaches and key elements elaborated by one or more DPs. Mainstreaming can be horizontal or vertical."<sup>31</sup>

For the purpose of the Evaluation Question on mainstreaming, the above definition is too wide because with validation and dissemination it also includes two elements which will be analysed separately. Thus, for the establishment of the mini-output: Inventory of successful mainstreaming, we used the definition provided by the EQUAL mainstreaming guide which specified: "**Under EQUAL, mainstreaming means integrating tried and tested EQUAL innovations into the core of local, regional, national and European employment and human resource policies, delivery systems and practice.**"<sup>32</sup>

The evaluation of mainstreaming was guided by a number of sub-questions that were defined at the outset of this evaluation. They are listed in the table below:

Table 18. List of sub-questions pertaining to mainstreaming

<p><b>Sub-questions pertaining to the current level/status of the indicators</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Which actors were mainly considered responsible for mainstreaming (DP, MA, NSS etc.)?</li><li>2. Which (horizontal and vertical) mainstreaming activities were implemented at national level in each of the thematic field and to what degree did they succeed?</li><li>3. Which (horizontal and vertical) mainstreaming activities were implemented at transnational level in each of the thematic fields and to what degree did they succeed?</li><li>4. What instruments have been provided centrally to support mainstreaming (exchange platforms, thematic networks etc.)?</li></ol>
<p><b>Sub-questions pertaining to the current level/status of the indicators</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. What are the characteristics of successful mainstreaming activities, especially with regard to targeted addressees, targeted areas and methods/tools used?</li><li>6. To what extent did the principles of partnership, empowerment and trans-nationality contribute to the success of mainstreaming activities?</li><li>7. Which factors contributed to overcoming the mainstreaming barriers?</li></ol>

<sup>31</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/equal/about/glossary-en\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/about/glossary-en_en.cfm)

<sup>32</sup> EQUAL. Making Change Possible. A Practical Guide to Mainstreaming, European Commission, DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, September 2005, p.7

## 4.2.2 Findings

### 4.2.2.1 Descriptions of mainstreaming cases

Overall, a total of 493 references to mainstreaming cases could be identified in the available documentation and were recorded in the mainstreaming inventory. Within the descriptions, general remarks prevail, stating only that mainstreaming took place, sometimes combined with an indication of the results/impacts achieved. In cases where the descriptions were more detailed, these details often referred to the DPs' activities in general and not to mainstreaming aspects. None of the descriptions referred to the mainstreaming process as a whole. What also remains unclear in most of the cases is what exactly was mainstreamed – the innovation (product, service, etc.) as a whole, the approach or transferable lessons.

### 4.2.2.2 Linkage of mainstreaming cases to specified innovations and thematic fields

Out of the 924 validated innovations identified in total, approximately 36% could be linked to mainstreaming cases.

With regard to thematic fields, the share of innovations for which a clear linkage to mainstreaming could be established varies between 28% in thematic field 3.E (Lifelong Learning and inclusive work practices) and 74% in thematic field 4.G (Reconciliation of family and professional life).

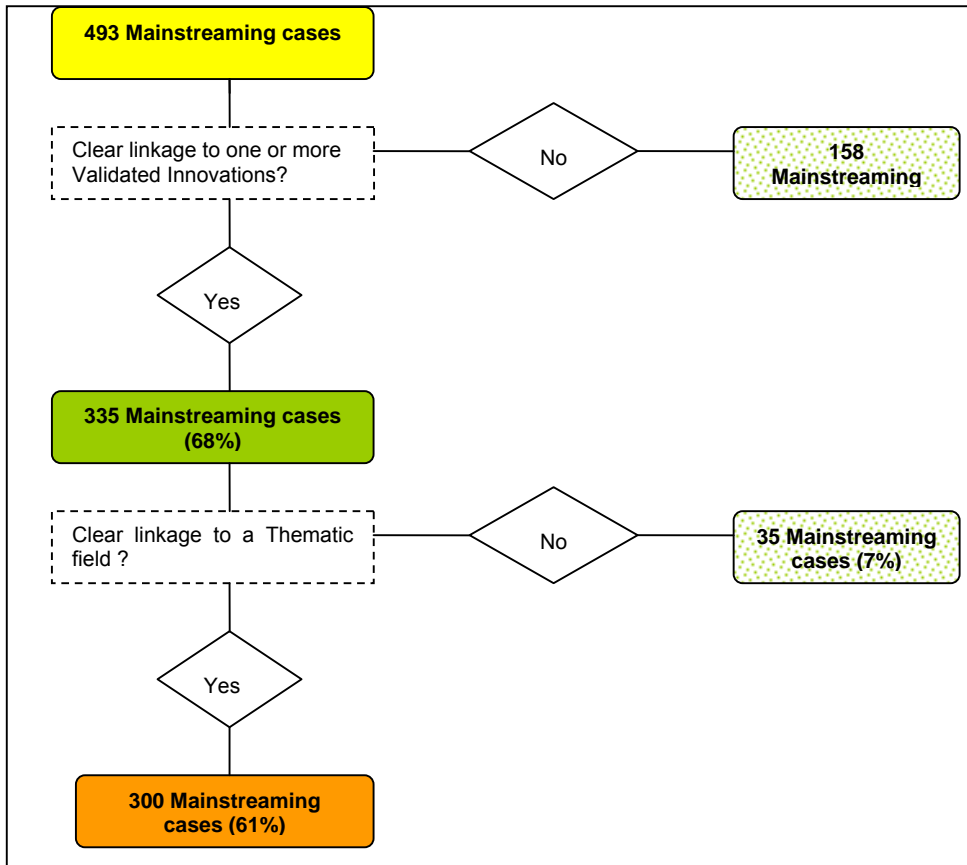
For the majority of cases the relation is 1:1, i.e. one innovation is linked to one mainstreaming case. However, roughly 10% of the innovations are related to two or more mainstreaming cases.

Table 19. Linkage of mainstreaming cases to innovations and thematic fields

Thematic field	Number of validated innovations	Number of reported mainstreaming cases	% of innovations clearly linked to mainstreaming cases
Without linkage to a specific innovation	n.a.	158	n.a.
1.A	259	100	39%
1.B	47	16	34%
2.C	60	19	32%
2.D	56	20	36%
3.E	79	22	28%
3.F	64	28	44%
4.G	73	53	74%
4.H	68	21	31%
5.I	38	21	51%
TF not specified	180	35	19%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>n.a.</b>
<b>TOTAL specified</b>	<b>744 (81%)</b>	<b>300 (61%)</b>	<b>40%</b>

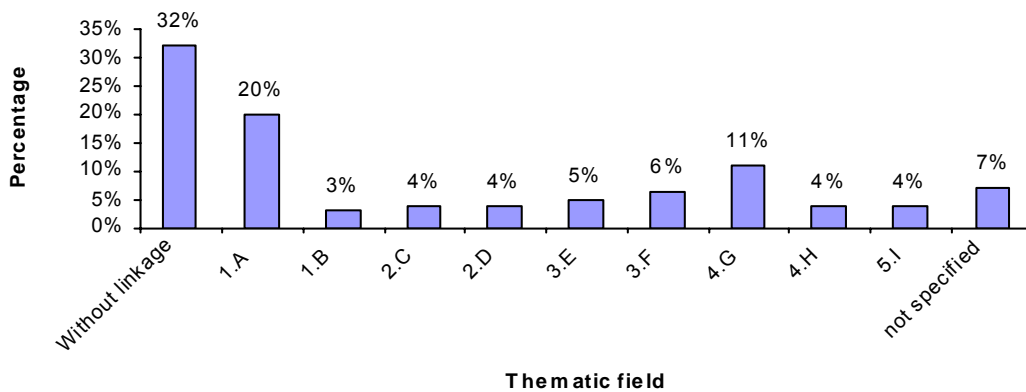
From the perspective of mainstreaming, roughly 61% of the references can be attributed to a specific validated innovation and through this to a thematic field. In all other cases, mainstreaming refers to one of the ESF pillars or only the results/impacts of mainstreaming are mentioned.

Figure 13. Linkage of mainstreaming cases to validated innovations and thematic fields



With regard to thematic fields, TF 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market) accounts for approximately 20% of all cases, followed by TF 4.G (Reconciliation of family and professional life) with 11% of the cases. The remaining cases are more or less equally distributed between the other fields.

Figure 14. Share of reported mainstreaming cases per thematic field





The distribution of mainstreaming cases between thematic fields reflects mostly the distribution of innovations. Only in field 4.G which accounts for 10% of all validated innovations assigned to a specific thematic field, the number of reported mainstreaming cases is significantly higher at 18%.

### Interpretation

The fact that a clear relation to specific innovations could only be established for approximately 60% of all mainstreaming cases shows that the division between project implementation on the one hand and mainstreaming on the other, which was encouraged through the differentiation between Action 2 and 3 was also reproduced by the available documentation. Mainstreaming was often dealt with as a separate issue with the linkages to the 'original object of mainstreaming' being of minor concern. An interesting exception was thematic field 4.G (Reconciliation of family and professional life) where, with 74% of the mainstreaming cases linked to specific innovations, the percentage was significantly higher. This does not necessarily mean that in this field more mainstreaming took place, but rather that apparently the way innovations and the respective mainstreaming efforts were reported differed from other thematic fields.

#### 4.2.2.3 Confirmed mainstreaming cases

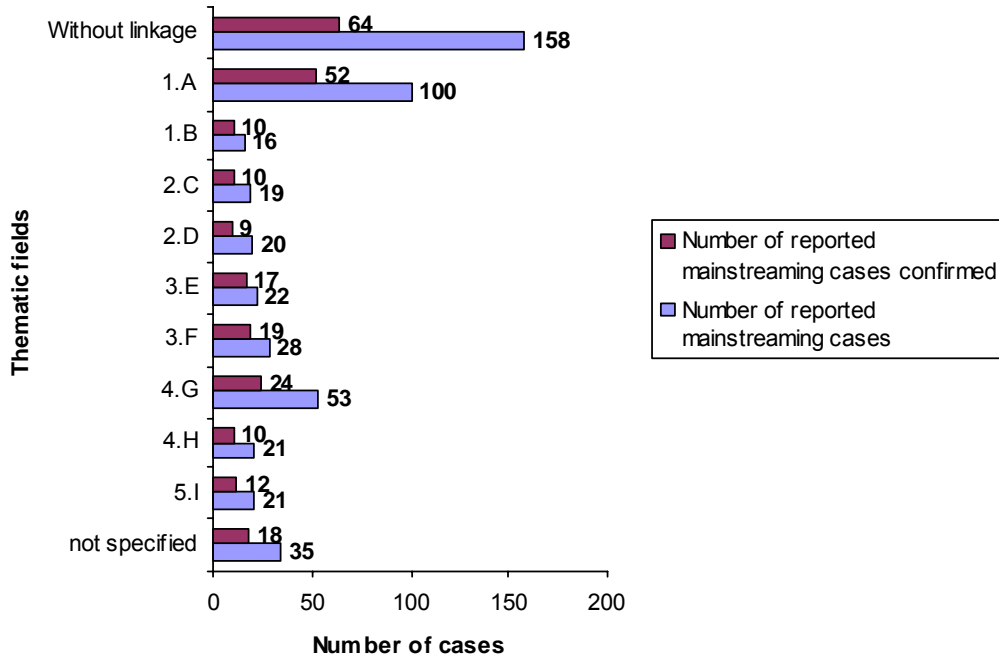
Overall, for 50% of the cases, success was confirmed in the reports. For the remainder, the references remain very vague: sometimes it was not clear whether the description only referred to the mainstreaming plans or the actual implementation, sometimes it was not clear whether the impacts envisaged were really achieved.

Table 20. Confirmed cases of mainstreaming

Linked to innovation in Thematic field	Number of references to mainstreaming cases found (No. and % of total no. of cases)	Number of confirmed mainstreaming cases (No. and % of total no. of cases)	% of mainstreaming cases confirmed
Without linkage	158 (32%)	64 (27%)	41%
1.A	100 (20%)	52 (21%)	53%
1.B	16 (3%)	10 (3%)	57%
2.C	19 (4%)	10 (4%)	55%
2.D	20 (4%)	9 (4%)	45%
3.E	22 (5%)	17 (7%)	77%
3.F	28 (6%)	19 (8%)	68%
4.G	53 (11%)	24 (10%)	45%
4.H	21 (4%)	10 (4%)	47%
5.I	21 (4%)	12 (5%)	57%
not specified	35 (7%)	18 (7%)	51%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>493 (100%)</b>	<b>245 (100%)</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>TOTAL specified</b>	<b>300 (61%)</b>	<b>163 (66%)</b>	<b>54%</b>

In most thematic fields the percentage of confirmed mainstreaming cases was equal to the overall rate of confirmation. However, there were two thematic fields where the respective rate was significantly higher: thematic field 3.E (Lifelong learning and inclusive work practices) with 77% and 3.F (Adaptability of firms and employees) with 68% of mainstreaming cases confirmed.

Figure 15. Confirmed cases of mainstreaming



### Interpretation

Taking into account that it takes some time for the impacts to unfold, the percentage of confirmed successful mainstreaming cases is quite high. The higher rate of confirmed mainstreaming cases in business related thematic fields could also be ascribed to the different amount of time different types of intermediary impacts needed to become manifest. 50% of the impacts related to the mainstreaming cases of field 3.E (Lifelong learning and inclusive work practices) and even 73% of the impacts in field 3.F belong to organisational impacts, which take less time to occur than many institutional and policy impacts, i.e. the type of impacts prevailing in the other thematic fields. Thus the latter were often referred to in terms of possible, but not yet realised developments on the basis of foundations which were laid by the individual DPs.

#### 4.2.2.4 Mainstreaming activities and outputs

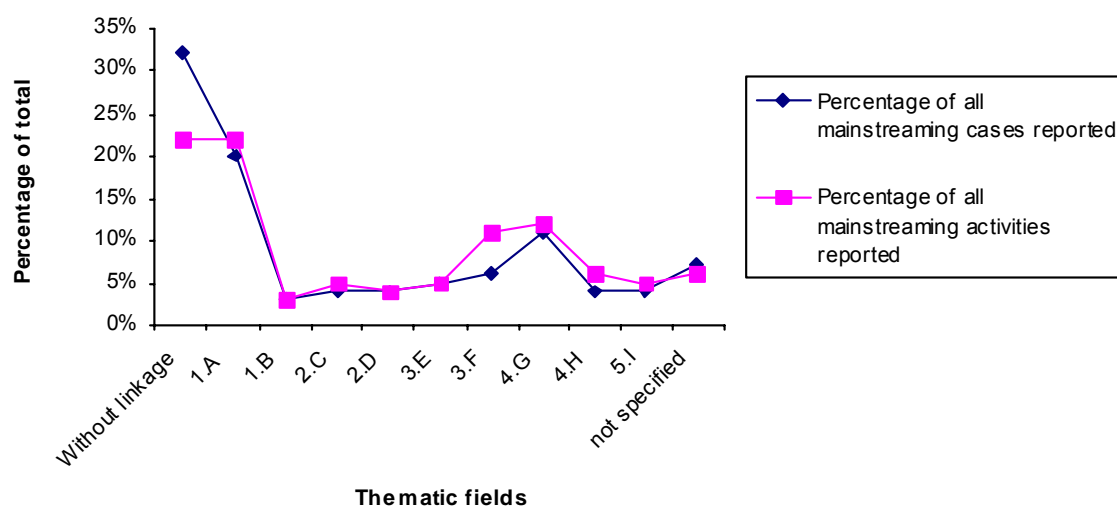
Overall, 684 indications of mainstreaming activities implemented were found. Among the activities reported, dissemination activities prevailed with approximately 39%, followed by activities directed towards policy formation with 32%. Around 25% of all activities mentioned fell into the category 'material provided for take up'.

However, the references to specific activities were not distributed equally between the mainstreaming cases identified. For roughly 40% of the mainstreaming cases reported nothing was known about activities and outputs. Of the remaining cases, 54% mentioned dissemination activities, 34% materials provided for take up and 44% activities directed towards policy formation.

Overall, the number of reported mainstreaming activities correlated with the number of mainstreaming cases reported for each field. The only exception was thematic field 3.F (Adaptability of firms and employees), which accounted for only 6% of all reported mainstreaming cases but for 11% of the mainstreaming activities referred to.

### Relation of Mainstreaming activities and cases per Thematic field

Figure 16. Relation of mainstreaming activities and mainstreaming cases per thematic field



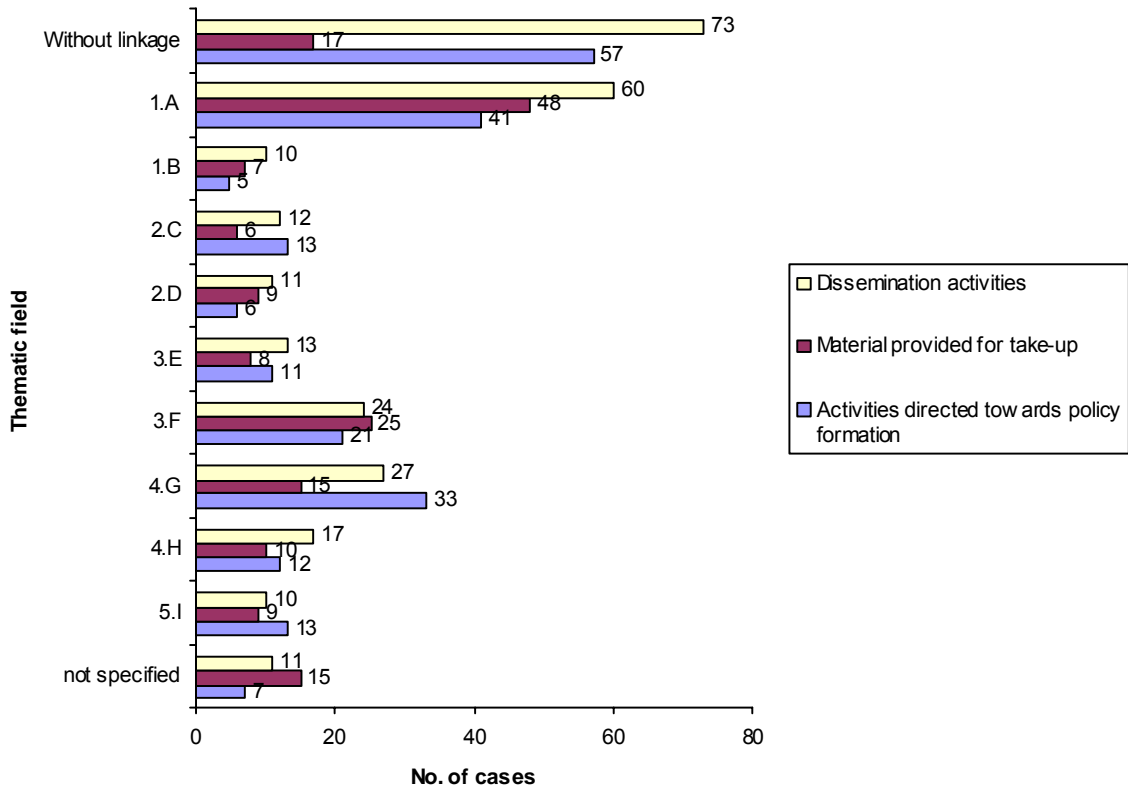
In most of the thematic fields, the distribution of activities corresponded to the overall distribution in that dissemination activities were clearly dominant. Again, thematic field 3.F stands out: all three types of mainstreaming activities were mentioned with almost the same frequency. As opposed to many other cases where only one type of activity was referred to, for more than half of the mainstreaming cases reported for thematic field 3.F all three types of activity were mentioned.

Table 21. Types of mainstreaming activity

Linked to innovation in Thematic field	Total no. of mainstreaming cases	Dissemination activities (Total no. and % of cases)	Material provided for take-up (Total no. and % of cases)	Activities directed towards policy formation (Total no. and % of cases)	Other	Total no. of activities reported
Without linkage	158	73 (46%)	17 (11%)	57 (36%)	3 (2%)	150
1.A	100	60 (60%)	48 (48%)	41 (41%)	6 (6%)	155
1.B	16	10 (63%)	7 (44%)	5 (31%)	0 (0%)	22
2.C	19	12 (63%)	6 (32%)	13 (68%)	2 (11%)	33
2.D	20	11 (55%)	9 (45%)	6 (30%)	1 (5%)	27
3.E	22	13 (59%)	8 (36%)	11 (50%)	2 (9%)	34
3.F	28	24 (86%)	25 (89%)	21 (75%)	4 (14%)	74
4.G	53	27 (51%)	15 (28%)	33 (62%)	1 (2%)	76
4.H	21	17 (81%)	10 (48%)	12 (57%)	1 (5%)	40
5.I	21	10 (48%)	9 (43%)	13 (62%)	4 (19%)	36
not specified	35	11 (31%)	15 (43%)	7 (20%)	4 (11%)	37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>268 (54%)</b>	<b>169 (34%)</b>	<b>219 (44%)</b>	<b>28 (6%)</b>	<b>684</b>

For mainstreaming cases in the thematic fields 2.C (Opening up the business creation process), 4.G (Reconciliation of family and professional life) and 5.I (Asylum seekers), activities directed towards policy formation are mentioned more often than the two other types of activities.

**Types of activities reported per Thematic field**  
 Figure 17. Types of activities reported per thematic field



#### 4.2.2.5 Dissemination activities

With regard to dissemination, a variety of different activities was carried out. The production of flyers on project activities as well as the publication of results in print and online were reported most frequently and can be considered 'standard measures'. Press releases and articles were also mentioned, as well as radio broadcasts and videos. Conferences on the other hand were hardly reported, except for in thematic field 5.I (Asylum seekers) where conferences accounted for one third of the dissemination activities. Meetings and working groups seem to have been especially important in thematic field 2.D (Social economy).

Table 22. Types of dissemination activity per thematic field

Linked to innovation in Thematic field	Total no. of dissemination activities	Conferences	Dissemination through all types of media	Meetings and working groups	Other
Without linkage	73	11 (15%)	8 (11%)	15 (21%)	39 (53%)
1.A	60	5 (8%)	29 (48%)	16 (27%)	10 (17%)
1.B	10	1 (10%)	8 (80%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
2.C	12	0 (0%)	10 (83%)	1 (9%)	1 (9%)
2.D	11	0 (0%)	4 (36%)	6 (55%)	1 (9%)
3.E	13	1 (7%)	9 (69%)	3 (23%)	0 (0%)
3.F	24	0 (0%)	17 (71%)	5 (21%)	2 (8%)
4.G	27	0 (0%)	10 (37%)	10 (37%)	7 (26%)
4.H	17	2 (12%)	8 (47%)	5 (29%)	2 (12%)
5.I	10	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
not specified	11	0 (0%)	1 (9%)	7 (64%)	3 (27%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>23 (9%)</b>	<b>108 (40%)</b>	<b>70 (26%)</b>	<b>67 (25%)</b>

However, most of the respective descriptions left it rather open whether these activities were used in the context of mainstreaming or only for dissemination purposes.

#### 4.2.2.6 Materials provided for take-up

For roughly one third of the mainstreaming cases, references hinted towards the availability of materials provided for take-up. In 39% of the cases a 'full documentation' was available, in 17% guidelines and in 27% training materials were mentioned in the reports. The latter is remarkable, since 186 of the innovations were connected to training activities.

Table 23. Materials provided for take-up

Linked to innovation in Thematic field	Total no. of "materials provided for take-up"	Full documentation	Guidelines	Training and training materials	Other
Without linkage	17	6 (35%)	3 (18%)	4 (24%)	4 (24%)
1.A	48	18 (38%)	10 (21%)	14 (29%)	6 (13%)
1.B	7	3 (43%)	1 (14%)	3 (43%)	0 (0%)
2.C	6	2 (33%)	0 (0%)	2 (33%)	2 (33%)
2.D	9	4 (44%)	2 (22%)	2 (22%)	1 (11%)
3.E	8	4 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (25%)	2 (25%)
3.F	25	9 (36%)	7 (28%)	5 (20%)	4 (16%)
4.G	15	9 (60%)	2 (13%)	3 (20%)	1 (7%)
4.H	10	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
5.I	9	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	3 (33%)	4 (44%)
not specified	15	8 (53%)	0 (0%)	3 (20%)	4 (27%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>169 (100)</b>	<b>67 (40%)</b>	<b>29 (17%)</b>	<b>44 (26%)</b>	<b>29 (17%)</b>

#### 4.2.2.7 Activities directed towards policy formation

Overall, approximately 30% of all mainstreaming activities addressed policy formation. Among these activities, those directed towards persons such as political decision makers were clearly dominant over activities addressing decision making processes.

Table 24. Activities directed towards policy formation

Linked to innovation in Thematic field	Total no. activities	Contact to & mobilisation of political decision makers	Lobbying decision making processes	Other
Without linkage	57	25 (44%)	8 (14%)	24 (44%)
1.A	41	19 (46%)	13 (32%)	9 (22%)
1.B	5	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)
2.C	13	7 (54%)	2 (15%)	4 (31%)
2.D	6	4 (66%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)
3.E	11	3 (27%)	5 (46%)	3 (27%)
3.F	21	17 (81%)	0 (0%)	4 (19%)
4.G	33	7 (22%)	16 (48%)	10 (30%)
4.H	12	3 (25%)	5 (42%)	4 (33%)
5.I	13	3 (23%)	6 (46%)	4 (31%)
not specified	7	2 (29%)	3 (43%)	2 (29%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>219 (100%)</b>	<b>92 (42%)</b>	<b>61 (28%)</b>	<b>66 (30%)</b>

#### Interpretation

The lack of a description of concrete mainstreaming activities for almost half of the reported mainstreaming cases clearly illustrates that the mainstreaming process itself was not the focus of most evaluations or reports. Overall the distribution of reported activities did not show significant differences between thematic fields: dissemination activities were mentioned most frequently among the measures applied for mainstreaming which indicates that either for many DPs or for many evaluators – or both – the difference between mainstreaming and dissemination was not clear. The only exceptions were thematic fields with clear policy objectives, namely field 2.C (Opening up the business creation process), 4.G (Reconciliation of family and professional life) and 5.I (Asylum seekers), where activities directed towards policy formation were mentioned more often than the two other types of activities.

#### 4.2.2.8 Responsible actors

From the very beginning of EQUAL it was clear that mainstreaming activities should not be confined to national level, but had to be transnational in nature especially with regard to future programming. Thus DPs were mapped and key trends were established on the basis of which European working groups were set up. At the same time, national thematic networks were established with the aim to facilitate mainstreaming at national level.

In addition, the Commission launched restricted calls for proposals for MAs to organize events, communication and learning platforms for mainstreaming the lessons learnt from EQUAL. Out of 23 applications 21 were selected. The platforms funded were of different formats, such as exchange events, peer reviews, policy fora and nine communities of practice (CoP). Among them, especially the latter aimed especially at mainstreaming.

Communities of Practice are “communication platforms bringing together programme managers and practitioners from within and/or outside EQUAL, involved in validating, disseminating and

transferring innovative tools and methods”. They aim to ‘build up capacities to ensure that the leading principles of EQUAL are embedded in the new Structural Funds programmes (2007-2013) through the continuous sharing of knowledge and the exchanging of good practice by means of moderated online discussion fora and meetings of experts and practitioners around a selected thematic priority or leading principle of EQUAL, ...”<sup>33</sup>

In their findings, the evaluators of the platforms concluded that though these CoPs proved to be good mechanisms to foster networking between Managing Authorities, mutual learning and dissemination, they were not always effective in mainstreaming the findings and results of EQUAL.

For almost half of the mainstreaming cases, no information was available on the responsible actors. For the majority of the remaining cases (approximately 70%), it was not specified who was actually responsible for mainstreaming, but the DPs as such were referred to. In less than 30% of the cases, the strategic partners or the MAs were mentioned.

Table 25. Actors responsible for mainstreaming

Linked to innovation in Thematic field	No information available	DP as such	Managing authorities	National Thematic Network	Strategic partner(s)	Total
Without linkage	61 (39%)	80 (51%)	4 (3%)	8 (5%)	5 (3%)	158
1.A	52 (52%)	34 (34%)	4 (4%)	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	100
1.B	11 (69%)	3 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	16
2.C	9 (47%)	7 (37%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (16%)	19
2.D	11 (55%)	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	20
3.E	12 (55%)	5 (23%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	4 (17%)	22
3.F	8 (29%)	17 (61%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	28
4.G	33 (62%)	12 (23%)	4 (8%)	0 (0%)	4 (8%)	53
4.H	11 (52%)	5 (24%)	3 (14%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	21
5.I	11 (52%)	4 (20%)	3 (14%)	0 (0%)	3 (14%)	21
not specified	13 (37%)	14 (40%)	3 (9%)	2 (5%)	3 (9%)	35
TOTAL	232 (47%)	187 (38%)	24 (5%)	10 (2%)	40 (8%)	493

### Interpretation

Our analysis of the existing documentation of mainstreaming showed a lack of clarity concerning the responsible actors for mainstreaming. This is surprising because according to experts, individual DPs could only be expected to achieve horizontal mainstreaming, while vertical mainstreaming lay within the responsibility of the MAs and NSS. This view is also expressed in the EU mainstreaming guide which states: “The lessons learned can be transferred to other people or organisations working on similar issues. This mainstreaming at a peer level, is called ‘horizontal mainstreaming’ and is done primarily by the DP’s themselves”. It also emphasises that “the chance of individual DPs achieving change at national or European level is limited. Their range of influence will usually be limited to the local or regional level. This is why it is so important that MAs and NSS start thinking about messages, audiences and methods for mainstreaming as early as possible”. Consequently the guide explicitly addresses MAs and NSS.

However, the rare references to MAs and NSS with regard to mainstreaming indicated that in many cases mainstreaming was regarded as the sole responsibility of the individual DPs. This shift of responsibility for vertical mainstreaming from MAs and NSS to the DPs themselves was

<sup>33</sup> Evaluation of 10 selected EQUAL Communication and Learning platforms run in 2007, Synthesis report, ICAS Institute, 2008, p. 11



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partly reinforced by the inclusion of public authorities from the respective policy fields as strategic partners in the DPs. While this was originally only one of many elements of a mainstreaming strategy suggested to MAs, sometimes it became the major approach to facilitate mainstreaming. In such cases successful vertical mainstreaming depended mainly on the respective activities of the strategic partners. Apparently this has been one of the obstacles to vertical mainstreaming, because many of the strategic partners had a rather passive role within the DPs without any specific tasks assigned to them.

This was partly overcome by involving public authorities not as strategic partners, but as operative partners. This was for example the case in the Austrian DP “POP UP GEM”, which was the object of one of the case studies. Either their role was, indeed, limited or the responsibilities for mainstreaming were not clearly defined within the DPs. There were, in fact, indications that quite frequently there was a lack of internal organisation with regard to mainstreaming, also due to the absence of concrete mainstreaming plans. Successful mainstreaming cases indicated that an operative role of public actors was a good trigger of future institutional and policy impacts.

**Box 8. POP UP GEM, DP code AT-5-18/212**

With regard to intermediary impacts, the DP POP UP GEM was one of the most successful DPs in Austria. In 2007, the public administration at the Land level in Styria took on board the know-how and tools of POP UP GEM and started the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the administration in all programmes and measures. This project was financed from regional public funds and will be supported by external experts until 2010.

The city of Graz changed its administrative structures and planning processes in a sustainable way. A series of tools (e.g. funding instruments) underwent a gender check and further checks were planned beyond the end of the Development Partnership. Gender mainstreaming was integrated in the monitoring system (‘Balanced Scorecards’) and was checked also by the auditing authority of the city. The municipality of Kapfenberg integrated gender mainstreaming in all their activities and development plans (e.g. in the Land development plan). A gender budgeting process was initiated with the expertise of POP UP GEM the results of which were taken into account in the upcoming budget. Sustainable results were also found in the companies with piloting activities.

One of the reasons for this success was the role of trade unions, communities and unions of communities, which were not strategic but operative partners. The respective entry in the EQUAL database explains: “It will be shown that no project with external experts – no matter how good it is – can move things in the same way as the people who are internally responsible for rules and regulations”.

However, quoting the European EQUAL mid-term evaluation report, the EU mainstreaming guide emphasises that though the direct participation of public authorities in EQUAL DPs might be an asset with regard to mainstreaming, it also entails the risk that innovation is subordinated to existing policy agendas.

#### **4.2.2.9 Types of mainstreaming**

When discussing different types of mainstreaming, it must be noted that due to the specific character of EQUAL DPs, the existing definition of mainstreaming types needed to be refined. The concept proposed by the mainstreaming guide implicitly assumed that the implementing partners did not belong to administrative bodies, and thus the take-up of practices at administrative level was automatically considered as ‘vertical’. However, in the case of EQUAL, a lot of innovations were implemented by administrative bodies from the beginning which raised the question whether a subsequent take-up by other administrative agencies constituted ‘vertical’ or ‘horizontal’ mainstreaming. For this reason, the Spanish evaluators distinguished between

'basic horizontal mainstreaming', i.e. continuation by DP members, 'enlarged horizontal mainstreaming', i.e. transfer to other actors who are not DP members, but located at the same decision making level and 'vertical mainstreaming', i.e. transfer to a higher decision making level.

The Spanish definition seemed more appropriate to the EQUAL Community Initiative. However, due to a lack of information on the structures of DPs in the available documentation, it could not be applied to the present analysis

Table 26. Types of mainstreaming

Linked to innovation in Thematic field	No information available	Continuation / maintenance	Horizontal take-up national	Horizontal take-up trans-national	Vertical national mainstreaming	Vertical trans-national mainstreaming	Total
Without linkage	45 (28%)	10 (6%)	68 (43%)	0 (0%)	35 (22%)	0 (0%)	158
1.A	3 (3%)	31 (31%)	35 (35%)	4(4%)	27 (27%)	0 (0%)	100
1.B	2 (13%)	5 (31%)	6 (38%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	16
2.C	0 (0%)	6 (32%)	7 (37%)	2 (11%)	4 (21%)	0 (0%)	19
2.D	0 (0%)	8 (40%)	9 (45%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	20
3.E	0 (0%)	7 (31%)	9 (41%)	1 (5%)	5 (23%)	0 (0%)	22
3.F	0 (0%)	5 (18%)	16 (57%)	2 (7%)	5 (18%)	0 (0%)	28
4.G	0 (0%)	11 (21%)	18 (34%)	4 (8%)	20 (38%)	0 (0%)	53
4.H	3 (14%)	6 (29%)	3 (14%)	2 (10%)	7(33%)	0 (0%)	21
5.I	0 (0%)	4 (20%)	5 (23%)	3 (14%)	9 (43%)	0 (0%)	21
not specified	5 (14%)	5 (14%)	17 (49%)	1 (3%)	7 (20%)	0 (0%)	35
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58 (12%)</b>	<b>98 (20%)</b>	<b>193 (39%)</b>	<b>21 (4%)</b>	<b>122 (25%)</b>	<b>1 (0%)</b>	<b>493</b>

The information contained in the existing reports clearly showed that despite the obligation to engage in transnational co-operation, transnational mainstreaming hardly took place. In most cases, mainstreaming was reported at national level, either in the form of a continuation of activities or as a horizontal take-up. In approximately 25% of the cases, vertical national mainstreaming was reported, meaning that there was a take up by administrative bodies. However, the existing information implied that in some cases it was rather an 'enlarged horizontal mainstreaming' between an administrative body involved in the implementation of the project and other institutions at the same level.

Even so, it is interesting that the emphasis in the available reports seemed to lie on vertical mainstreaming, which probably also reflects the emphasis of many DPs. This implies a top-down approach in that certain innovations were first mainstreamed to policy measures and then influenced work on the ground. The opposite approach, namely to use horizontal mainstreaming to spread a practice to such an extent that it eventually has to be reflected by policy, does not seem to have been very common<sup>34</sup>.

In this respect, an interesting reflection from a Portuguese interview partner is provided below. It concerns the implementation of horizontal mainstreaming as a prerequisite for vertical mainstreaming.

<sup>34</sup> This way is only applicable in cases, where policy changes are no pre-requisite for organisational or institutional changes

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#### Box 9. Reflection from Portugal on mainstreaming priorities

“Vertical mainstreaming is not possible without horizontal mainstreaming. There is another way to build policy measures. The Commission faces this issue/this idea with a disturbing silence. A simplistic view of the mainstreaming process is not possible. For what use is a policy measure if the practice is not consistently spreading? It is the demonstrative effect that, by extending the practice we could have much more effect than the policy (e.g. Municipalities that assist victims of domestic violence - What matters in this case? The policy measure or the support that is given consistently to the victims?)”.

#### Interpretation

The emphasis on vertical mainstreaming in existing reports and evaluations can be explained by several factors: Firstly, most information on mainstreaming, e.g. the respective EU guide, focused on vertical mainstreaming, while an overall guide on horizontal mainstreaming addressed to DPs was missing. Secondly, there was no guidance on how or what should be reported regarding the mainstreaming. Since the focus of most MAs which normally were the contracting authorities for national evaluations often lay on structural changes and policy changes rather than on organisational impacts, this was also reflected in the reports. Thirdly, as mentioned already above, EQUAL supported a rather traditional way of mainstreaming based on a top-down approach.

#### 4.2.3 The whole picture: Activities used for mainstreaming under EQUAL

The analysis of the available information revealed little about the actual activities used to mainstream the innovations under EQUAL. Many descriptions did not refer to specific activities and outputs at all, but rather to the impacts achieved. Consequently, it was neither possible to distinguish between specific activities and the respective level of success, nor to attribute certain types of activities to certain types of mainstreaming or certain thematic fields. Though there were some differences with regard to aspects such as activities used or responsible actors the incomplete reporting did not allow us to draw any conclusions without running the risk of creating artefacts.

Naturally, this raises the question about the reasons for this considerable lack of concrete information on mainstreaming. After all, mainstreaming was one of the main EQUAL principles with a special EU guide and a specific Action dedicated to it. The analysis of the respective information gave the impression that notwithstanding there was a great deal of uncertainty on the part of the project promoters in particular but also on the part of the Managing Authorities on how to practically deal with mainstreaming. While the inputs and results were clearly defined, the activities leading to the latter remained blurred, especially with regard to the difference between mainstreaming and dissemination.

The major difficulty here seemed to be that many concrete activities used for dissemination and mainstreaming indeed did not really differ. The question here is not *what* was being done, but *how* it was being done and *by whom*. To illustrate the point, what exactly is the difference between a meeting that only informs participants about an innovation and a meeting that causes them to actively take the innovation on board? The lack of concreteness on this issue was one of the weaknesses of the EQUAL mainstreaming guide.

The evaluators did not find any conceptualisation of mainstreaming containing an analytical framework which also defined process indicators that would have allowed a more qualified answer to the Evaluation Question. This rendered the evaluation of mainstreaming very difficult and, accordingly, many evaluations omitted it. What was especially missing in this regard was a thorough analysis of mainstreaming cases which implemented all recommended activities, but still failed.

Within the framework of this assignment, it was not possible to develop an analytical framework for mainstreaming. However, we would like to describe some of the 'cornerstones' it should contain. The purpose of such a framework would be two-fold: on the one hand to provide a scientifically sound and consistent basis for the monitoring and evaluation of mainstreaming activities for the Commission and the national authorities and external evaluators; on the other hand to provide the actors responsible at national and project level for mainstreaming with an analytical framework and guidance for setting up concrete mainstreaming activities.

The starting point for the analytical framework would be the EU mainstreaming guide<sup>35</sup>, which already contains a number of definitions. They are, however, not always precise enough and should thus be complemented.

More specifically, the analytical framework should contain the following cornerstones.

Table 27. Cornerstones of an analytical framework for mainstreaming

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Definition of possible objects of mainstreaming:</b> existing reports on mainstreaming mostly refer to the take-up or continuation of practices, the EU guide emphasises the mainstreaming of lessons learned. There are, indeed, many different elements that can be mainstreamed: ideas, approaches, specific practices, lessons learned or whole projects. All of them should be clearly defined and be illustrated with practical examples.</li> <li>2. <b>Definition of target groups of mainstreaming:</b> Depending on the choice of objects of mainstreaming a list of potential target groups to which mainstreaming activities would be addressed should be developed. In addition, a distinction could be made between mainstreaming and dissemination target groups, since they are not necessarily the same, even if they happen in some cases to coincide.</li> <li>3. <b>Definition of possible types of mainstreaming:</b> as mentioned already, the existing typology of vertical vs. horizontal mainstreaming is not in all cases selective enough. A more precise definition should be developed, which might also drop the differentiation between horizontal and vertical mainstreaming in favour of a more precise typology, e.g. based on a combination of object and addressee of the mainstreaming effort</li> <li>4. <b>Definition of possible goals/purposes of mainstreaming:</b> this is closely related to both the aspects mentioned above. However, it should be treated separately, because effective mainstreaming activities should be goal-oriented. If certain specific practices should be established as 'standard' in a certain field, different actions are required than in a case where a certain approach should be established.</li> <li>5. <b>Description of the mainstreaming process:</b> this has already been done in the EU guide. There are, however, several aspects which need further clarification. For example, the conceptual relationship between good practice and mainstreaming is not clear. The description implies that the identification of good practices is a precondition for mainstreaming, but does not give arguments for this. Can practices/approaches, etc. which have not been evaluated not be mainstreamed? If there are, indeed, conceptual links between mainstreaming and evaluation they have to be specified and it has to be defined under which conditions something can be considered as having 'undergone an evaluation'.</li> <li>6. <b>List of possible mainstreaming activities related to specific goals, objects and types of mainstreaming:</b> This could on the one hand include some kind of matrix providing an overview of possible activities. It should on the other hand clearly describe the activities in a way that allows them to be distinguished from dissemination activities.</li> </ol>
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<sup>35</sup> Making Change Possible - A Practical Guide to Mainstreaming, European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Unit B4, September 2005

7. **Indicators to measure mainstreaming:** Here both performance indicators measuring the success of mainstreaming activities and process indicators assessing the process of mainstreaming as a whole should be developed. Performance indicators should be defined for all mainstreaming activities described.
8. Finally, the framework should contain an **overall definition of mainstreaming** which incorporates the definitions mentioned above.

#### 4.2.3.1 Factors facilitating mainstreaming

The reported information as well as the interviews with the stakeholders allowed us to identify factors which both facilitated and hindered mainstreaming:

- **Political commitment and ownership.** 'Ownership' of political stakeholders and decision makers was key to ensuring vertical mainstreaming. This was fostered by the following factors:
  - Consideration of their specific needs and interests already at the stage of project design.
  - Involvement of policy/decision makers in partnerships from the beginning and with specific responsibilities in the project. This way, the experiences were 'internalised' so that the uptake of the methods or tools occurs spontaneously. Accordingly, it was most efficient if the policy makers were either the lead partners or operative partners.
  - Assurance of their constant involvement (if they were not partners) by: regular dissemination of the results of the project; invitation to workshops and dissemination actions; dialogue and negotiation with political actors; participation in monitoring and evaluation meetings or thematic round tables.
  - The active involvement of partners in DPs, in particular the active involvement of territorial actors (regional, local). In small countries like Malta and Cyprus or in mono-provincial regions in Spain (e.g. Murcia, Rioja, etc.) the impact appeared to be greater as it was easier for actors to cooperate on a smaller territorial basis. In Malta, for example, there was very active involvement of actors such as the Housing Authority and the national employment agency and a 'shorter' route to 'push' recommendations towards the EU level through Maltese Members of the European Parliament<sup>36</sup>. In larger countries and regions with several provinces it was more difficult for EQUAL to reach all parts of the territory or to involve most actors. In decentralised countries like Spain and Italy, the more the regional administration was involved in the DPs the more likely there was mainstreaming. The involvement of local government bodies or other public bodies within DPs made them aware of certain problems or priorities which in turn encouraged them to include them in their own policies. In larger countries and regions with several provinces it was more difficult for EQUAL to reach all parts of the territory or to involve most actors.
- **Design of mainstreaming plans.** These were more effective when drafted early in the project lifecycle. They worked best if they were developed before the start of Action 3 and contained a clear assignment of responsibility for different mainstreaming activities.
- **The work of the national Thematic Working Groups.** In many countries, the TWGs played a significant role in providing a context for reflection, debate and the promotion of mainstreaming of the results of EQUAL. However, the involvement of DPs was essential to their effective functioning. The TWGs produced numerous publications mainly focused on good practice and mainstreaming and produced policy proposals which they lobbied

<sup>36</sup>, e.g. in the framework of the asylum seekers project.

for vis-à-vis politicians and decision makers. In Spain in particular, EQUAL led to the institutionalisation of some thematic national networks that contributed and can still contribute to mainstreaming into policy making.

- **The strategic instrument of 'partnership'**. The involvement of strategic partners in the DPs fostered mainstreaming significantly provided that the respective partners had an active part in the project. Even if they did not belong to the institutions relevant to the mainstreaming activities, they often had the role of 'door openers'.
- **Support of the regional technical assistance**. Due to the difficulties many DPs had with regard to the operationalisation of mainstreaming, guidance and practical support by the regional support structures played an important role.

#### 4.2.3.2 Factors impeding mainstreaming

The following factors impeding mainstreaming were identified:

- **Lack of political interest** or receptiveness, or lack of agreement with entities with political capacity.
- **Sole responsibility of DPs for all types of mainstreaming**.
- **Insufficient contacts of DPs with political decision makers** and accordingly difficulties to reach relevant stakeholders.
- **Organisational issues** within institutions with decision making capacity (change of people responsible, organisational restructuring, etc.).
- **Lack of involvement of strategic partners** in the project and a resulting passive attitude.
- **Lack of mainstreaming plans** and consequently insufficient assignment of mainstreaming tasks and responsibilities.
- **Delays** in project implementation.
- **Difficulties to distinguish mainstreaming activities from dissemination**. Especially at local level mainstreaming activities were often confused with the DPs' communication actions.
- **Lack of support from the regional support structure**.

As can be seen from the above, most of the factors identified in the available documentation and in the interviews related to 'vertical mainstreaming', while specific findings for horizontal mainstreaming towards the private sector were rather scarce.

## 4.3 Intermediary impacts

### 4.3.1 Definition

In line with the intervention logic of the EQUAL Community Initiative, intermediary impacts were defined as the results of mainstreaming the validated innovations.

Three types of intermediary impacts can be distinguished:

1. **Policy impacts**: Adaptation of existing or introduction of new employment, inclusion or anti-discrimination policies, changes in policy making processes or the adaptation of existing or the introduction of new programmes.
2. **Institutional impacts**: Changes of labour market intermediation structures and processes, changes in the education and training system, new/adapted structures, processes and measures for the support of business creation, changes in regulatory work arrangements, etc.

3. **Organisational impacts:** these impacts refer on the one hand to changes in the human resources policies such as changes in the recruitment policies, improved access to training, career advancement, pay structure, anti-discrimination policies, on the other hand to changes in the work organisation, especially the structure of jobs.

Policy impacts stand out in two ways:

Firstly, in some areas, changes in the form of adapting or introducing policies were a pre-condition for institutional and organisational changes. If, for example, legislation did not allow the employment of foreigners with a certain status or the financing of the training of foreigners with public money, institutional and organisational changes were not possible.

Secondly, some policy impacts such as the adaptation of existing programmes or the introduction of new ones could also be the direct result of the experiences gained by the MAs in the course of the implementation of EQUAL. In this case, the intermediary impacts were independent of specific innovations.

The evaluation of the intermediary impacts was guided by a number of sub-questions that were defined at the outset of this evaluation. They are listed in the table below:

Table 28. List of sub-questions pertaining to intermediary impacts

<p><b>Sub-questions pertaining to the current level/status of the indicators</b></p> <p>1. Which intermediary impacts have been identified in each of the thematic fields? Which actors were mainly considered responsible for mainstreaming (DP, MA, NSS etc.)?</p>
<p><b>Sub-questions pertaining to the current level/status of the indicators</b></p> <p>2. Which factors facilitated/inhibited the achievement of intermediary impacts?</p> <p>3. To what extent have EQUAL results informed changes in employment, inclusion and anti-discrimination policies at the national, regional and local level?</p> <p>4. To what extent have EQUAL results informed changes in policy-making processes at the national, regional and/or local level?</p> <p>5. To what extent have EQUAL results informed changes in the education and training system?</p> <p>6. To what extent have EQUAL results informed changes in structures, processes and measures for the support to business creation?</p> <p>7. To what extent have EQUAL results informed changes in regulatory frameworks?</p> <p>8. To what extent are these changes likely to make a difference in the fight against discrimination and inequalities in the labour market and what are their possible limits?</p> <p>9. To what extent are these changes sustainable?</p>

#### 4.3.2 Findings

For 221 reported mainstreaming cases, references to intermediary impacts could be identified in the existing documentation. For 141 (around 64%) of them a relation to a validated innovation and the respective thematic field could also be reconstructed, with roughly 20% referring to the field 1.A (Facilitating access and return to the labour market) and 10% to 4.G (Reconciliation of family and professional life).



Table 29. Intermediary impacts linked to mainstreaming cases

Linked to innovation in Thematic field	Total (no. and %)
Without linkage	74 (33%)
1.A	50 (23%)
1.B	3 (1%)
2.C	10 (5%)
2.D	11 (5%)
3.E	15 (7%)
3.F	13 (6%)
4.G	23 (10%)
4.H	12 (5%)
5.I	4(2%)
not specified	6 (3%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>221 (100%)</b>
<b>TOTAL Thematic Field specified</b>	<b>141 (64%)</b>

Since some of the mainstreaming cases produced several impacts, the total number of intermediary impacts identified was 253. Among them, policy impacts prevailed with 41%, followed by institutional impacts with 31% and organisational impacts with 28%.

Table 30. Intermediary impacts reported for each of the thematic fields

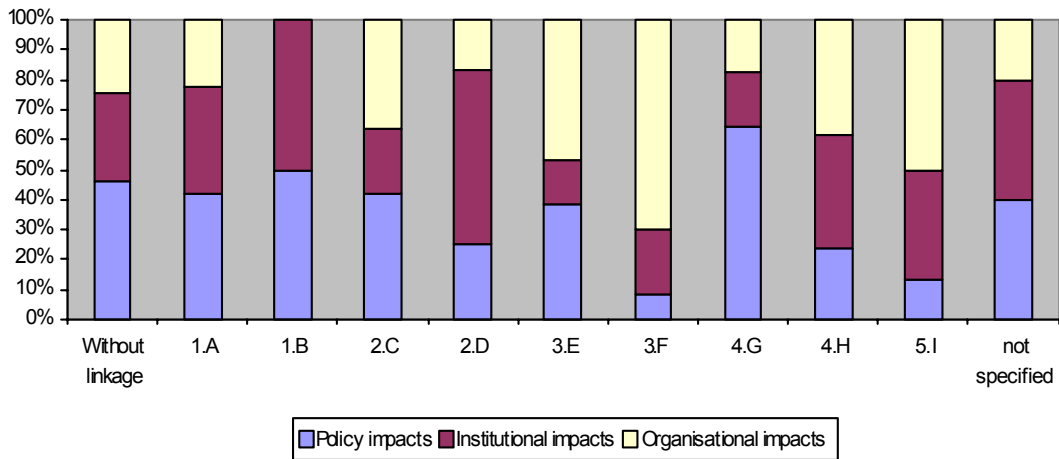
Linked to innovation in Thematic field	Policy impacts	Institutional impacts	Organisational impacts	Total no. of impacts
Without linkage	36 (34%)	23 (29%)	14 (20%)	73 (29%)
1.A	27 (26%)	23 (29%)	15 (21%)	65 (26%)
1.B	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
2.C	8 (8%)	4 (5%)	7 (10%)	19 (8%)
2.D	3 (3%)	7 (9%)	2 (3%)	12 (5%)
3.E	5 (5%)	2 (3%)	6 (9%)	13 (5%)
3.F	1 (1%)	3 (4%)	11 (16%)	15 (6%)
4.G	18 (17%)	5 (6%)	5 (7%)	28 (11%)
4.H	3 (3%)	5 (6%)	5 (7%)	13 (5%)
5.I	1 (1%)	3 (4%)	4 (6%)	8 (3%)
not specified	2 (2%)	2 (3%)	1 (1%)	5 (2%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105 (100%)</b>	<b>78 (100%)</b>	<b>70 (100%)</b>	<b>253 (100%)</b>

The category 'without linkage' contains on the one hand impacts of mainstreaming cases that could not be linked to specific innovations, on the other hand impacts that could not be linked to specific mainstreaming activities. Most of these belonged to policy impacts and were the result of a direct transfer of principles and/or experiences gained during the implementation of EQUAL to a policy/programme level.

With regard to thematic fields, most intermediary impacts were reported for field 1.A (26%) and field 4.G with 11%; the fewest impacts for field 1.B. By and large, this distribution applies to all three categories of impacts. There were two exceptions: field 4.G with a disproportionately high number of policy impacts and field 3.F with an above average number of organisational impacts.



**Types of intermediary impacts per thematic field**  
 Figure 18. Types of intermediary impacts per thematic field



**Interpretation**

Overall, the distribution of intermediary impacts among the thematic fields reflected both the distribution of validated innovations as well as the distribution of mainstreaming cases. However, a comparison of the types of mainstreaming activities reported (cf. figure 17) and the types of intermediary impacts in each of the thematic fields indicated different rates of success. For example, in both thematic field 4.G (Reconciliation of family and professional life) and 5.I (Asylum seekers), mainstreaming activities directed towards policy formation prevailed. While in the case of 4.G this was mirrored by the prevalence of policy impacts reported, with regard to asylum seekers the respective activities were apparently less successful. This can be explained by the political agenda in most Member States with the inclusion of asylum seekers not being one of the priorities.

**Policy impacts**

Almost two thirds of the policy impacts identified belong to the field of employment and anti-discrimination policies and roughly one quarter refer to policy making processes.

Table 31. Types of policy impacts

Linked to innovation in Thematic field	Employment, inclusion & anti-discrimination policies	Policy making processes	Other	Total no. of impacts
Without linkage	26	4	5	36
1.A	18	7	2	27
1.B	1	0	0	1
2.C	1	6	1	8
2.D	1	2	0	3
3.E	2	2	1	5
3.F	1	0	0	1
4.G	10	3	5	18
4.H	2	1	0	3
5.I	0	1	0	1
not specified	1	1	0	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63 (61%)</b>	<b>27 (26%)</b>	<b>14 (13%)</b>	<b>105 (100%)</b>

About 70% of the policy impacts were observed at national level, some 20% at local level and 10% at regional level. For the majority of impacts the evidence was quite weak: only 40% of the impacts reported referred to new or proposed legislation or directives. All the others were either based on the perception of stakeholders or the evidence is unclear.

With regard to **employment, inclusion and anti-discrimination policies**, the following types of policy changes were reported for the national or regional level:

- Legislative changes (new laws and amendments of existing laws), for example in the fields of trafficking of human beings (PT), on social enterprises (FI), on cooperatives (DE) integrated itineraries for severe social exclusion groups (PT), etc.
- New content of policies with the incorporation of EQUAL principles and results in the new OPs 2007-2013.
- Incorporation of the EQUAL methodology and principles into the work of public authorities, at the local and regional level mainly.
- New support frameworks for target groups or changes in existing support structures.
- Fiscal changes that favour disadvantaged groups and act as incentives for their labour market inclusion.
- New target groups for employment, inclusion and anti-discrimination policies.
- New measures/structures to support target groups.

**Box 10. Extent of incorporation of EQUAL principles in programming and the new OPs 2007-2013 in Greece**

The Greek **National Strategic Framework** stresses the incorporation of the EQUAL principles in the new development policy. It also states under the coordination mechanisms that the incorporation of EQUAL principles will take place through a specialised structure.

Law 3614/28-11-2007 states that the EQUAL MA will foresee the incorporation of EQUAL principles in the OPs for 2007-2013, while it will become an intermediary management body in the programme 'Human Resource Development'.

**OP 'Employment':**

- ✓ Includes a whole Axis on 'socially vulnerable target groups' and another one on 'active employment policies' (addressed to women, young people and including a local action plan for employment and social economy actions). This was influenced directly by EQUAL, namely, by the work of the TWGs.
- ✓ The EQUAL MA has become the IB for this part of the OP. The 'active employment policies' axis has all the tools to become like a mini-EQUAL programme.

**OP 'Human Resources Development' includes references to EQUAL:**

- ✓ Partnership, transnationality, interregional cooperation and innovation are defined as basic principles in the OP design;
- ✓ The SWOT analysis builds on the EQUAL experience;
- ✓ The design and implementation of the programme will include partnership structures based on the example of EQUAL DPs;
- ✓ Up to 0.5% of the budget is foreseen for TNC;
- ✓ It emphasises the development of empowerment policies for disadvantaged groups and the design of targeted interventions for their social and labour market integration;
- ✓ For the implementation of 'support to accessing the labour market', emphasis will be given to the implementation of innovative good practices produced under EQUAL;
- ✓ Monitoring and reporting to the Commission will also cover the incorporation of EQUAL principles;
- ✓ The set up of a 'Special Authority for the Incorporation of EQUAL Principles' will greatly contribute to their sustainability and dissemination in the new programming period;
- ✓ The programme will consolidate EQUAL good practices in the field of setting up and functioning of social cooperatives/enterprises for people with mental health problems;
- ✓ A new service/department will ensure the incorporation of EQUAL principles, will identify opportunities where these can be incorporated and will offer the necessary know how in this respect to experts and programme managers.

**OP 'Lifelong learning'** states that a new service/department will ensure the incorporation of EQUAL principles, will identify opportunities where these can be incorporated and will offer the necessary know how in this respect to experts and programme managers.

**OP 'Administrative Reform' includes references to EQUAL:**

- ✓ The holistic approach of EQUAL on equal opportunities will be part of the programme and transmitted to public administrations;
- ✓ The programme supplement will define processes to ensure the dissemination of good practices that stem from innovation and TNC in EQUAL;
- ✓ It foresees the strengthening of the administrative capacity of social partner organisations and NGOs through innovative and transnational cooperation;
- ✓ It foresees the consolidation of the work of TWGs for actions concerning equality, the contracting of women in high level positions and awareness raising for the support of victims of human trafficking (women);
- ✓ It aims to increase the participation of women in decision making;
- ✓ It supports cooperation between public and private actors for the development of innovative actions;
- ✓ It promotes innovative actions through a process of 'pilot implementation – final implementation – dissemination – adaptation – transfer';

- ✓ It supports local authority actions to benefit women and the fight against violence through the use of EQUAL good practices;
- ✓ A new service/department will ensure the incorporation of EQUAL principles, will identify opportunities where these can be incorporated and will offer the necessary know how in this respect to experts and programme managers.

The number of impacts on **policy making processes** mentioned is much lower. This might be explained by the fact that compared to policy changes they required structural changes which were not only more difficult to initiate, but would also have required more time.

They can be divided into two groups:

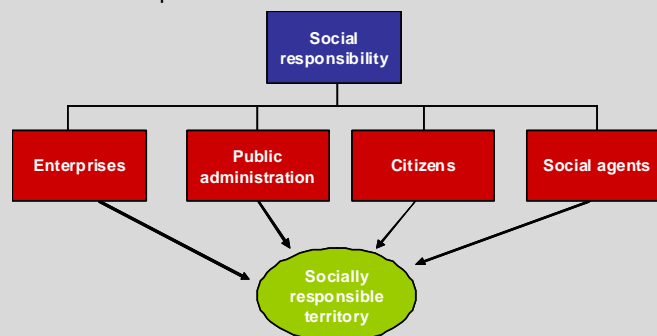
- New or improved coordination mechanisms: This encompassed on the one hand a strengthened inter-institutional cooperation and dialogue at all levels, e.g. between ministries, between ministries and regions, etc. On the other hand, new consultation processes were established including new target groups in the formulation of policies and strategies.
- New observation systems: Especially in the southern EU Member States, a number of National Observatories were set up, e.g. on Trafficking in Human Beings and Social Responsibility.

One example of improved multi-regional coordination is the Spanish network 'Retos' (Red Retos) described in more detail below:

#### Box 11. 'Red Retos' (Network Challenges).

The origin of this network on territorial social responsibility was in EQUAL. The network was set up in 2007 as a result of the work carried out over six years in the context of the national TWG of Axis 1, Sub-Group on Social Responsibility and Labour Market Inclusion, and several DPs participated in it. The aim of the network is to consolidate the work carried out in the context of the TWG and to give continuity to a cooperation approach that proved to be effective for resolving complex problems.

Results of the TWG that led to the setting up of 'Red Retos' include: the identification of the role of the public administration in social responsibility by including social aspects in the processes of public contracting; actions related to social responsibility developed by DPs in the context of EQUAL where social agents, trade unions and employers' organisations, as well as universities, public administration and other entities, cooperated in order to design and implement a series of actions in diverse contexts and with an innovative methodology. Following reflections on the concept of social responsibility, the TWG defined a scene where a network would be developed encompassing social and environmental policies... and this how 'Red Retos' was born.



'Red Retos' presents a new model for territorial social responsibility (TSR) and is a good example of how, starting from a new focus of co-responsibility, it has developed the concept of TSR: "an unfinished process of economic, social and cultural transformation of a territory, through the social responsibility driver". It is therefore a new multi-dimensional (not only enterprises are socially responsible but also the public administration, social agents and the citizens in general) and territorial (linked to local development) concept.

The network is presided over by the Ministry of Employment and Immigration through the DG of Social Economy of Autonomous Work and Corporate Social Responsibility. The Administrative Unit for the ESF of the Ministry holds the Secretariat of the Network. The Network is composed of over 20 territories, including local, provincial and regional administration and two observers (the Spanish Federation of municipalities and provinces and the CSR Observatory).

Examples of actions carried out by the Network include:

- ✓ Implementation of a social responsibility system in the Alcázar de San Juan municipality;
- ✓ Dissemination, awareness raising and application of social responsibility practices between SMEs and implementation of actions in favour of socially responsible territories and organisations (Barcelona provincial government).
- ✓ Construction of a provincial network on territorial social responsibility and incorporation of social clauses in public contracting in small municipalities (province of Granada).
- ✓ ERES Sevilla: consolidation of a network to make Sevilla a socially responsible territory.
- ✓ Setting up of an Socio-Economic Observatory and study on the incorporation of social responsibility in enterprises (municipality of Gandía).
- ✓ Pact for socially responsible employment that aims to extend social responsibility to the whole territory through an employment pact (municipality of Castellón).

A recent event of the Network in November 2009 in Granada dealt with social responsibility as a key to the development of territories. Issues covered in the workshop included: social responsibility as a key factor for sustainable development (comprising three pillars: culture and attention to people; energy and climate change; economic promotion and employment), the obstacles to CSR, the role of different actors in CSR (public administration, enterprises, civil society, consumers and investors), presentations of social responsibility projects such as the 'Ethic bank' project (a credit cooperative), how to promote social responsibility in enterprises operating in a certain territory, etc.

#### **Links between policy impacts and EQUAL**

Though there were a number of changes in the policy and legislative environments, in general it is difficult to attribute these directly to EQUAL. Especially new laws or amendments in legislation may have been introduced in any case. However, even if EQUAL alone did not trigger the changes, it undoubtedly reinforced them, for example by offering more evidence and arguments or steering the changes. In many cases, EQUAL projects and/or TWGs lobbied for changes in legislation.

The design of new OPs was clearly influenced directly by EQUAL since some EQUAL MAs were also working on programming for the 2007-2013 period. In addition, the work of TWGs often culminated in the production of policy proposals, some of which were considered and included in the new programmes. A good example from Spain is the difference between the OP on Adaptability and the OP on the Fight Against Discrimination: the former has no references to EQUAL as it was prepared by people not involved in EQUAL while the latter was influenced by EQUAL as it was prepared by the same entities who worked in EQUAL.

New support structures and frameworks can also often be linked directly to EQUAL because they are a direct result of the work of DPs (e.g. social welfare services to asylum seekers in Malta, new services for people with disabilities (Ireland) and sexual minorities (Finland)).

At local level, EQUAL promoted the creation of partnerships in the social field but their effect complemented that of other programmes (Leader+) in the rural sector and national programming instruments such the Territorial Pacts for Employment.

#### **Institutional impacts**

Among the references found on institutional impacts, changes in the education and training system on the one hand and changes in the labour market intermediation structures and processes on the other prevailed – together they account for more than 50% of the cases.

Table 32. Types of institutional impacts

Linked to innovation in Thematic field	Education and training system	Labour market intermediation structures and processes	Regulatory work arrangements	Structures, processes and measures for the support to business creation	Other	Total no. of impacts
Without linkage	7	7	1	1	8	24
1.A	7	9	3	0	2	23
1.B	0	0	0	0	1	1
2.C	0	0	0	4	0	4
2.D	1	1	1	4	0	7
3.E	2	0	0	0	0	2
3.F	2	1	0	0	0	3
4.G	2	2	1	1	0	5
4.H	1	1	2	2	1	5
5.I	0	1	0	0	0	3
not specified	1	0	0	1	0	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23 (29%)</b>	<b>22 (28%)</b>	<b>8 (10%)</b>	<b>13 (17%)</b>	<b>12 (15%)</b>	<b>79 (100%)</b>

Unlike policy impacts, more than half of the institutional impacts reported took place at regional or local level.

The changes which occurred with regard to the **education and training** system were mostly

- Design of new or changes in existing curricula/training schemes;
- Changes in the content and orientation of training programmes – especially as regards the inclusion of new target groups;
- New certification mechanisms for professional qualifications – especially as regards the creation of new professional profiles such as ‘cultural mediator’, ‘immigrant nurses’, ‘employment consultant’, etc.
- New education or training structures – especially as regards new or improved modes of access to education and training at local level to make them more flexible and responsive to needs and local conditions.

For most of these changes there was no hard evidence per se, but the curricula and courses developed under EQUAL by the various education and training providers continue to be used.

The **key changes in labour market intermediation structures and processes** include:

- Improved coordination between actors – especially as regards the cooperation of local employment services with other social service providers;
- Changes in the way of working of such structures, i.e. in processes
- Improved organisation of employment services;
- Integrated inclusion itineraries;
- Catering for new target groups.

Overall, there was not much evidence of changes in **regulatory work arrangements**. Although there were instances of new collective agreements, it was often not clear whether they were influenced by EQUAL.

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Changes concerning the **support to business creation** consisted mainly in the continuation of the provision of support services for young entrepreneurs or start-ups developed under EQUAL. Accordingly, most impacts reported were observed at local level. Since many innovations in this field included special training there was some overlap with impacts on education and training. Existing structures were especially influenced in cases where new organisations/institutions were set up (e.g. German Micro Finance Institute or Institute for Ethnic Entrepreneurship in Denmark).

A further institutional impact was the **increased capacity of the MAs and support structures** to access and manage funding of this nature. The increased absorption and disbursement rates in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of EQUAL indicate an increase in the capacity of the MAs to manage the Initiative. The fact that innovation now features in many OPs and that the EQUAL principles have been brought forward into the new OPs indicates that there has been an impact. We distinguished between at least three areas where capacity may have been enhanced:

- Firstly, within the public administration (in particular where the MAs were themselves the support structure), although this is always reduced as staff move on and there is a loss of institutional knowledge.
- Secondly, where professional, private sector capacity was built, i.e. where the support activities were contracted out. In these instances, we can see an increase in available national expertise.
- Thirdly in civil society, which became more professional in its dealings with policy makers and its ability to manage funding.

In some Member States, EQUAL was very proactive in adapting, developing and disseminating tools for ESF managers, and for project promoters, some of which were “mainstreamed” transnationally, either through bilateral transfer, or through their integration into common guides and procedures (e.g. tools for ESF bodies to develop a mainstreaming strategy, or tools for project promoters to apply Project Cycle Management techniques).

#### **Links between institutional impacts and EQUAL**

Unlike other changes, new developments/changes in labour market intermediation structures could more easily be related to EQUAL. Especially local employment services were in many countries involved in EQUAL partnerships and were therefore directly affected by them. In addition, new structures and processes were developed as a result of EQUAL projects which supported the establishment of new or the improvement of existing employment services.

In the field of education and training, it was more difficult to prove the direct link between EQUAL and any changes that may have occurred as some educational reforms may have already been underway. There were, however, specific projects that worked directly in the training field and brought about long-lasting changes. For instance in Greece a new law was passed on the ‘certification of professional profiles/capacities’. The National Certification Centre was responsible for this. New profiles for approximately 80 new professions were developed such as the ‘employment consultant’ or other social profiles (e.g. ‘social mediator’, etc.).

Regarding changes in regulatory work arrangements, EQUAL was less successful, possibly due to the time involved in carrying out such changes and the complexity of obtaining the consensus of social partners in this process.

In the field of support to business creation, the link to EQUAL could be established in those cases where vulnerable groups were explicitly addressed.



### Organisational impacts

Among all references to intermediary impacts, fewest were found in the field of organisational impacts. Here the access to training and access of different groups to jobs account for more than 60% of the cases.

Table 33. Organisational impacts

Linked to innovation in Thematic field	Access to training	Access of different groups to these jobs	Anti-discrimination policies and monitoring	Career advancement	Recruitment policies	Structure of jobs	Type of employment contracts	Total no. of impacts
Without linkage	5	6	1	0	1	1	0	14
1.A	3	5	4	1	0	1	1	15
1.B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2.C	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	7
2.D	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
3.E	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	6
3.F	1	5	2	1	2	0	0	11
4.G	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
4.H	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	5
5.I	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	4
not specified	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17(24%)</b>	<b>29(41%)</b>	<b>10 (14%)</b>	<b>5 (7%)</b>	<b>4(6%)</b>	<b>3(4%)</b>	<b>2(3%)</b>	<b>70 (100%)</b>

Overall, it can be said that both the documentation of changes as well as the respective evidence were the most fragmentary of all types of intermediary impacts. If impacts were described, they refer normally to partners of the DPs who continued with certain practices. Other than that, there is no serious indication that EQUAL succeeded in changing employers' attitudes. Awareness raising campaigns launched in some countries for example on the 'abilities of people with disabilities' may have brought about some changes. However, due to the absence of pertinent evaluations, these are only speculations. The low numbers of organisational impacts and the few references to take-up by the private sector found in the existing documentation as well as the fragmentary descriptions allowed two different interpretations: either a failure of horizontal mainstreaming in the private sector or a weak evidence base.

## 5 The long-term impacts of EQUAL

### 5.1 Introduction

This section presents final findings on the fourth evaluation question, EQ4: 'What long-term impacts is the EQUAL Community initiative expected to have?'

### 5.2 Definition

We use the term 'impact' for any other effects than results, intended or not. Within impacts we distinguish between 'intermediary impacts' and 'longer-term' impacts. However, as can be seen from the intervention logic (cf. figure 2), the following issues should be born in mind:

Firstly, there are several 'chains of impacts' that can be attributed to the EQUAL Community Initiative, each of which triggers certain long-term impacts. They might in some cases overlap, but can also go into different directions.

Secondly, there is also a hierarchy between longer-term impacts. Thus, the ultimate impacts envisaged by EQUAL do not follow directly after intermediary impacts, but there are some steps in between.

Finally, there is no generally acknowledged definition of the time-span referred to as 'long-term'. Though there is a common understanding that 'long-term' impacts cannot be expected to occur before a couple of years, there are contexts where their achievement could take up to twenty years. Experiences indicate that the achievement of impacts takes longer if they require a change of mindset or a change in the way of life and shorter if only 'technical' changes have to take place. Equally, changes take longer if society as a whole is concerned than if the changes only refer to certain sectors.

### 5.3 Methodology

Originally, for the identification of long-term impacts, a screening grid was used. However, as was to be expected, indications of long-term impacts were rather scarce. In addition, the analysis of references showed that most of them referred only to programme participants. We thus decided against a linear analysis of the impact grid as was done for the other evaluation questions. Instead, qualitative interviews and discussions with the expert panel provided the basis for the findings presented below. They are guided by the following sub-questions:

Table 34. List of sub-questions pertaining to long-term impacts

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Which results were used for programming or implementing the ESF OPs 2007-13?</li><li>2. Which potential long-term impacts can be expected overall on the basis of the intermediary impacts identified?</li><li>3. To what extent can EQUAL be expected to have contributed to increased employment for vulnerable groups and the reduction of discrimination cases in the labour market?</li><li>4. Which factors are likely to influence the achievement of long-term impacts?</li></ol> |
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### 5.4 Findings

EQUAL has impacted on ESF programming in two ways: on the one hand the experiences gained under EQUAL led to the incorporation of some or all of the EQUAL principles in the 2007-2013 Operational Programmes. The principles most reflected are those of partnership, transnationality and equal opportunities between men and women and, to a lesser extent, the principle of innovation (innovation is more difficult to incorporate as it implies experimentation that is not foreseen in OPs). On the other hand, it increased awareness amongst relevant actors and decision makers of the existence of new target groups and their respective needs. This raised awareness can be seen as the most distinctive result of EQUAL that is expected to affect

the situation of vulnerable groups in the long-term. The target groups for which this is particularly true are asylum seekers, immigrants and ethnic minorities (in particular, Roma) and ex-prisoners, groups that had not been addressed before or whose inclusion in employment policies and actions was obstructed by prejudice. Having said this, it should also be noted that this sensitisation regarding the situation and needs of vulnerable groups mostly concerned people and/or organisations directly involved in the programme or the activities of DPs. With the exception of some countries where big media campaigns were launched, there is no evidence of a general change in the public discourse on vulnerable groups.

One of the key questions in this regard is whether the application of the policies and models developed will depend on the continuation of a similar programme to EQUAL or on the application of only some of the EQUAL principles or for current changes to last. The evidence appears to suggest that EQUAL's long-term impacts on the situation of vulnerable groups will not be so impressive in the absence of specific provisions for either a continuation of EQUAL or something similar or its incorporation in national mainstreaming programmes with a specific budget assigned to it. The problems that EQUAL was designed to address still persist, which calls for further action in the future.

#### 5.4.1 Factors influencing the achievement of long-term impacts

The following factors have been identified as conducive to the achievement of long-term impacts:

- i. **The existence of flexible and integrated programmes like EQUAL:** Programmes that encompass partnership, participation of several diverse actors, empowerment, opportunities for local authority participation, direct contact with target groups (EQUAL was very close to the final beneficiaries), bottom-up approach, enthusiasm of organisations/bodies involved (they all liked EQUAL for the opportunity it gave them to suggest, design and develop policy proposals).
- ii. **Programming and budgeting:** Expected impacts will be determined by the inclusion of EQUAL good practice into employment policy, equal opportunities policy, social policy, inclusion policy. For changes to last and impacts to be achieved, programming of these policies should include distinct budgeting and specific financial commitments.
- iii. **Tendering procedures for project implementation:** EQUAL produced policy proposals, many of which have been incorporated in new OPs (e.g. in Greece, 50% of policy proposals were included in the OP for employment). However, the extent to which these will be applied in practice depends on the details of the calls for proposals and the eligibility requirements set out there.
- iv. **The extent of changes in attitudes:** EQUAL has changed the attitudes of participating enterprises and raised their awareness. The extent to which this implies a real change in their attitude to social reality will determine also the long-term changes for the target groups. These changes in mentality should be further promoted and extended to the wider economy through increased and continuous communication and dissemination.
- v. **The willingness/attitude of target groups themselves:** Another crucial factor is the motivation of target groups to actively pursue employment opportunities and to participate in the available schemes. To tackle this, relevant actors involved in employment and inclusion programmes should facilitate access to information and increase awareness of target groups of the opportunities they have in the context of new programmes.
- vi. **Continuation/establishment of TWGs:** They proved to be very effective in many countries, supported cooperation processes and helped identify good practice.

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- vii. **Continuity of people and structures:** Participation in the management of new programmes of the same people who were there under EQUAL increases the likelihood of designing actions that are a real reflection of EQUAL (those who were involved in EQUAL would have liked to see it continue). Likewise, where the EQUAL MA participated in the Monitoring Committees for the preparation of new OPs they transmitted their experience into the new programmes. At project level, the continuation of structures will also contribute to long-term impacts.
- viii. **Legislative changes:** Changes in regulations and laws to facilitate access to employment for people with difficulties.
- ix. **Taking responsibility at institutional level:** Local authorities and social partners could take on the cost of continuation and pursue long-term impacts by ensuring the sustainability of tools and structures developed by EQUAL.

However, the evolving global economic situation also sets the pace for change irrespective of EQUAL. This is why it is difficult to estimate the direct influence of EQUAL on change and the situation of some of the above vulnerable groups will change not only as a consequence of EQUAL but also due to a policy shift triggered by the global economic crisis. Changes in immigration flows, the climbing unemployment rates due to massive restructuring and demographic ageing are on the one hand expected to drive policies to tackle immigrants, the unemployed and ageing workers. On the other hand, in many countries it is doubted whether employment for the defined target groups in companies struggling in times of economic downturn will be available. It is thus expected that due to the worsening economic situation, the situation of vulnerable groups will also deteriorate in the next few years until the economy picks up again. However, in this regard it also should be noted that the new constituencies do not go away even in times of recession. The squeeze on public funding and the necessity to make it more efficient can also engender change. Thus, though the difficult economic situation can make things more difficult, it can also be an opportunity for change. EQUAL type activities can provide a solution in a recession and provide an important alternative to the macro-economic approach.

## 6 The Community Added Value of EQUAL

### 6.1 Introduction

After reviewing a large number of factors, and documenting, reflecting and assessing the outputs, results and impacts of EQUAL, the fundamental question remains: 'Was it worth the effort? Was it really necessary to install this new and experimental type of programme on a European scale?' This is behind the fifth Evaluation Question, EQ5: 'What is the Community Added Value of EQUAL?'

Community Added Value (CAV) is central to the issue of the legitimacy and legitimisation of policy action taken on European level, whether in a centralised form or in a more open form of coordination where the EU takes an active role in promoting new policy and governance approaches.

EQUAL undoubtedly set a landmark in that respect, offering a previously unknown conceptual and financial framework for experimentation in the field of social integration policy related to the labour market, both with respect to the scope of activities and the structures and methods of delivery.

### 6.2 Definition

Unlike the standard ESF or the more selectively implemented Innovative Measures<sup>37</sup>, but integrating lessons learned from these, EQUAL was a large scale attempt to combine innovation development with the mainstreaming of innovation. EQUAL aimed to overcome the frequently observed problem that innovations that were developed and successfully tested in the development context were 'lost' afterwards as the good-practice example per se was not strong enough to overcome the hurdles of becoming state-of-the-art practice.

This clear focus on an integrated strategy for developing and mainstreaming innovations may be considered unique to EQUAL.

EQUAL created a unique institutional framework with

- Obligatory partnership arrangements (national & trans-national),
- Coordination, networking and broad stakeholder involvement (strategic partners, empowerment, National Thematic Networks – NTN, and European Thematic Groups - ETG),
- A focus on experimentation and the corresponding immanent readiness for risk taking,

EQUAL also bridged the gap between strong, indicator based operationalisation and legitimisation on the one hand, and more procedural forms of generating legitimacy that can be considered characteristic for the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on the other. This included the strong emphasis that was put on a thorough approach for systematic self-assessment and evaluation at all levels of implementation.

To make the CAV more tangible and to underpin it with evidence, a list of sub-questions to be answered through the desk research and in particular through the interviews was formulated:

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Communication COM(2000) 894 on the implementation of innovative measures under Article 6 of the European Social Fund Regulation for the programming period 2000-2006

Table 35. List of sub-questions pertaining to Evaluation Question 5

1. Why was EQUAL participation interesting for the national/regional authorities (complemented existing policies, additional source of funding in a scarce environment, opportunity to upgrade existing policy instruments etc.)?
2. To what extent have the specific features of the EQUAL Community initiative demonstrated a specifically Community value to the inputs, outputs, results and impacts in the selected MS?
3. The EQUAL Community Initiative was targeted especially at vulnerable groups. Were any of these groups a 'new target group' in that it usually did not/could not participate in comparable national programmes?
4. In your view, do the results achieved by EQUAL projects differ from other, especially national actions taken in the same fields? If so, in which respect?
5. What do you think: could similar results have been achieved in your country without EQUAL support? If not, why not?
6. What is the present budget (approximately) provided for active anti-discrimination policies? If you compare it to the time before EQUAL: is it lower, the same or higher?
7. Has there been any specific activity targeted to implement the Gender Mainstreaming principle as a binding principle for funding decisions throughout your EQUAL programme, i.e. as a horizontal approach and not only inside the pillar on Equal Opportunities? If so, what provisions have been taken in particular and do you consider them effective?
8. Has there been any strategic monitoring on Gender Equality aspects in the programme implementation in the direction of e.g. Gender Counting, Gender Budgeting, Gender Impact assessment? If yes: what effects did it have on the implementation process?

These sub-questions reflect our understanding of the concept of CAV. CAV requires more than just a positive outcome of programme activities as such. There must be something additionally gained that can be linked to what makes EQUAL specific and divergent from the standard activities.

This can vary from country to country, but at the end of the day, there should be agreement that the results and scope achieved by EQUAL would not have been reached without the specificities of the Community Initiative. It could be said that there is Added Value when EQUAL fulfils our general criteria for innovation, i.e. being new and better than the well known standards – and providing evidence for this.

Of course, not all sub-questions were answered for all Member States through the interviews or document screening. Moreover, quite often the 'simple' fact that EQUAL was in place and working by its principles was already interpreted as CAV. But we found specific answers also in other contexts of our investigations, in particular referring to the relationship between the partnership principle and the capacity for innovation development. According to the interviews in the EU8, the requirements of EQUAL for transnational cooperation, partnership and innovation represented a CAV in that they forced the groups concerned to develop truly new ideas. The long-term impacts on the target groups will depend on the economic situation. This has changed dramatically within the last couple of years and in the present situation it is not possible to concentrate only on the vulnerable groups which were identified during the first programming period of the Structural Funds in the EU8.

There is a lot of evidence that the specificities of EQUAL and its novelty provided the framework and instruments that produced an additional yield that would not have been possible through the existing national labour market policy approaches.

### 6.3 Findings

We could not find substantial hints on CAV in the national evaluations; the topic did not play a major role if indeed any at all. This is most probably related to the fact that the national authorities have a different focus when launching a programme evaluation, even if initiated and/or co-financed by the EU, than the Commission, in particular, as the ESF has shifted from being a European Programme, co-financed by Member States, to an instrument for co-financing national activities in the framework of the EES and its national implementation via National Actions Plans for Employment (NAP). However, the interviews brought a number of interesting details to light that demonstrate EQUAL's additional value. We present the results sub-question by sub-question with country examples to illustrate.

#### Why was EQUAL participation interesting for the national/regional authorities?

From the interviewees' statements it was clear that EQUAL complemented national policies, sometimes to a large extent, although smaller initiatives may have existed before. The additional funding constituted an added value of its own, particularly in smaller and economically weaker countries (net-receivers). However, what was often emphasised as more relevant than the funding itself – in some cases the funding for special target groups was actually higher before EQUAL – was the new and more integrated approach of service delivery and policy development through innovation and mainstreaming.

The interest of national/regional authorities was evident in the participation of a large number of regional authorities and ministries in DPs, some of which also had a coordinating role. EQUAL promoted dialogue amongst organisations that had never before worked together. Inter-institutional and inter-departmental cooperation sprang up as a result of EQUAL and rendered the programme a very interesting new instrument for cooperation in order to address common serious problems in the social field.

EQUAL was particularly interesting for local and regional authorities as they could choose where they wanted to invest the money. They did not only have extra resources but could also choose which priorities to invest in. This was a unique feature of EQUAL.

EQUAL offered a great learning opportunity to public authorities, in particular – but by no means exclusively – in the EU10, in direct cooperation with civil society organisations/NGOs that were previously considered with some caution with regard to their reliability and professionalism. This included capacity building related to project management in a non-conditional but goal-oriented way. This was also a field where transnational partnerships contributed through the direct comparison of practices and attitudes between Member States.

However, not only the organisational and procedural aspects of the work within EQUAL offered learning opportunities that would not have taken place otherwise. The scope of policy was widened by the opportunity (and the incentives) to address new target groups (e.g. migrants, asylum seekers, ex-prisoners, homeless people, victims of trafficking, ex-substance abusers). The opportunity of participating in EQUAL was also used to reflect on the impact of the administrative activities (regulations and procedures, red tape) of the partners.

New spheres of activity and new types and combinations of activities were started under EQUAL. Business start-ups and self-employment were promoted which was particularly relevant in some countries for young people, unemployed people, ethnic minorities and women (the latter especially, in isolated rural areas). Also, within the entrepreneurship pillar, priority was given, for the first time, to the third sector. Improved employability was no longer only aimed at through innovation in training and re-qualification systems and methods, but also through a range of integrated activities (training, mentoring, advice, seminars, etc.) focused on disadvantaged target groups (while the EES mainly refers to long-term unemployment and youth unemployment) to enhance their social and labour market inclusion.



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#### Box 12. New spheres of activity

In Italy, the entrepreneurship pillar mainly addressed social cooperatives and the third sector not specifically supported by other instruments. The theme of immigration was not included in national policies so EQUAL was the first programme to deal with the policy field.

In Malta and Cyprus, EQUAL offered new ways of dealing with female unemployment and inactive women in the labour market. In Malta, this was achieved through a project in the thematic field 4G on reducing gender gaps (equal opportunities pillar), while in Cyprus it was achieved through projects in the thematic field 2C on business creation (entrepreneurship pillar). In the field of asylum seekers (TF 5.1) both countries fomented empowerment and the promotion of the social rights of this target group. Although these countries offered reception, basic services, accommodation and provision of state medical care and services for asylum seekers before EQUAL, vocational training and work placements/job opportunities of asylum seekers were not addressed before EQUAL (in Cyprus asylum seekers were not allowed to work before EQUAL, with EQUAL they could).

In countries with decentralised public administration and decision making powers in the regions, EQUAL was reported to have complemented regional policies on employment and social inclusion (e.g. in Italy and Spain) and to have strengthened mainstreaming at local level: the majority of good practices were incorporated at local level, in contrast to general policies which have traditionally affected the regional and national levels. It is common that the local level implements the good practice, while financing and normative regulation takes place at the regional or national administrative level.

#### Box 13. CAV in Latvia

In Latvia, CAV was summed up as follows:

- (1) Non-standard, highly effective methods were developed and promoted to address the needs of the target groups which would not have been possible with national financing alone;
- (2) New social services were developed through inspiration from the transnational cooperation and community policy enactment fostered the faster adoption of equal opportunities in the areas addressed through the removal of administrative barriers;
- (3) New principles in designing measures for the target groups were applied: no decisions were made without involvement of the target groups and without taking their views into account: NGOs representing the target groups sat around the table with policy makers and social partners thus ensuring participatory and open decision making centred around the needs of the target group;
- (4) The scope of delivering services was widened considerably which would not have been possible with national efforts only;
- (5) The availability of transnational partnerships and the transfer of best practice and experience was also an important prerequisite in advancing non-discriminatory and active employment measures for the target group.

Many of these aspects and assessments apply to the EU15 as well, but to a different extent. In the EU15, the term CAV was treated slightly less emphatically. This may be rooted in longer traditions in active policy measures as well as in different perspectives of 'net payer' countries like Germany, and may also be related to the more defensive attitude towards the suspected European Commission's interventions into national spheres of interest. The fact that in non-Objective 1 areas, the financial weight of EQUAL compared to the general expenditure in the social and labour market policy area was lighter will also have contributed to a slightly less enthusiastic position.



Nonetheless, EQUAL was also considered positively in the EU15 in particular for the opportunities it gave for risk-taking in a 'laboratory environment', for innovation development, for complementing national policies with new fields of activities, and for the involvement of new actors from the voluntary sector/NGOs, and for its focus on the most vulnerable target groups. The latter became more visible (e.g. in Finland and Germany) and achieved a more advantageous position regarding active participation in and benefiting from labour market policy instruments than before (e.g. asylum seekers, but also ex-offenders, substance abusers, etc.).

With regard to ethnic minorities, institutional obstacles sometimes represented a hindrance, because of protection of privacy laws that made a streamlined approach in favour of ethnic minorities cumbersome for formal reasons.

Generally very much appreciated was the partnership approach that was considered a boosting factor for a streamlined approach to innovation development and as an elementary precondition for mainstreaming.

#### Box 14. CAV in Ireland

In Ireland, EQUAL was considered to have done serious work bringing together key players to address the barriers to inclusion in the labour market. It provided a resource for innovation that was not available from other sources. In addition, the technical support was also an important input. The outputs and products generated were excellent in many cases. For instance, resources like the Ideasbank and other products are a repository of good materials that can be used in future. It also has an audience that wants to access this information. While EQUAL has not influenced national policy, it did produce innovation that was taken up to some extent. EQUAL revealed a need for more flexibility and greater responsiveness in programmes. By aligning with the work of the Equality Authority, as the practical manifestation of the state's promotion and support for equality, EQUAL had a clear focus. It also did some very interesting work on the coalface of social inclusion and adaptability of workplaces (upgrading skills, diversity, etc.).

The ratings of transnational partnerships and empowerment were more ambivalent. In some cases, they were considered to have had no or only minor positive effects, not so much because of a lack of potential but because they need experience and good management and take more effort than often assumed. The obstacles to value added in these aspects were: difficulties to define a joint topic and common interests, lack of time and funding, high turnover of people involved, linguistic and cultural barriers.

Nonetheless the option of transnational partnerships was in general positively rated, either regarding its specific role in bringing in new and innovative ideas or because it consolidated and reinforced the DP's understanding of EQUAL principles on some objectives such as equity and reducing the gender gap. In France, it helped the DPs to broaden their views, to better understand other national and cultural contexts and to find ways to address common problems. This value added was mostly brought about by study visits, exchanges of trainees, seminars, and the production of guidebooks, manuals and web sites.

The transnationality aspect of partnership offered know-how and experiences and brought actors in contact with changing conditions and new ways of doing things, it changed their way of thinking. However, transnational cooperation could have worked better: it requires very good organisation and is not effective if it is merely an exchange of experiences. Transnational cooperation, if well exploited and focused on the target audiences, greatly influences the target groups' empowerment and the finding of solutions to their problems/needs.

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**To what extent have the specific features of the EQUAL Community initiative demonstrated a specifically Community value to the inputs, outputs, results and impacts in the selected MS?**

The sub-question on the effects of the 'EQUAL specific features' was actually targeted at capturing more tangible effects related to the usual measurement levels of goal-based programmes, namely Input, Output, Result, and Impact. The evaluation used the following definitions of the above terms:

- Inputs = resources that have been invested for activities in the thematic fields
- Outputs = products, services, etc. produced by the DPs
- Results = take up of innovations
- Impacts = longer term effects on the situation of the target groups

As specific features of EQUAL we considered the principles of innovation and mainstreaming, and the strategic instruments of partnership, transnationality and empowerment. In addition, the Gender Mainstreaming principle was taken on board, although not EQUAL-specific, but more explicitly emphasised under EQUAL than under the ESF in general.

**Box 15. Gender Equality in Estonia**

In Estonia, if there had been no requirement for gender equality then the DPs would not have taken it into account. Now they have experience working with such requirements and will hopefully continue to apply them.

As mentioned before, new spheres of activity were opened up under EQUAL. Specific inputs for these were additional financial resources for the social economy, entrepreneurship, asylum seekers and other vulnerable groups. In the EU10, the financial aspect was undoubtedly a major added value as it provided the opportunity to develop projects for vulnerable groups which would not have been developed otherwise. Some of the thematic fields were truly new in a number of countries, e.g. work-family balance or access to the labour market for asylum seekers in Lithuania.

The partnership principle turned out to be one of the most outstanding factors of EQUAL. Even the relatively high cost of coordination was considered acceptable because of the extraordinary effects of the partnership approach.

**Box 16. New ways of cooperation in Poland**

In Poland, it was said that even though the mid-term and mid-term update evaluations criticised the high management costs of partnerships (high compared to mainstream projects, not requiring extra resources to manage transnational cooperation), EQUAL helped develop new ways of cooperation and management of partnerships (on a more equal basis), at the same time providing a platform to develop and test solutions. This would not have been possible in a mainstream programme.

Partnership was even considered a resource of its own under EQUAL. The partnership design in the form of a DP was a unique input in the organisation of EQUAL projects (projects in the field of employment and social inclusion were not built on multi-actor cooperation before). The way in which EQUAL was managed both at national and EU level, was also much appreciated.

The DPs were often interpreted as the relevant innovation at stake, the participation of target groups in standard training measures was sometimes interpreted as empowerment as was the partnership principle for the partners themselves.

The Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) (like the National Thematic Networks (NTN) and the European Thematic Groups (ETG)) were considered 'outputs' in themselves and were also found to contribute to the improvement of outputs and results: In this way, TWGs were able to produce policy proposals. The role of the TWGs was therefore crucial for promoting the mainstreaming of EQUAL products as they influenced the design of OPs for the new programming period. EU-level TWGs, where several MAs took part also added value through exchange of experience, learning, best practices and tools transfer.

**The EQUAL Community Initiative was targeted especially at vulnerable groups. Were any of these groups a 'new target group' in that it usually did not/could not participate in comparable national programmes?**

New scope for policy, i.e. addressing new target groups or opening pathways for integration that traditionally were not accessible due to the standard legal framework creates a strong argument for CAV. New – and often the most vulnerable – target groups were: migrants, ethnic minorities, asylum seekers, ex-offenders and prisoners, homeless people, victims of human trafficking, ex-substance abusers. The results clearly show the pioneering effects of EQUAL for many of those groups in many of the countries, in particular for migrants, ethnic minorities and asylum seekers.

The choice which target groups to address always reflects political priorities in the current socio-economic and political environment. For instance, there were few asylum seekers in Spain, therefore this thematic field was addressed by only one public organisation (IMSERCO, the DG on Integration of Immigrants – Secretary of State on Immigration) and projects were not open to public tendering. Conversely, in Cyprus, labour market integration for young people was perceived to be a highly relevant policy area for innovation.

EQUAL clearly addressed new target groups, made their problems visible and offered tools to help them overcome these problems. These new tools and new opportunities now exist as a result of EQUAL. The main change that can be observed is increased awareness of the existence and needs of these target groups. In Greece for instance, immigrants needed employment as well as legal support which EQUAL offered. A good example was a project (DREAM) which produced: a Code of Ethics for Mass Media concerning the Application of Policies Combating Discriminations; an Equality Audit in Mass Media (to combat the maintenance of the phenomena of racism and xenophobia through the discourse used); and established Antiracist Intervention Structures linked to national and transnational actors. A further Greek example was support for people with mental illnesses: EQUAL built on/consolidated a law for the establishment of cooperatives by the mentally ill. In Spain, all target groups were addressed before but not with the same intensity or approach as under EQUAL. Many of the EQUAL target groups were also not new in Denmark and around the time EQUAL was launched there were some programmes initiated by the Danish Refugee Council for asylum seekers intending to prepare these for the Danish labour market. However, for political reasons these initiatives did not receive any follow-up (according to current legislation, asylum seekers awaiting a decision on their status as refugees cannot work in the Danish labour market). In the UK, asylum seekers got a platform that was previously denied to them although they were not actually intended to be an EQUAL target group. Initially, the target group was refugees, but asylum seekers also benefited from the Initiative. In Italy, local and national decision makers are now aware of the importance of considering asylum seekers as a specific group. In Walloon, migrants and ethnic minorities are not 'defined' due to the privacy laws and are therefore not addressed explicitly. Asylum seekers became more visible as a marginalized group through EQUAL.

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**In your view, do the results achieved by EQUAL projects differ from other, especially national actions taken in the same fields? If so, in which respect?**

This question was raised to get an impression of the different outcomes of EQUAL compared to other activities in the relevant policy fields as perceived by the stakeholders. In many cases the interviewees positively emphasised differences between EQUAL and the standard national, but also ESF measures. Many of the aspects mentioned referred to the principles more than to specific outcomes or results. Obviously, the methodological aspects in a broad sense influenced the results although these are not easily measurable. Actions under EQUAL are different and also have more complex goals which makes a direct comparison difficult. The types of measures financed cannot really be compared as the usual support for vulnerable groups is not experimental.

There were fundamental differences between EQUAL and national actions, namely the former's innovative character, its model and principles, and the holistic approach in implementation, which also provided more flexibility. EQUAL was unique in that the principles of partnership, transnationality, empowerment, experimentation and innovation were not present in any national programmes. These brought a totally new approach to addressing inequalities in the labour market.

EQUAL addressed policy gaps and target groups that were not addressed before. It also provided a higher budget for certain measures and raised awareness for the difficult situation of vulnerable groups.

EQUAL involved and motivated NGOs, giving them a new role compared to national programmes. In some countries they did not usually have project management autonomy. This autonomy required the transfer of knowledge and know-how which EQUAL offered.

The implementation of EQUAL entailed a learning curve which also separated it from national programmes. Knowledge acquired in the 1st Round was incorporated in the implementation of the 2nd Round. For instance, in the field of equal opportunities in Spain, the 1st Round focused on creating services for women, while the 2nd Round changed the perspective towards reconciliation and co-responsibility (not to 'treat' women in isolation but also creating the necessary framework to support them). A similar change took place in relation to immigrants: the 2nd Round focused more on providing integrated itineraries.

This learning curve was not restricted to EQUAL alone but also can be shown for the new ESF Operational Programmes as e.g. was reported from Germany where all complex programmes involving partnerships, transnationality, and innovation development are financed through the ESF OP which involves five ministries. A number of these programmes have similarities with EQUAL which can be seen as learning from EQUAL.

There were also more sceptical voices that pointed out that in spite of different methods and approaches the *results* did not diverge from other actions in similar fields. This was the case for the Czech Republic: "In the Czech Republic, although there were undoubtedly some very good and EQUAL specific results, the majority of the results were of average quality and importance".

In the Central European and Nordic countries interviewees noted that to some extent EQUAL projects were similar to ESF projects, although here too the opportunity to 'think outside the box' (Denmark, Germany and the UK), to take risks and in particular the more process-oriented way of working were positively rated. This also required (and led to) a less statistical but quality oriented evaluation approach as was explicitly stressed in the case of Denmark.

**What do you think: could similar results have been achieved in your country without EQUAL support? If not, why not?**

With this question we wanted to find out whether and why the European initiative might be considered to have superseded isolated national activities. The results generally unambiguously state that the national frameworks would not have provided the specific features of EQUAL (i.e. the EQUAL principles, in particular partnership, but also transnationality). Moreover, with its funding provisions and strategic goals, EQUAL was considered to have brought into focus and provided funding for subjects otherwise neglected. As a programme related to the EES, EQUAL was at the same time offering a framework for a demand-driven implementation. Member State authorities could decide how to identify the relevant demand and needs – in a nation-wide top-down approach or in a less strict and more bottom-up approach based on proposals from beneficiaries, stakeholders and applicants.

There is a near consensus in the southern Member States that similar results would not have been achieved without EQUAL support. This was the first time that there was an opportunity in the social field to experiment and implement innovative actions. The EQUAL approach and principles were more decisive instruments than the actual funding. EQUAL was unique for its integrated, holistic, participative and flexible approach. It was very close to the beneficiaries and allowed flexibility in the use of funds.

In all the EU8, the opinion was that these results would not have been achieved without EQUAL because EQUAL was funding something that would not have been funded otherwise. Apart from the actions for specific target groups, the programme encouraged partnership and transnational cooperation which would not have happened otherwise.

In Latvia, for example, EQUAL activities contributed to addressing and solving problems of discrimination and inequalities with regard to the labour market by facilitating the elaboration of draft documentation for policy planning (concepts, strategies), drafts of normative documents or recommended amendments in the current normative documents. Several projects suggested establishing new laws or making amendments.

The exception among the New Member States is Malta where the NSS claimed that similar results could have been achieved over a longer period of time without EQUAL since the government is always committed to addressing the needs of socially excluded and disadvantaged people.

In the Scandinavian countries some sceptical voices were also heard. However, the general feedback indicates for those countries too that national programmes alone could not have achieved the same results due to the well-known range of factors distinguishing EQUAL from the national policies. A number of additional pro-EQUAL arguments were mentioned:

- Centralisation of employment policies with poor involvement of social and other partners and local governments, and with little flexibility. In this respect, EQUAL compensated for overly centralised systems.
- Relevant policies are rarely project based but sectorally organised – defined on separate budgetary lines – and thus follow a model of ‘conditional programming’ instead of a more integrative and goal-based programming.
- EQUAL provided a stable framework for funding for seven years which allowed thorough testing and mainstreaming.

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**What is the present budget (approximately) provided for active anti-discrimination policies? If you compare it to the time before EQUAL: is it lower, the same or higher?**

The sustainability of EQUAL activities would be a good indication of the CAV of the Community Initiative. We chose the availability and volume of specific funding as a proper indicator. The stability or even an increase in funding was our proposed benchmark to judge the policy impact of EQUAL.

One major problem with the indicator was that the relevant anti-discrimination policy budgets were spread amongst several ministries, authorities, and bodies on central and/or regional/local level. Because of this, the interview partners were not able to give concrete figures. In a number of cases, the impression was that budgets had been increased, but there was also evidence of cutbacks, in particular as a result of the economic crisis or reforms in the legal framework. At least with regard to the current ESF implementation there were hints of a take-up and continuation of EQUAL-type activities but not necessarily with stable or increased budgets.

The budget for active anti-discrimination policies is not clearly discernible except in Spain and Malta. In Spain, there is now an increased budget for active anti-discrimination policies. In the OP on the fight against discrimination, there are now more funds than before. There is in particular more budget for equal opportunities. In Malta, due to the small budget allocated for EQUAL, the national budget for anti-discrimination policies remained the same as before EQUAL.

The exact budget could not be named in any of the EU8 as in most Member States the budget for anti-discrimination policies was managed by a different ministry (Ministry of the Interior). However, in most countries it was assumed that the budget was now higher than before EQUAL. In Lithuania it was supposed minimal nevertheless. In Estonia, the budget available in the Structural Fund programmes in the new period for innovative activities is higher than under EQUAL. In Slovenia, as the different types of discrimination (gender/ethnic orientation/sexual orientation, etc. discrimination) are implemented at different levels (national/regional/local), it was not possible to provide an estimate of the budget provided for anti-discrimination policy. In Latvia, it was remarked that due to the economic downturn, the social budget was cut back by more than 50% thus there are no grounds to assume that EQUAL had led to an increase in the public budget for active anti-discrimination policies.

The situation is not much different in the central or northern Member States as the following examples from France, Ireland and Belgium (Dutch speaking part) illustrate: In France the budget development is hard to define because anti-discrimination policies and budgets are scattered among different ministries and regional authorities, targeting different situations (housing, revenue, health, children) and/or 'discriminated' groups (single parents, Roma, families below the poverty line). During the EQUAL programming period, administrative reforms shifted responsibilities for inclusion policies (elderly people for instance) from national to sub-regional ('*département*') budgets. With the current economic recession and the scarcity of financial means, there seems to be less public support for a growing number of vulnerable groups. In Ireland, the budget is higher now than before EQUAL but factors other than EQUAL have driven this. Anti-discrimination policies now have a higher status (instituted in legislation through changes in legislation) and structure (the Equality Authority). In Flanders, the current ESF budget is much higher. The same thematic fields are used in the new programming period and the whole ESF budget is focused on anti-discrimination policies. Approximately 5% is spent on transnational cooperation, 5% on innovation, 15% on social inclusion, and 40-50% on employability and adaptability.



**Has there been any specific activity targeted to implement the gender mainstreaming (GM) principle as a binding principle for funding decisions throughout your EQUAL programme, i.e. as a horizontal approach and not only inside the pillar on Equal Opportunities? If so, what provisions have been taken in particular and do you consider them effective?**

Gender equality and gender mainstreaming were not specific to EQUAL alone but constituted a general horizontal priority and strategy to be applied throughout the Structural Fund programmes. However, it could be said to have received a fresh impetus through EQUAL. That is why on the basis of discussions at the first expert panel meeting, we decided to include the topic in our CAV criteria. The topic was broached in the interviews on the basis of three sub-questions related to GM as a pre-condition for funding decisions, to provisions taken for a Gender Monitoring (i.e. the general monitoring of gender-related output and result indicators), and to the relevance for the EQUAL evaluations.

From the interviews, the overall picture is quite sketchy, showing the lack of a thorough understanding of the implications of gender mainstreaming at the time of implementation of EQUAL. In particular the interpretation of 'horizontal' seemed often to have been understood to mean 'less relevant'. Nevertheless, there were some interesting cases of positive change.

In the southern countries - apart from TFs 4.G and 4.H that addressed gender explicitly - GM was applied only horizontally, although it can be observed that a large number of women participated in social economy actions. The promotion of gender equality was one of the most innovative areas of intervention in Cyprus: DPs working in this area were all very innovative in terms of methodologies. It was also regarded as innovative that public bodies and NGOs worked together to promote gender equality.

Spain experimented more with GM. Several results have been taken into account for the future, for instance:

- The management of employment policies incorporates gender (e.g. Basque country).
- The profile of 'equality agent' is now in the national catalogue of professional profiles.
- EQUAL generalised and made popular the equality theme.
- Several entities that had not worked before with the gender concept started doing so.

France chose to include GM as a horizontal selection criterion for all DPs instead of one thematic option amongst others. It was closely monitored by the State services in charge of women's rights (*Délégations aux Droits des Femmes*) at national, regional and sub-regional (*département*) levels. Their representatives would usually sit on programming committees. Thus, the field 4.H (Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation) was not selected as a priority by France in the 1<sup>st</sup> Round. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round, special provisions were made by the MAs in order to consolidate this objective. Special briefings, awareness campaigns and training sessions on this subject were offered to DPs by State services in charge of women's rights.

As stated by the Mid-Term Evaluation of the OP, in Walloon, the principle of GM was not fully understood; in fact, only 20% of on-going projects incorporated it. As a result, the ESF Agency in Brussels developed a specific tool to better guide projects for the remaining period. A guide was published on how to better integrate gender in EQUAL projects. This guide was also up-dated for the new programming period.

Although there were no formal targets, the MA/NSS for Flanders had to inform project promoters about GM. Although GM was a criterion that needed to be addressed, project promoters did not fully comprehend what that might entail. A booklet on GM was handed out and a Gender Coordinator appointed.

In Germany, under the new federal ESF programme, an Agency for Gender Equality in the ESF OP has been set up to deal, amongst other things specifically with Gender Budgeting.



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**Has there been any strategic monitoring on Gender Equality aspects in the programme implementation in the direction of e.g. Gender Counting, Gender Budgeting, Gender Impact Assessment? If so, what effects did it have on the implementation process?**

Gender Monitoring – if it existed at all – was mainly restricted to gender-counting, i.e. the register of participants and their involvement in/benefits from programme activities, but at least in some cases this was more differentiated than prescribed in the ESF regulations. While explicit Gender Budgeting (i.e. the record and monitoring not of participation by gender alone but also the analysis of financial allocation related to the gender of participants and – more qualitatively - related to the goal of promoting gender equality) was not reported to exist anywhere, at least one case of Gender Impact Assessment could be identified:

In one French DP (insertion-emploi.net), an IT voucher allowing Internet access – with individual training - in the public library was mostly used by women because the opening hours of the library prevented the mostly male workforce of the agro-food factory next door to attend. The mid-term gender impact assessment eventually led the public library to adapt its opening hours accordingly and allow male 'blue collars' to benefit from IT coaching after work as well.

**Have provisions been taken to implement GM as a principle in the framework of programme evaluation and did this eventually lead to any adjustments?**

As far as reported it looks as though all evaluations took the Gender Equality issue into account and had to apply GM to their designs. But there is no evidence of any impact on the subsequent programme implementation, i.e. after the mid-term or updated mid-term evaluations.

## 7 Conclusions and recommendations

The following conclusions are in two parts: firstly we present a series of overall conclusions on the EQUAL Community Initiative that are cross-cutting in their nature and reflect our overall judgement on the Programme's design and performance and secondly we address the five specific evaluation questions set out in the ToR. Together these inform the recommendations presented in 7.3.

### 7.1 Overall conclusions

#### 7.1.1 EQUAL was extremely successful in enabling the development and mainstreaming of a large number of innovations and delivered Community Added Value not only through these results but also through the innovative and participative implementation of its activities as such

Through EQUAL the Commission has managed to design an instrument capable of responding to the specificities of the individual Member States, providing sufficient flexibility while retaining its focus on core principles. It generated a considerable volume of documented innovations and delivered added value to national and EU policies, particularly where national policies were fragmented or insufficient to meet the needs of the particular target groups.

EQUAL demonstrated the importance of innovation in the social context as a key 'driver' and informant of policy change. To echo the words of Commissioner Špidla<sup>38</sup> speaking in December 2008: "[EQUAL] has shown that reforms can be prepared and triggered, supported and enabled by innovative approaches. We have seen that by involving stakeholders in a collective learning process and by participating in developing and testing new approaches, greater ownership and commitment to change can be achieved. And there is an advantage in testing alternative arrangements and ways of delivery initially on a small scale".

EQUAL delivered considerable added value in terms of: providing access to funds and programmes to groups that otherwise would not have been targeted; increasing the quality of results through the use of the strategic instruments and providing a mechanism for risk sharing so that innovation could flourish.

#### 7.1.2 The design of EQUAL proved to be highly appropriate for addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, practitioners and policy makers and demonstrated the effectiveness of working in partnership

The design of EQUAL (the strategic instruments and in particular the partnership and empowerment principles) was highly appropriate to meet the needs of the target groups and policy makers. In fact, EQUAL was particularly successful in bridging gaps between the target groups, practitioners and policy-makers. The partnership approach ensured that the specificities of the target groups: hard to reach with traditional instruments, with often under-resourced representative and umbrella organisations, did not hamper their effective engagement in activities, while the thematic working groups provided a supplementary 'bridge' to the policy process.

EQUAL was remarkable for its 'overarching' approach, with an active and intentional development of innovation covering the full innovation development cycle from diagnosis through design to testing and validation of results, and finally to the dissemination and mainstreaming of successful outcomes to ensure their take-up into regular practice, in order to define a new 'state of the art', i.e. its integrated mainstreaming approach that was embedded in the partnership

<sup>38</sup> For more information see: 'Equal Opportunities for All: Delivering the Lisbon Strategy through Social Innovation and Transnational Cooperation', December 2008.

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arrangements, with the partnerships not only providing a framework for development of innovations but also providing a way to mainstream results into the work and goals of stakeholders, an important prerequisite for later mainstreaming at the policy level.

Despite EQUAL's success in reaching all target groups and delivering across all the thematic fields, there were low absorption rates in some fields which can be attributed to national authorities emphasising certain themes over others, e.g. through the structure of the co-financing. Future initiatives may address the difficulties of NGOs and other smaller groups in accessing funding, particularly in cases where national co-financing requirements are at odds with the European innovation philosophy.

### **7.1.3 EQUAL contributed to the equality agenda by demonstrating the importance of a holistic approach to fighting social exclusion**

EQUAL has demonstrated the limits of programmes to fight social exclusion through employment alone. While employment and economic growth are necessary they are not sufficient to address income disparities, regional disparities, gender and ethnic disparities or household hardships. For many individuals, accessing the labour market requires a range of supports that traditional social programmes often struggle to deliver. In addition, enterprises employing individuals from disadvantaged communities, or operating within disadvantaged communities, require different tools. EQUAL facilitated new models of working and has demonstrated in practice that inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the labour market is both possible and effective. In this respect, EQUAL has contributed to the equality agenda.

### **7.1.4 EQUAL was an important capacity building tool, in particular for the EU8/10**

EQUAL was particularly useful for the EU8/10 which had much less developed capacity in the field of innovation and combating discrimination in the workplace. In addition to providing extra financing, important in times of fiscal constraint, it allowed both the upgrading of national policies and the filling of policy gaps. Importantly, EQUAL promoted greater cooperation between the state (at national and regional level) actors and civil society organisations, thus enhancing social cohesion. The transnational element also allowed the partners to cooperate with their colleagues in other Member States and to reinforce the integration process.

### **7.1.5 There is a need to build on the EQUAL experience to continue to promote innovation and combat discrimination in the workplace**

According to a Eurobarometer survey published in November 2009, 64% of Europeans surveyed believe that the current economic crisis will bring more discrimination in the labour market. This indicates that in the public perception at least, discrimination remains an issue of concern. The current economic climate and the challenges facing the Community and Member States are considerable. The EQUAL experience has shown that standard policy instruments are not sufficiently creative and flexible to generate and test solutions. In the present climate, it is therefore important to identify how public policy can both support job creation through innovative approaches and continue to facilitate access to the labour market for groups suffering from discrimination. As the private sector and individuals are urged to become innovative and flexible, this challenge also faces the policy makers. In this context, one of the principal lessons of EQUAL has been the value of a space for innovation and not simply innovation but innovation generated through an inclusive process. It is essential therefore that the Member States demonstrate the political will to tackle discrimination.

## 7.2 Addressing the five evaluation questions

**Evaluation Question 1: To what extent has the actual expenditure of the EQUAL Community Initiative been targeted at achieving the main objectives set in the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion process?**

### 7.2.1 EQUAL closely and effectively addressed EES and Social Inclusion objectives

The EES was conceived to respond to the urgent need to take effective action to provide Europe with more and better jobs. It aimed to strengthen the coordination of national employment policies giving Member States common objectives and targets on the basis of its four pillars.

The EQUAL programme in the period under evaluation was closely linked with the objectives of the EES. Analysis of actual expenditure confirms that funds were targeted at achieving EES objectives, in particular the objectives of achieving a lifecycle approach to work, enhancing the inclusiveness of labour markets for disadvantaged people and adaptation of the training and education infrastructure to meet new competency requirements, particularly in relation to social innovation and the social economy. In addition to its specific contribution to meeting EES objectives, EQUAL has focused on developing and testing new ways to promote labour market inclusion, with an emphasis on adapting structures and systems to the needs both of the labour market and employers and to the particular needs of disadvantaged groups.

EQUAL was therefore utilised as intended, and with good results. EQUAL funded a range of appropriate actions including: specific actions by Member States to develop and test tools and resources; dissemination of results; networking to share experience and expertise both at national and EU levels and dedicated actions to promote mainstreaming of successful innovations.

### 7.2.2 The EQUAL ‘methodology’ actively contributed to the coordination of policies

Policy coordination, both with EU and national level instruments has been an important aspect of both the EES and the Social Inclusion process. Through its particular methodology, **EQUAL has actively contributed to effective action and to the coordination of policies**. The main reasons for this lay in the EQUAL structure and principles as follows:

- Firstly, **the partnership approach**, encompassing a large range of stakeholders that included social partners, NGOs, public authorities, the private sector and direct beneficiaries under the umbrella of the Development Partnership. The DP concept ‘obliged’ different actors to work together to address specific issues and target groups. EQUAL promoted partnership as an efficient instrument of better governance. By working together in partnership with other actors, decision makers in some countries considered certain themes/target groups for the first time in policy discussions (for instance, asylum seekers, training for ex-offenders). Governance processes were not well defined in some countries and EQUAL contributed to improve coordination, consultation and stakeholder involvement
- The **transnational cooperation** aspect of partnership (although not consistently highly rated by all countries) provided a vehicle to learn from other experiences with the aim of finding solutions to local problems and introducing innovation into new contexts. The transnational dimension was also an important element in introducing a ‘European’ flavour to EQUAL activities, promoting joint approaches to common problems, pan-European learning as well as fostering a common language to describe and address issues of discrimination and social exclusion.

- Secondly and equally important, **the broad base of participation** enabled relevant actors and beneficiaries to participate on an equal basis in the programme. EQUAL actively engaged with target groups and promoted their access to the labour market. It empowered small organisations, particularly those organisations working closely with vulnerable groups and expanded the number of beneficiaries, most of whom would not have had the opportunity to participate in other ESF measures.
- Thirdly, as a **space for innovation**, EQUAL allowed partners to develop and demonstrate new approaches to fostering labour market participation by identifying and addressing barriers to participation and thus enriching national and sub-national policy processes.
- Fourthly, EQUAL promoted the actuality of **diversity at work**. This was not known or relevant in some countries until recently due to the short history of immigration or asylum-seekers. In addition, the enlargement process and the economic boom experienced by many countries increased economic migration. For those Member States, with little experience and often narrow conceptions of diversity, EQUAL helped to demonstrate the mutuality of benefits from education or learning – for individuals, employers, community and voluntary organisation, education providers, training bodies etc. EQUAL in practice provided cost effective and innovative ways to demonstrate that diversity in the workplace could be achieved and was of value.
- Fifthly, EQUAL promoted a **holistic approach** to addressing barriers to accessing employment, through identifying barriers specific to the particular target groups and developing innovative approaches to addressing these barriers.
- Last but not least, EQUAL **enhanced awareness** of the specific problems of vulnerable groups. Through the empowerment and partnership principles EQUAL ensured that voices rarely or indeed never heard on a national level were heard, thus helping to combat social exclusion. Communication of projects' results to the public also helped to increase public awareness of different risk groups and their problems. In many countries, there has been a clear shift towards inclusion of vulnerable groups in policy priorities and employers are increasingly better able to manage diversity in the workplace as well as implement anti-discrimination and equality policies.

The main value of EQUAL in contributing to employment and social inclusion is not however found in any of the above factors in isolation, but in their combination within a systematic framework and under a high-level coordination body, i.e. the European Commission. In practice, the EES provided the framework, while EQUAL provided an appropriate instrument to stimulate and support change on the ground. In particular it can be noted that EQUAL provided a 'bridge' between policy (at both national and EU level) by allowing for a 'bottom up' input into the policy process. EQUAL was very ambitious by emphasising a change in the way of doing things – predominantly a change in systems through innovation and partnership, rather than a change in people.

### 7.2.3 EQUAL strengthened the local dimension of the EES

A particular finding of the evaluation is EQUAL's important role in strengthening the local dimension of the EES and the integration of various approaches (e.g. local employment and development initiatives, local welfare systems). In this it showed a certain continuity with regard to previous programmes. Finally, EQUAL contributed to 'Active Inclusion' policies (e.g. EQUAL and the ESF quoted by the EU Commission (COM(2006)44)) in at least to two pillars: links to labour markets (e.g. jobs and training opportunities); access to quality services (e.g. employment, social support, health, childcare, housing, etc.); the third pillar being income support to the most vulnerable persons and groups.

#### 7.2.4 EQUAL both linked with national policies and provided an extra policy strain

In addition to supporting the EES, EQUAL has linked effectively with national policies, providing an extra policy strain by: addressing areas where national policies were somewhat fragmented or where certain target or risk groups were not covered by national policies. By bringing different actors together to support target groups in a more holistic manner, EQUAL has facilitated improvements in service delivery through better targeting and delivery of services, thus upgrading existing policies. EQUAL has also been effective in allowing public bodies to identify new areas of activity and new priorities, linked to developments in the labour market, such as 'work life balance' and 'social economy'.

**Evaluation Question 2: To what extent has the EQUAL Community Initiative supported activities that produced relevant and useful innovation for preventing and combating discrimination and inequality in the labour market?**

#### 7.2.5 EQUAL has generated a high volume of useful innovations, particularly new and process-related innovations

Through this evaluation process we have identified a total of 924 innovations of which a substantial proportion has been classed as 'mainstreaming capable' or indeed have been successfully mainstreamed – vertically or horizontally, at national or transnational level, or in the form of maintenance and continuation. This considerable achievement is a good indication that something 'relevant and useful' has been created, and in this sense mainstreaming can be considered as (almost) equivalent to a market demand.

The majority of (recorded) innovations (53%) had an entirely new character (i.e. they were newly developed), followed by innovations that were adapted from different contexts. Interestingly the programme is dominated by process-oriented innovation<sup>39</sup> (76% of total innovations), while context and goal innovations count for 20% and 10% respectively. This demonstrates an emphasis on the production of new systems, processes and tools to help combat discrimination and inequalities in the labour market.

With an investment of approximately €Bln3.3, EQUAL provided a considerable amount of funding to the development of innovations in the field of social inclusion and labour market policies. This is a multiple of that provided for innovation under the ESF (innovative actions, employment pacts and local partnerships, etc.) (about 750 million €). But it was not only more money but there was related a shift from quantity to quality that was directly supported by the specific implementation arrangements.

Of most significance has been EQUAL's role as a 'laboratory' for innovation and a vehicle for testing new approaches, however modest. Its specific focus on innovation and its ability to create the conditions for stimulating and capturing innovation (through the strategic instruments) has provided a 'low risk' (at least from the point of view of taxpayers funds) vehicle for experimentation.

<sup>39</sup> Process oriented innovations cover the development of new methods, tools or approaches as well as the improvement of existing methods. Goal oriented innovations centre around the formulation of new objectives and may include approaches to identify new and promising qualifications and opening up new areas of employment. Context-oriented innovations relate to political and institutional structures and are concerned with system development in relation to the labour market.

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### 7.2.6 The strategic instruments, and partnerships in particular have been important 'drivers' of innovation

It is clear that the specific features of EQUAL i.e. the strategic instruments have contributed to the development of innovation. But not all have performed equally well or had the same impact on innovation. Of most note is the important role of the partnerships in the development, validation, and mainstreaming of innovation. It is difficult to say with certainty however what elements in partnership are definitive in stimulating innovation, but we can conclude that the 'optimum' DP (at least from an innovation generation perspective) has several broad characteristics: it is not 'too big' i.e. it remains manageable, partners are selected for their expertise in specific fields covered by the project and preferably with previous experience in working together, it has good internal governance, including an appropriate mix and balance between the partners, involves policy makers and shares responsibilities between the partners in an appropriate manner to maximise their respective skills. The participation of target groups, both as partners and to facilitate testing and validation of innovations, is also a critical factor for ensuring that the project serves their real needs.

With respect to the transnational cooperation principle, the picture is somewhat ambiguous. While transnational cooperation has provided an important opportunity to learn from other environments, its impact on innovation generation has been mixed. Although recognised as useful, the transnational element was less effective than purely national approaches to generation of innovations. Barriers to the effective use of transnationality include cultural and language differences, strong focus of projects on their national component and an overall low interest by DP partners in this EQUAL principle. Having said this, for many entities, especially in EU8 countries, EQUAL opened the door to a more 'equal' exchange of experience between old and new Member States. Likewise, with the empowerment principle; empowerment has been seen largely in terms of capacity and confidence building among participating organisations, while active empowerment of final beneficiaries to participate in innovation generation (rather than testing) has been more limited.

While the partnership approach, complemented to a more limited extent by the empowerment and transnational principles, have stimulated innovations, there has been less success in clearly identifying, testing and validating innovations at programme level. In more than half of recorded cases, validation approaches did not generally follow a systematic and reproducible process that includes sufficient testing of the innovation. There are however some notable exceptions, including the systematic validation process developed under the Portuguese programme, which has gained currency in a number of other countries. What is now needed is a more rigorous and systematic process for testing and validating innovations.

What is most notable about current validation practice is the focus on identifying successes. While this is extremely valuable in terms of focussing attention on what works, and thus facilitating mainstreaming, there has been less attention on learning from experience, including the lessons learned from initiatives that have been less than successful. From this point of view, innovation under EQUAL cannot be considered as a 'pure' vehicle for social innovation (with clear design parameters, control groups etc.) but rather as an innovative approach to problem solving with policy learning as a desired but not inevitable outcome.

Despite this, EQUAL has focussed on identifying and recording innovations ('products') and this has provided a valuable base of data for policy-makers and practitioners throughout the Union.



**Evaluation Question 3: To what extent has the EQUAL Community Initiative supported activities that resulted in the take up of innovation at high policy/institutional level or/and the transfer of innovation in different contexts?**

### 7.2.7 EQUAL generated a high level of take up and transfer of innovation

This question addresses both mainstreaming, and intermediary impacts (defined as the results of mainstreaming the validated innovations). Mainstreaming has been one of the main EQUAL principles with dedicated funding through Action 3 and considerable guidance provided to both the Managing Authorities and the DPs. Our analysis indicates a considerable volume of mainstreaming at both horizontal and vertical levels – of 924 validated innovations, approximately 36% can be linked to instances of mainstreaming. While it is not possible to make a direct comparison between EQUAL take-up and transfer rates and those from other programmes (given the *sui generis* nature of EQUAL and differences in methodologies between this and other research), 36% linkage would appear to be quite high, particularly as mainstreaming effects take some time to emerge.

Findings also indicate that the main intermediary impacts of EQUAL are seen in terms of changes in policies, rather than policy-making processes (and with some success in terms of organisational impacts). This reflects the EQUAL focus on specific areas of intervention where national policies were not delivering the required results and where the added value of EQUAL was to inform policy formation.

### 7.2.8 There was some uncertainty as to how to tackle mainstreaming in practice

Despite the ostensibly high take-up rate, the analysis also indicates that there was a great deal of uncertainty on how to deal with mainstreaming during design, implementation and evaluation in practice. Importantly, while there seems to be a common understanding around the results/impacts to be achieved, there is limited evidence that this has been clearly operationalised, i.e. how exactly this should be done or indeed who should take the lead. Thus the whole mainstreaming concept remains to some extent a sort of ‘black box’: while the inputs and outcomes are clear, the activities leading to the latter remain blurred, especially as regards the difference to ‘standard’ dissemination activities.

We did not find any ‘conceptualisation’ of mainstreaming containing an analytical framework that also defines process indicators. This renders the evaluation of mainstreaming very difficult. Other factors hampering the evaluation of mainstreaming include the time that it can take for innovations and lessons learned to be taken up into the policy environment and the often less than linear path between a specific innovation at DP level and a policy or practice change. Thus, many evaluations fail to deal adequately with the mainstreaming issue.

### 7.2.9 There is a need to integrate mainstreaming throughout the cycle, particularly at the early stages

The allocation of specific funding to mainstreaming activities while in principle a useful initiative has had the sometimes negative effect of relegating mainstreaming to a later point in the cycle, or its envisioning as an activity that can be taken up later on. Findings lead us to conclude that successful mainstreaming needs to be built in at an early stage through incorporation of key stakeholders in the DPs, clear identification of the kind and scope of information required by policy-makers that the DP can reasonably be expected to provide, and consideration of the link between the DP and the national policy structures. Successful mainstreaming also depends on the links between the innovation that is being mainstreamed and policy priorities: another reason why it is crucial to involve policy makers in DP structures as they bring in the policy priority perspective.

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This evaluation has allowed us to identify some **factors that are crucial to successful mainstreaming**, amongst which the commitment of and 'ownership' by political stakeholders plays a pivotal role. Most of the success factors for mainstreaming focus on 'vertical' mainstreaming, as does the available information on mainstreaming. This is interesting because it implies that 'horizontal' mainstreaming poses fewer problems, an assumption that is not backed by our data. In fact, consistent horizontal mainstreaming could be another way to achieve vertical mainstreaming, through for example the build up of peer pressure or accumulation of a body of practice-based evidence that can facilitate a shift in policy, an approach that apparently was seldom followed under EQUAL.

### 7.2.10 EQUAL achieved a significant number of intermediary impacts<sup>40</sup> as a result of the mainstreaming of the validated innovations

More than 200 mainstreaming cases and approximately 140 validated innovations could be linked to intermediary impacts. The evaluation distinguished between three types of intermediary impacts:

1. **Policy impacts:** Adaptation of existing or introduction of new employment, inclusion or anti-discrimination policies, changes in policy making processes or the adaptation of existing or the introduction of new programmes. As set out in the intervention logic, both these effects can occur independently of each other or be connected by feedback-loops and thus form a circle. Thus some of the legal changes observed might lead to new or adapted programmes in future and vice versa.
2. **Institutional impacts:** Changes of labour market intermediation structures and processes, changes in the education and training system, new/adapted structures, processes and measures for the support of business creation, changes in regulatory work arrangements, etc.
3. **Organisational impacts:** these impacts refer on the one hand to changes in the human resources policies such as changes in the recruitment policies, improved access to training, career advancement, pay structure, anti-discrimination policies, on the other hand to changes in the work organisation, especially the structure of jobs.

The main impacts observed within the three types are detailed below.

#### Policy impacts

Policy impacts accounted for the majority (41%) of the intermediary impacts identified. Thematic field 4.G - Reconciling Family and Professional Life had a disproportionate volume of policy impacts, while 3.F - Adaptability had a high number of organisational impacts. Policy changes have been reported at national and regional levels in the areas of legislative changes, incorporation of EQUAL principles into new policies or into the new OPs, as well as the allocation of new fiscal incentives to increase the labour market participation of vulnerable groups and the identification of new target groups.

There has been less success in the area of **policy-making processes** but of note are new coordination mechanisms and new monitoring systems (e.g. Observatories). Institutional impacts include changes in education and training frameworks (new curricula and training schemes and new certification mechanisms) and changes in labour market intermediation (through improved coordination between actors, new working methods and improved organisation of employment services). Changes in the support to business services took mainly the form of continuation of support services for entrepreneurs and start-ups founded under EQUAL.

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<sup>40</sup> While 'results' are understood as the change(s) produced by the activities of the programme (corresponding to the specific objectives), the intermediary impacts are understood as the change(s) produced by the activities of the programme which correspond to the overall objectives.

The prevalence of policy changes in the 4.G - Reconciling Family and Professional Life and 2.C - Business Creation fields reflects the supportive political and public climate and discourse in these areas. Low impacts in the area of migrants and asylum seekers would indicate difficulties in achieving intermediary impacts in these areas due to low levels of political support, weak or undeveloped supportive legislative frameworks in this field, weaknesses in the civil society organisations working with these groups (lack of resources, organisational skills, coordination etc.) and low levels of public awareness around the needs of these groups and their integration into the labour market.

### Institutional impacts

Institutional impacts include changes in education and training frameworks (new curricula and training schemes and new certification mechanisms) and changes in labour market intermediation (through improved coordination between actors, new working methods and improved organisation of employment services). Changes in the support to business services took mainly the form of continuation of support services for entrepreneurs and start-ups founded under EQUAL.

### Organisational impacts

EQUAL contributed to **good organisational impacts on employment services**, but there was **insufficient private sector involvement**. Good organisational impacts in the area of employment services could indicate that EQUAL was used to support the reorientation of employment services away from the management of unemployment towards more active programmes and building of their skills in this regard. Limited intermediary impacts identified in relation to support for business creation indicates a lack of private sector engagement with EQUAL e.g. the banking/finance sector or substantive work on business creation jointly with business networks, chambers of commerce etc. This may also be due to the EQUAL focus on the social economy in terms of job provision in the EQUAL context rather than more 'mainstream' start-ups.

EQUAL contributed to an increase in the quality of governance in civil society organisations. The working methods of EQUAL including the partnership approach and the emphasis on self-evaluation and recording of outputs/products brought a new rigour to many of the participating NGOs with a consequent positive impact on their ability to function as solid partners in development.

### Evaluation Question 4: What long-term impact is the EQUAL Community Initiative expected to have?

At this stage, no final conclusions can be made on the achievement of long-term impacts as depicted in the intervention logic of EQUAL<sup>41</sup>. However, findings indicate that the cause-effect mechanisms anticipated are likely to occur since a number of important effects already triggered by the intermediary impacts achieved point into the direction of changes envisaged by the programme. Most important among them is the observation that EQUAL has reinforced the importance and role of social inclusion and anti-discrimination in employment policy through demonstrating approaches that work and changing the mindsets and attitudes of stakeholders. However, the long-term impacts of specific innovations and lessons learned strongly depend on external factors (such as the overall economic environment) as well as the willingness of key stakeholders to apply and further develop policies and approaches developed under EQUAL.

<sup>41</sup> This is due to the fact, that logic models only show parts of the impact chain, which consists usually of much more steps than the three outcome levels displayed (results, intermediary impacts, long term impacts). There are additional steps between intermediary impacts and long term impacts the inclusion of which would make the intervention logic too complex and unreadable.

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### **7.2.11 EQUAL impacts mainly on policies, rather than on the labour market**

Overall, it can be said that EQUAL had a higher impact on policies than on the labour markets. This is explained by the nature of the programme, which aimed at promoting new models for working life and access to work by fighting discrimination and exclusion. EQUAL also aimed to bring new ideas to the EES and the Social Inclusion process and to complement these instruments. Long-term impacts on target groups will thus depend both on external factors and on the effective application of policies and inclusion models that were developed or enhanced by EQUAL.

Other factors that will influence the achievement of long-term impacts include the existence of programmes that involve partnership, participation of several diverse actors, empowerment, opportunities for local authority participation, direct contact with target groups, bottom-up approaches and the commitment of the organisations/bodies involved. Long-term impacts are also contingent on the ability of the target groups, their representative organisations and the private sector to be open to new forms of engagement with the labour market and active labour market measures.

### **7.2.12 Long-term EQUAL impacts on awareness-raising and changing mindsets**

The levels of discrimination, social exclusion as well as the long-term impacts of EQUAL on these levels are extremely difficult to measure because of the attribution problem. Problems of discrimination and social exclusion cannot be solved quickly due to entrenched stereotypes, social and family role models, traditions, etc. It can however be said that given the initial context, there were many achievements. The Initiative has established itself as a useful approach to combat discrimination in the labour market with the empowerment of its stakeholders, the gathering of critical mass and by emphasising innovation. It has resulted in very important learning among the key stakeholders and influenced substantially how people who participated in the programme think and act.

Participants in EQUAL partnerships as well as Managing Authorities have raised their awareness of vulnerable groups and appreciate the importance of working together in order to integrate services and competences. Despite the economic crisis this changed mindset should make a difference in the years to come, provided that there are sufficient financial means to implement active labour market measures for the target groups and sufficient political will to ensure that social inclusion remains on the agenda.

### **7.2.13 EQUAL created a common language and approach to social inclusion across the EU**

EQUAL created a common culture, including a vocabulary and common frames of reference among participants. This commonality has been sufficiently flexible to preserve national characteristics and specificities. In effect, an EQUAL 'community' has emerged with a common vocabulary around anti-discrimination and social inclusion as well as concepts such as innovation and mainstreaming. This is an important by-product of the EQUAL process and which should not be lost in the coming period as the Member States and the Union struggle to address the effects of the current economic crisis and where more concerted and more new approaches and joint actions will be required.

The space created by EQUAL for mutual learning in partnerships and peer-to-peer arrangements, at national and EU levels – bringing together stakeholders of target beneficiaries, NGO's, enterprises, professional service providers and administrative bodies – offered an excellent opportunity to generate sustainable community added value. But sustainability and long-term impact requires that lessons really have been learned and that elements that were effective will be continued and developed under national and/or EU-level auspices.

<b>Evaluation Question 5: What is the Community Added Value of EQUAL?</b>
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it is clear that EQUAL has delivered added value across a range of areas and crucially through the provision of an instrument specifically dedicated to risk taking, innovation and mainstreaming. The main elements of identified added value are:

- Funding activities for groups that would have not been otherwise targeted;
- Increased quality of outputs of activities that would have been funded at national level but without the same conditionality;
- Provision of a clear space for risk-taking and innovation;
- Enhanced attention to gender equality and mainstreaming.

Using the typology developed in our Inception Report (input, output, results and impact), we can conclude that EQUAL has demonstrated and delivered CAV across the areas identified in the following manner.

#### 7.2.14 EQUAL catalysed funding to groups that would not otherwise have been targeted

In terms of **inputs**, EQUAL had a 'boosting' effect to the extent that it catalysed funding towards groups that would not have been targeted otherwise – asylum seekers, ex prisoners etc. Where we find instances of 'mirroring effects', e.g. where the additional EU-funding contributed to national activities without lasting structural effects and simply provided an additional source of funding for activities that were or that would have been funded under national budgets, there is evidence that the strategic instruments brought an added dimension. The funding was therefore not simply additional, but also conditional, which in turn ensured a high quality of the outputs (even if not translated into structural effects/mainstreamed) and has in many cases added an extra dimension bringing the EU contribution beyond merely additional funding.

#### 7.2.15 EQUAL provided resources for new areas of intervention, through new mechanisms

EQUAL offered new financial resources for the social economy and entrepreneurship. In addition, the partnership design in the form of a DP was a unique input in the organisation of EQUAL projects (previously, projects in the field of employment and social inclusion were not built on multi-actor cooperation). The transnationality aspect offered know-how and experiences and brought actors into contact with new ways of doing things and helped to stimulate changes in both in ways of thinking and development of practical solution to problems.

When discussing CAV in relation to **output**, as the experimental aspects of the ESF have become more 'standard', it has become more difficult to identify a clear difference between ESF outputs and EQUAL outputs. However, as EQUAL has a clear experimental design targeted at changing national policies (in addition to European/EES policies) rather than at merely co-financing their implementation, we can look at both the nature and quality of the outputs from the point of view of CAV. However given the methodology adopted for this evaluation as well as the considerable time constraints, it has not been possible to look in-depth at ESF outputs to offer a detailed comparison. It must also be taken into account that while EQUAL focussed on changing structures/systems and policies, the ESF is more targeted on the labour market itself.

In relation to **results**, the main question is 'how are results affected by EU specificities?' This can be further operationalised with the question: 'did EU specificities influence the effectiveness and/or efficiency of achieving the specific goals of actions?' 'Better results' than ESF or national programmes would indicate a CAV. As noted earlier, this evaluation is somewhat constrained in its ability to compare EQUAL results with those from ESF or from national programmes. However some elements of CAV, in the context of EQUAL, can be identified: the strategic

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partnership approach has and the innovative nature of many of the results, coupled with the focus on mainstreaming are clear indications of added value.

In relation to **impact**, the main issue is how the EU specificities influenced the impacts of the programme?' Given the extensive focus on mainstreaming, it is expected that EQUAL would have been more successful than standard measures (national or ESF-related). However in the absence of detailed consideration of other measures it is not possible to say with certainty.

#### **7.2.16 EQUAL brought added value through its focus on innovation, complementarity with national policies and strategic instruments**

At a more general level, a number of additional conclusions can be reached. While previous programmes (both Community and national) had generated and successfully tested innovations, there were considerable difficulties in transforming good practices into state-of-the-art practices. Thus its clear focus on an integrated strategy for developing and mainstreaming of innovations has been a 'unique selling point' of EQUAL.

Importantly, EQUAL has filled gaps in national policy making processes, which in the social policy field tend to be rather rigid and static and have difficulty reacting to structural changes in the labour market and often struggle to reach vulnerable groups. EQUAL was therefore an important complement to national and sub-national policies in terms of enriching both their content (opening up existing programmes and policies to new target groups) and adapting their delivery mechanisms to reach their target audience. Active involvement of national, sub-national and civil society bodies in EQUAL is clear testament to its added value.

The strategic instruments, multi-annuality and flexibility marked EQUAL out as different from national or indeed other ESF measures and have delivered a clear added value. From our information base, it can be tentatively concluded that EQUAL results can, by and large, be classed as 'better' than those that delivered under national programmes or under ESF for vulnerable groups. The unique working methods of EQUAL (in particular the DPs) ensured that innovative policies and actions developed had widespread ownership and commitment due to the manner in which they had arisen, i.e. through a collaborative rather than top-down process.

#### **7.2.17 The EQUAL focus on gender equality and mainstreaming had mixed success**

Although gender equality and gender mainstreaming are not specific to EQUAL, they were strongly promoted within the initiative. Findings<sup>42</sup> however lead us to conclude that while EQUAL gave a new impetus to these issues, it was not as successful as may have been hoped from the strong general commitment in the regulatory framework. Despite some successes, overall understanding and operationalisation of gender mainstreaming throughout the EQUAL cycle remained inconsistent. Given the history of gender equality-oriented approaches within the Structural Funds, this is not really surprising: the older Member States took considerable time and effort to move from singular activities exclusively addressing women (thus ensuring a mere numerical increase in participation), through specifically designed 'positive actions', to the current 'dual strategy' (including positive action and gender mainstreaming) approach. Indeed, this process has not yet come to an end and the goal of gender equality still is on the agenda. Thus it is no surprise that also with EQUAL the issue has not been resolved. Achieving gender equality among the Member States still has some distance to go, with varying attitudes, role models, and administrative traditions.

This would indicate a need to take a fresh look at how gender equality and mainstreaming are incorporated into future programmes, and there are good examples through EQUAL and other

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<sup>42</sup> Gender mainstreaming as a specific area of inquiry was not part of the Terms of Reference for this assignment and was taken up only in the later stages of the research.



instruments from which to learn. Importantly, there is willingness to learn from good practice and tools exist, e.g. the Community of Practise (CoP) on Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming recently restarted under Swedish aegis.

Finally, it may be concluded that EQUAL has had a disproportionately high level of CAV in relation to those target groups or policy areas not addressed under existing national programmes through the ability to innovate and learn from experience. To use an analogy from the business environment, EQUAL has helped to both offset the financial risk of entering new 'market segments' as well as providing a mechanism to spread the risk between different actors (strategic partners). Therefore EQUAL can also be seen as an effective 'risk management' mechanism in the area of social innovation.

### 7.3 Recommendations

At the request of the Commission, the Recommendations are divided into two parts: the first concerning actions to be taken up in the current programming period, the second to be taken up in the next programming period (2014-2020) whereby the recommendations for the first are of course also valid for the second. They are addressed both to the Commission Services and national authorities.

#### 7.3.1 Actions to be taken up in the current programming period 2007-2013

##### 1) The Commission Services should take the lead in defining and operationalising the concept of social innovation.

Facing the trends of ageing society and the changing social roles of women and men, technological developments and the shift to service industries, as well as the global challenges of climate change and migration, the need for social innovation remains a crucial issue. Scarce resources and competing funding needs will continue to increase the need to justify social policy choices and expenditure. Thus, future innovation-fostering programmes should ensure that there is a clear, unambiguous, and harmonised conceptual and regulatory framework that Member States can 'translate' into activity underpinned by a comprehensive monitoring approach and supporting structures and services. In particular such a strategically central term like 'innovation' needs a clear and operational concept, equipped with a methodology for validation that can be generally applied and documented for monitoring and reporting purposes.

- 1.1. The Commission Services should issue orientation and guidance on suitable, feasible and acceptable instruments to promote social innovation under the current and future ESF programming, including a clear definition and conceptual framework for innovation;
- 1.2. The Commission Services should issue guidance for monitoring and evaluation of social innovation, including definition of indicators for monitoring innovation, and criteria for cost-benefit analysis;
- 1.3. The Commission Services should consider guidance on good practice for innovation validation to support the current OPs, including the definition of a common validation process;
- 1.4. There are good reasons why the main implementation approach for innovation development under EQUAL was generally bottom-up, e.g. the benefits of proximity to the problem, involvement of local and regional actors in addressing local and regional problems etc. However, a complementary approach could be to identify the social policy 'bottlenecks' for which innovation would be welcome, based on SWOT analysis and construction of intervention logics (e.g. in the way they have been sketched in this evaluation report under ch. 2). This approach could help to fine tune activities, as well as ensure utility of the innovations and provide a starting point for evaluations and quality assurance.



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- 1.5. By its nature, innovation development is a risky undertaking. That gives it a dynamic that goes against the philosophy of ensuring accountability and guaranteeing (positive) results that underpins current approaches to management of public resources and the corresponding audit strategies. But, to make innovation development for social inclusion workable it is necessary to ensure that any risk is spread and that the burden of potential (and to be expected) failure is not left to the beneficiaries alone. Thus – in case of innovation development – success-criteria and definitions of guaranteed results have to be adequately designed to keep the risk manageable – in particular for smaller and financially weaker NGOs. Otherwise important stakeholders will either be excluded from participation or choose not to participate, with a corresponding loss in innovative potential. In this respect also the combination of national co-funding based on standard labour market measures (including binding success-benchmarks for e.g. trainees) - with EU co-funding dedicated to risk-related innovation development may limit the potential to stimulate the maximum amount and quality of innovations. MAs should therefore consider how co-funding and other requirements can affect both the stakeholder participation, as well as the overall quality of innovations.
  - 1.6. The Commission Services should capitalise on the inheritance of EQUAL and existing good practice for innovation validation, by *inter alia* including the definition of a common validation process as a standard requirement. Good examples on validation processes/approaches already exist (from Portugal for instance) and these could be analysed with a view to transfer and adaptation into other contexts, programmes and/or countries.

**2) Managing Authorities should strengthen the guidance available to project partners in relation to innovation.**

The Managing Authorities should ensure that clear guidance is available for potential project partners and that there is a clear framework in place for validation of innovations that is independent and robust. EQUAL has shown that partnerships that applied methods of participative planning and evaluation, such as PCM, were more efficient in project implementation, and more effective in terms of mainstreaming.

As a general approach it is recommended to explicitly relate implementation and supporting activities and structures to the general steps of the innovation development cycle:

- 2.1. Integrate a bottom-up needs assessment (involving and mobilising citizens and stakeholders on a broad scale) into SWOT analysis, thus raising awareness 'uno actu';
- 2.2. Design the programme with an explicit intervention logic based on the foregoing diagnostic exercise, translated into the procedures of tendering/call for proposals. Although, bottom-up approaches are necessary, they need to be complemented by a top-down strategy as has been clearly shown by the experience of gender mainstreaming and actions related to gender equality in general. Equally, social innovation development also needs support by a strong 'owner' in the background.
- 2.3. Create support structures and implement activities to overcome traditional barriers between 'silos' of policy and unrelated but potentially synergetic activities. The exchange of experience and mutual learning are key-factors for successful social innovation development.
- 2.4. Develop and test innovations and validate them in a transparent and comprehensive way.
- 2.5. Carry out appropriate forms of cost-benefit analysis. Where a comparative analysis of programme success (in terms of efficacy and efficiency) is envisaged, provision should be made to ensure comparability also relating to the relevant cost-structures. The

Commission Services should therefore include guidance on carrying out cost benefit analysis within the evaluation framework.

- 2.6. Develop proper evaluation methods including experimental designs where feasible for more rigorous testing but be aware that not all innovation will be testable in this way but that testing has to be complemented by more 'soft' procedures like peer-reviewing and benchmarking.
- 2.7. Create from successful approaches a body of knowledge with good practise examples that are disseminated in a systematic manner.
- 2.8. Make sure that mainstreaming and scaling up becomes an integral part of innovation design and development.

### **3) Policy makers and governments should enhance the focus on mainstreaming, and make mainstreaming more operational.**

Policy makers and governments should ensure that mainstreaming of innovations developed under the current OPs is high on the agenda. Specific actions need to be taken at all levels to ensure that mainstreaming is built in at all stages in the project cycle.

- 3.1. The Commission Services should provide guidance on mainstreaming to clearly differentiate between mainstreaming and dissemination activities. Attention should also be paid to the respective roles of partners and other actors in the mainstreaming process. Where possible, indicators to inform evaluation should be developed.
- 3.2. Managing Authorities should develop mainstreaming strategies at thematic level, consistent with the institutional framework, be operational and ensure clarity of distinction between dissemination and mainstreaming.
- 3.3. Managing Authorities should assist project partners to build in mainstreaming at early project stages (rather than seen as a separate action), through stakeholder analysis that clearly identifies stakeholders at policy level and involves them in the project work, either as partners, or through tailored contacts (e.g. special briefings, reports etc.) and complemented by a mainstreaming strategy at the earliest practicable stage, i.e. in parallel with the development of the project concept.
- 3.4. Managing Authorities should develop guidelines on the benefits of 'horizontal' mainstreaming, including a special focus on business/enterprises: how can you 'sell' your innovation/ideas, etc. to other firms/organisations?

### **4) The work of the Thematic Working Groups should be continued to bring together the experience of the current programming round.**

The EQUAL TWGs have been important vehicles for mainstreaming and identification of lessons learned. Experience from this evaluation highlights the importance of continued political support and adequate resourcing for Thematic Groups at national and EU levels to bring together experiences and lessons learned from the current round of OPs.

- 4.1. The Commission Services and Managing Authorities should maximise the benefits from the Thematic Working Group approach by actively supporting the work of the groups and providing appropriate 'vehicles' for dissemination of their results, particularly in the policy-making context. The structure and focus of the Thematic Groups can reflect the current range and diversity of actions supported under the current ESF programming round and contribute to 'transnational' learning so that policy making at EU level as well as at national level can continue to be enhanced.

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### 7.3.2 Actions to be taken up in the next programming period 2014-2020

#### 5) Ensure a holistic and balanced approach using EQUAL lessons

The EC Consultation Document on the Future EU 2020 Strategy (COM(2009) 647) is focused on three converging priorities: 1) Creating value by basing growth on knowledge; 2) Empowering people in inclusive societies; and 3) Creating a competitive, connected and greener economy. The Consultation Document fully acknowledges that having a job does not secure a reduction in poverty levels and social exclusion. A new holistic and more balanced approach is therefore necessary for future ESF programmes. This approach should: raise the political status and importance of the social inclusion process in the Member States plans associated with the new EU 2020 Strategy; increase awareness of the social inclusion process through governance mechanisms that stimulate and support social innovations and involve relevant stakeholders and especially Parliaments at EU, national and sub-national levels.

- 5.1. The Commission Services should therefore ensure that Guidance Documents (to ESF managing authorities) for the new EU 2020 strategy include specific attention to the importance of promoting innovative approaches in the social inclusion process, as well as specific requirements on consultation with state and civil society actors.
- 5.2. Managing Authorities should ensure that the experiences from EQUAL are captured during the new planning period both regarding the approach and the results in terms of good practice by: a) specifically seeking feedback and input from EQUAL actors; and b) building on the outputs of national and European thematic networks; and c) clearly identifying a set of core Lessons Learned on an ex post basis from the EQUAL experience.
- 5.3. Related to the above, Managing Authorities of the new ESF Operational Programmes should translate the EQUAL experience into effective infrastructures and support services for project promoters and for ESF administrators as well as into tendering documentation and eligibility requirements thereby ensuring that EQUAL experiences are not only captured in theory but are also transferred into the practice of the new funding and support arrangements.

#### 6) Strengthen the focus on the most vulnerable through innovative actions

Integrated Guidelines (IGs) will be defined to put the three overarching priorities of the EU 2020 Strategy into operation (COM(2009)647).

- 6.1. The Commission Services should ensure that its guidelines for designing the next ESF programmes should identify a set of thematic fields concerning a new strand of innovative actions throughout the EU Member States while capitalising on the results of EQUAL. To this end, a stronger focus is recommended on the most vulnerable target groups in order to tackle the multi-dimensional issues of social inclusion and social cohesion according to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- 6.2. The Commission Services should also consider to propose a limited number of thematic fields (in comparison to the 9 in EQUAL) in order to ensure that critical mass can be achieved in priority thematic areas.

#### 7) Provide experimentation space

Most ESF OPs have so far made only little use of the regulatory provision to promote innovation, and therefore only a limited margin to innovate. They are not flexible and they lack capacities to design, implement and valorise actions supporting systematic learning and experimentation – an important aspect of the success of EQUAL. A complete change in OPs may not be necessary and in any case may be difficult to achieve, it may be sufficient to change only some actions in actual OPs. This does preclude more substantial changes following the interim revision of OPs in 2011.

- 7.1. As part of their evaluation arrangements for ongoing OPs, Managing Authorities should specifically consider to assess the need of promoting a) take-up by vulnerable groups and b) innovation. Where participation rates are low, Managing Authorities should ensure that where possible, new actions should ensure a space for experimentation and testing of innovations, e.g. through a commitment to allocate a dedicated percentage of funding for innovation-focussed actions.

#### **8) Consider reintroducing one common action for developing and mainstreaming new approaches**

With EQUAL, all EU countries were working under one common framework for a coherent and synchronised design, implementation and mainstreaming of innovative action, and for establishing professional support capacities. For the current ESF OPs, there is hardly anything like this in place. The problems EQUAL set out to address remain and are likely to be exacerbated in the current economic and social climate. National policies and instruments however, remain somewhat rigid and inflexible. Therefore, there is a need to boost their efficiency and longer term impact with an EU wide support framework for social innovation and mutual learning.

- 8.1. The Commission Services should therefore consider the need and opportunity for a common funding facility that would be able to generate of a new 'laboratory for social change' and, that would have the stimuli and resources to develop new policies and approaches, as well as involving multi-level actors and with a focus on mainstreaming validated innovations. Features of this new 'laboratory' should include: a focus on innovation, multi-level partnerships, selected thematic fields and mainstreaming.

#### **9) Improve evaluation practices**

Evaluation is an essential part of the programme cycle and essential for enhancing the capacity for innovation and experimentation. Reliable indicators are needed to describe the baseline situation and to identify and assess the added value of innovative achievements, to compare the results of experimental actions, e.g. through control groups etc. Evaluation under the EQUAL programme has focussed largely on operational and management issues and less on strategic and policy issues. More attention should be paid to ensuring that ongoing evaluations focussing on strategic needs are conducted in a timely manner (launched and completed and with results available according to the planned schedule), adequately address innovation and mainstreaming and gender equality.

- 9.1. The Commission Services should therefore improve their guidance to national authorities to ensure that evaluation is contracted and carried out in a timely manner (to ensure that evaluation results can inform programming at the appropriate time); that standardised long format summaries are available to facilitate multi-country analysis; innovation and gender equality (both in terms of funding allocated and outcomes) are considered in a consistent manner;
- 9.2. Managing Authorities should ensure that an evaluation strategy for the programme period is in place, providing for both operational and strategic evaluations with clear timetables. MAs should also ensure that evaluations are contracted and completed in a timely manner and that the monitoring information (including financial data) is collected, collated and made available in a timely manner, i.e. in line with the relevant strategy/timetable.

#### **10) The EQUAL strategic principles should be continued into the 2014 programming period.**

The EQUAL principles of partnership and empowerment have demonstrated their value in promoting ownership of reform agendas and dialogue between stakeholders. With respect to empowerment, a comprehensive approach has to be found, clearly separating it from the

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general partnership principle and including in it the involvement and strengthening of beneficiaries from target groups and/or their representatives in NGOs. Where possible, private sector involvement should be enhanced.

- 10.1. The Commission Services should ensure that the principles of partnership is emphasised in future guidelines. This could include a clear definition and operational concept of partnership, as well as good practice examples;
- 10.2. The Commission Services should ensure that the principles of empowerment is emphasised in future guidelines. This could include a clear definition and operational concept of empowerment, as well as good practice examples. Where appropriate, eligibility criteria could allow for funding of particular actions to support empowerment, e.g. specific skills enhancement (so that partners can contribute more effectively to the partnership) or networking activities for NGOs;
- 10.3. Managing Authorities should ensure that the principles of partnership and empowerment are becoming an integrated element of the new ESF OPs.
- 10.4. Managing Authorities should consider how best to involve the private sector in future ESF programmes, in both consultation on programme design and in implementation for example as partners in multi-actor projects.

**11) Transnational cooperation should be promoted as an opportunity and not as a necessary requirement.**

Transnational cooperation is highly regarded for its potential for innovation development, but the inherent difficulties and complexities must be noted, including cultural differences, differing national frameworks and rules, and lack of synchronisation of activities between the Member States. With these facts in mind, the possibility for transnational cooperation should be maintained but not as an obligatory 'condition sine qua non' for all 'transnational' projects but rather as an add-on with specific targets and specific budgets provided.

- 11.1 The Commission Services should promote transnational cooperation as an opportunity for learning that yields advantages and benefits. More flexibility and higher efficiency could be achieved if OPs were modified to give beneficiaries the option rather than the obligation to add a transnational component. However, this would imply that transnational activities have to be accepted eligible costs rather than a strict requirement. Guidance and good practice lessons on transnational cooperation should be disseminated.

**12) Balance flexibility in partnerships with minimum participation requirements.**

Experience has shown that when a partnership approach is used, partnerships are most successful when partners bring competence and pro-active engagement to the table. Partnerships that focus on competence and capacity rather than pro-forma inclusion have the best chance of success.

- 12.1. Managing Authorities should ensure that when a partnership approach in funding actions and projects is used, the partnerships selected are flexible in terms of numbers and types of partners and that each partner's involvement is meaningful and useful within the context of the partnership. One way to ensure this is to seek proof of working together in the project conception and preparation process.
- 12.2. Managing Authorities should ensure that the support structures and services are established. These need to pay special attention to how partners are performing within the partnership and provide support and guidance when problems arise. On going assessment of how partnerships function will help identify under-active or uncommitted partners and develop mechanisms/incentives to 'bring them back to track' or ultimately drop them.

- 12.3. Managing Authorities should identify lessons learned with regard to good practices for partnerships, where used, between programme rounds and refine requirements accordingly.

**13) Continue to support EU level networking**

EQUAL has generated important findings that are relevant at both national and EU levels. The majority of these have been identified, validated and disseminated through thematic networks at national or EU level.

- 13.1. To adequately capture relevant lessons gained under the current ESF to inform policy making in other countries and at community-level, the Commission Services should establish a formal mechanism for linking up national thematic networks at EU level, sharing experience and lessons, and for developing synergies. This could build on the Thematic Working Groups set up under EQUAL, some of which still operate under the current ESF OPs or have been funded as a learning networks at EU level.
- 13.2. Besides the establishment of flexible exchange and learning platforms, additional support to those 'who wish to do more' should be provided, such as the provision and further development of tools and methods for networking, validation, mainstreaming, peer learning etc . This could ensure a broad and intense participation and exchange of knowledge (of both good and bad practice) and offer participation to a broader audience than is possible in more formalised contexts.

## Annex 1: Summary of data on validated innovations aggregated to thematic field level

Table 1. Innovation – number and relevant sources for identification<sup>43</sup>

Thematic field TF	Count Cases	Innovation was identified by us via one or several of the following sources									
		Evaluation/ Annual Implementation Report	NTN /ETG reported	Database	Other sources	No explicit identification	Match cases	[%] match	Ticks	[%] of all cases	
1.A	259	212	0	43	64	1	259	100%	320	124%	
1.B	47	33	2	10	12	2	47	100%	59	126%	
2.C	60	51	0	12	15	0	60	100%	78	130%	
2.D	56	39	0	19	15	1	56	100%	74	132%	
3.E	79	67	2	9	24	1	79	100%	103	130%	
3.F	64	52	0	30	19	0	64	100%	101	158%	
4.G	73	68	0	11	6	0	73	100%	85	116%	
4.H	68	46	0	19	12	1	68	100%	78	115%	
5.I	38	26	0	9	13	0	38	100%	48	126%	
not specified	180	82	0	12	87	7	180	100%	188	104%	
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.134</b>	<b>123%</b>	
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>127%</b>	
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>81%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>81%</b>		<b>83%</b>		
<i>Share of matches</i>		<b>73%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>1%</b>					
<i>Share of ticks</i>		<b>60%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>1%</b>			<b>100%</b>		

Table 2. Innovation – Extent of information provided

TF	Count Cases	Extent of information provided						
		n.a.	basic mention with no further details	mention with some information on the DP/beneficiary	more detailed description	Ticks	[%] of all cases	
1.A	259	4	107	69	79	255	98%	
1.B	47	1	19	13	14	46	98%	
2.C	60	0	27	15	18	60	100%	
2.D	56	0	17	12	27	56	100%	
3.E	79	2	44	15	18	77	97%	
3.F	64	0	20	22	22	64	100%	
4.G	73	1	37	18	17	72	99%	
4.H	68	3	16	22	27	65	96%	
5.I	38	1	10	16	11	37	97%	
not specified	180	22	51	92	15	158	88%	
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>96%</b>	
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>98%</b>	
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>81%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>82%</b>		
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>39%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>100%</b>		

<sup>43</sup> The 'no explicit' item is explained above under 1.2



Table 3. Innovation – Reported novelty by typologies I \_ Emergence

Thematic field TF	Count Cases	Reported novelty by typologies I						
		Emergence						
		Import /take up	Active adaption	Newly developed	Match cases	[%] match	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	8	51	65	111	43%	124	112%
1.B	47	2	6	8	16	34%	16	100%
2.C	60	1	6	16	19	32%	23	121%
2.D	56	2	5	8	14	25%	15	107%
3.E	79	2	5	11	16	20%	18	113%
3.F	64	8	13	23	31	48%	44	142%
4.G	73	4	15	16	32	44%	35	109%
4.H	68	4	7	29	37	54%	40	108%
5.I	38	7	9	7	18	47%	23	128%
not specified	180	3	42	46	90	50%	91	101%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>112%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>115%</b>
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>81%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>77%</b>		<b>79%</b>	
<b>Share of matches</b>		<b>11%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>60%</b>				
<b>Share of ticks</b>		<b>10%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>53%</b>			<b>100%</b>	

Table 4. Innovation – Reported novelty by typologies II - Dimension

Thematic field TF	Count Cases	Reported novelty by typologies II						
		Dimension						
		Goal	Process	Context	Match cases	[%] match	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	44	177	53	252	97%	274	109%
1.B	47	9	26	9	43	91%	44	102%
2.C	60	14	28	17	51	85%	59	116%
2.D	56	8	35	15	51	91%	58	114%
3.E	79	15	50	16	76	96%	81	107%
3.F	64	6	42	8	55	86%	56	102%
4.G	73	24	34	12	67	92%	70	104%
4.H	68	17	42	12	63	93%	71	113%
5.I	38	13	20	10	37	97%	43	116%
not specified	180	24	124	12	157	87%	160	102%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>916</b>	<b>108%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>109%</b>
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>81%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>82%</b>		<b>83%</b>	
<b>Share of matches</b>		<b>20%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>19%</b>				
<b>Share of ticks</b>		<b>19%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>18%</b>			<b>100%</b>	

Table 5. Innovation – Validation approach used /referred to by sources

Validation approach for developed innovations used by sources								
How was it done?								
TF	Count Cases	n.a.	for selected innovations on ad hoc basis	no clear framework	systematic overall validation procedure	Ticks	[%] of all cases	
1.A	259	13	69	135	42	246	95%	
1.B	47	2	12	29	4	45	96%	
2.C	60	10	9	35	6	50	83%	
2.D	56	8	16	27	5	48	86%	
3.E	79	5	17	56	1	74	94%	
3.F	64	2	32	27	3	62	97%	
4.G	73	1	22	19	31	72	99%	
4.H	68	8	17	27	16	60	88%	
5.I	38	6	12	14	6	32	84%	
not specified	180	34	42	12	92	146	81%	
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>90%</b>	
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>93%</b>	
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>81%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>83%</b>		
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>30%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>100%</b>		

Table 6. Innovation – Who did the validation?

Validation approach for developed innovations used by sources									
Who did it?									
TF	count cases	n.a.	managing authorities	national evaluator	NTN /ETG	self-assessment by DP	others (e.g. University)	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	13	42	109	34	47	14	246	95%
1.B	47	3	10	23	1	4	6	44	94%
2.C	60	13	8	30	0	5	4	47	78%
2.D	56	8	11	24	0	1	12	48	86%
3.E	79	4	22	34	1	16	2	75	95%
3.F	64	2	17	34	1	2	8	62	97%
4.G	73	2	9	35	19	5	3	71	97%
4.H	68	6	7	31	3	6	15	62	91%
5.I	38	7	3	14	2	6	6	31	82%
not specified	180	20	7	56	85	0	12	160	89%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>92%</b>
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>81%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>81%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>16%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 7. Innovation – Extent of reported mainstreaming

Thematic field TF	Count Cases	Extent of any reported mainstreaming							
		Explicit main-streaming	Implicit main-streaming	No successful main-streaming recorded	Unknown	Match cases	[%] match	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	60	31	31	82	180	69%	204	113%
1.B	47	8	7	0	11	25	53%	26	104%
2.C	60	11	4	4	17	27	45%	36	133%
2.D	56	12	4	2	21	37	66%	39	105%
3.E	79	15	4	3	21	38	48%	43	113%
3.F	64	21	9	13	37	52	81%	80	154%
4.G	73	37	7	9	17	61	84%	70	115%
4.H	68	19	8	2	24	48	71%	53	110%
5.I	38	11	6	5	10	26	68%	32	123%
not specified	180	25	55	16	61	157	87%	157	100%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>114%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>118%</b>
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>76%</b>		<b>79%</b>	
<b>Share of matches</b>		<b>34%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>46%</b>				
<b>Share of ticks</b>		<b>30%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>41%</b>			<b>100%</b>	

Table 8. Innovation – Sustainability and mainstreaming orientation

Thematic field TF	Count Cases	Sustainability/mainstreaming via								
		vertical national main-streaming	horizontal main-streaming /take-up national	horizontal main-streaming /take-up trans-national	vertical trans-national main-streaming	continuation/maintenance	Match cases	[%] match	Ticks	[%] of all cases
1.A	259	33	58	14	11	47	75	29%	163	217%
1.B	47	1	8	0	0	8	9	19%	17	189%
2.C	60	7	4	2	4	8	13	22%	25	192%
2.D	56	6	17	1	1	7	18	32%	32	178%
3.E	79	7	9	4	3	8	15	19%	31	207%
3.F	64	18	18	14	13	8	29	45%	71	245%
4.G	73	19	29	5	4	6	44	60%	63	143%
4.H	68	10	8	5	2	9	18	26%	34	189%
5.I	38	5	8	4	3	5	12	32%	25	208%
not specified	180	5	26	2	0	66	32	18%	99	309%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>211%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>198%</b>
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>88%</b>		<b>82%</b>	
<b>Share of matches</b>		<b>42%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>65%</b>				
<b>Share of ticks</b>		<b>20%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>31%</b>			<b>100%</b>	

Table 9. Innovation – Completeness of documentation for mainstreaming

Completeness of documentation for mainstreaming?							
TF	Count Cases	n.a.	low	medium	high	Ticks	<i>[%] of all cases</i>
1.A	259	28	129	49	53	231	89%
1.B	47	8	16	15	8	39	83%
2.C	60	4	35	14	7	56	93%
2.D	56	7	16	18	15	49	88%
3.E	79	5	51	12	11	74	94%
3.F	64	0	20	30	14	64	100%
4.G	73	15	14	19	25	58	79%
4.H	68	14	17	17	20	54	79%
5.I	38	8	10	10	10	30	79%
not specified	180	65	15	95	5	115	64%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>88%</b>
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>81%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>85%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<i>42%</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>100%</i>	

## Annex 2: Summary of data on cases of successful mainstreaming aggregated to thematic field level

Table 1. Mainstreaming cases identified and those considered successful

TF	Count Cases	Confirmed mainstreaming	share of confirmed	
no linked Inno	158	64	41%	no assignment to a TF is possible as no link to an innovation ID
1.A	100	52	52%	
1.B	16	10	63%	
2.C	19	10	53%	
2.D	20	9	45%	
3.E	22	17	77%	
3.F	28	19	68%	
4.G	53	24	45%	
4.H	21	10	48%	
5.I	21	12	57%	
not specified	35	18	51%	
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>50%</b>	
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>54%</b>	
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>67%</b>		

Table 2. Mainstreaming – who is the relevant actor

TF	Count	n.a.	DP as such	MA /IB	NTN	Strateg. Partners	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	158	61	80	4	8	5	97	61%
1.A	100	52	34	4	0	10	48	48%
1.B	16	11	3	0	0	2	5	31%
2.C	19	9	7	0	0	3	10	53%
2.D	20	11	6	2	0	1	9	45%
3.E	22	12	5	1	0	4	10	45%
3.F	28	8	17	0	0	3	20	71%
4.G	53	33	12	4	0	4	20	38%
4.H	21	11	5	3	0	2	10	48%
5.I	21	11	4	3	0	3	10	48%
not specified	35	13	14	3	2	3	22	63%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>53%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>142</b>	
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>54%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>72%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 3. Mainstreaming – Cases by type of mainstreaming

TF	COUNT CASES	n.a.	continuation /maintenance	horizontal mainstreaming /take-up national	horizontal mainstreaming /take-up trans-national	vertical national mainstreaming	vertical trans-national mainstreaming	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	158	45	10	68	0	35	0	113	72%
1.A	100	3	31	35	4	27	0	97	97%
1.B	16	2	5	6	1	1	1	14	88%
2.C	19	0	6	7	2	4	0	19	100%
2.D	20	0	8	9	1	2	0	20	100%
3.E	22	0	7	9	1	5	0	22	100%
3.F	28	0	5	16	2	5	0	28	100%
4.G	53	0	11	18	4	20	0	53	100%
4.H	21	3	6	3	2	7	0	18	86%
5.I	21	0	4	5	3	9	0	21	100%
not specified	35	5	5	17	1	7	0	30	86%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>88%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>292</b>	
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>67%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<i>23%</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>100%</i>	

Table 4. Mainstreaming activities and outputs: Publicity /Promotion

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	conferen-ces	dissemination through all types of media	meetings & working groups	other (please specify)	specification	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	158	85	11	8	15	39	6	73	46%
1.A	100	40	5	29	16	10	5	60	60%
1.B	16	6	1	8	0	1	1	10	63%
2.C	19	7	0	10	1	1	0	12	63%
2.D	20	9	0	4	6	1	0	11	55%
3.E	22	9	1	9	3	0	0	13	59%
3.F	28	4	0	17	5	2	0	24	86%
4.G	53	26	0	10	10	7	1	27	51%
4.H	21	4	2	8	5	2	1	17	81%
5.I	21	11	3	4	2	1	0	10	48%
not specified	35	24	0	1	7	3	0	11	31%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>184</b>	
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>69%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<i>9%</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>25%</i>		<i>100%</i>	

Table 5. Mainstreaming activities and outputs: Policy formulation

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	contact to & mobilisation of political decision makers	lobbying decision making processes	other (please specify)	specification	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	158	101	25	8	24	23	57	36%
1.A	100	59	19	13	9	1	41	41%
1.B	16	11	2	2	1	1	5	31%
2.C	19	6	7	2	4	4	13	68%
2.D	20	14	4	1	1	0	6	30%
3.E	22	11	3	5	3	0	11	50%
3.F	28	7	17	0	4	1	21	75%
4.G	53	20	7	16	10	4	33	62%
4.H	21	9	3	5	4	1	12	57%
5.I	21	8	3	6	4	1	13	62%
not specified	35	28	2	3	2	0	7	20%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>155</b>	
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>71%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<i>42%</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>30%</i>		<i>100%</i>	

Table 6. Mainstreaming activities and outputs: Resources provided for take-up

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	Full documentation of innovation and conditions of its application	Guidelines	Training & training materials	other (please specify)	specification	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	158	141	6	3	4	4	0	17	11%
1.A	100	52	18	10	14	6	1	48	48%
1.B	16	9	3	1	3	0	0	7	44%
2.C	19	13	2	0	2	2	0	6	32%
2.D	20	11	4	2	2	1	1	9	45%
3.E	22	14	4	0	2	2	2	8	36%
3.F	28	3	9	7	5	4	0	25	89%
4.G	53	38	9	2	3	1	0	15	28%
4.H	21	11	3	3	3	1	0	10	48%
5.I	21	12	1	1	3	4	1	9	43%
not specified	35	20	8	0	3	4	1	15	43%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>137</b>	
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>81%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<i>40%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>17%</i>		<i>100%</i>	



## Annex 3: Summary of data on impacts aggregated to thematic field level

Table 1. Intermediary impacts: Policy impacts – Level

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	National	Regional	Local	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	74	38	30	3	3	36	49%
1.A	50	24	18	1	7	26	52%
1.B	3	1	2	0	0	2	67%
2.C	10	2	2	2	4	8	80%
2.D	11	8	1	1	1	3	27%
3.E	15	10	2	2	1	5	33%
3.F	13	12	1	0	0	1	8%
4.G	23	5	16	0	2	18	78%
4.H	12	9	1	1	1	3	25%
5.I	4	3	1	0	0	1	25%
not specified	6	4	1	1	0	2	33%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>67</b>	
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>64%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>64%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>71%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 2. Intermediary impacts: Policy impacts – Changes in ...

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	Employment, inclusion & anti-discrimination policies	Policy making processes	Other (specify)	specification	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	74	39	26	4	5	1	35	47%
1.A	50	22	19	7	2	2	28	56%
1.B	3	2	1	0	0	0	1	33%
2.C	10	2	1	6	1	0	8	80%
2.D	11	8	1	2	0	0	3	27%
3.E	15	10	2	2	1	0	5	33%
3.F	13	12	1	0	0	0	1	8%
4.G	23	5	10	3	5	0	18	78%
4.H	12	9	2	1	0	0	3	25%
5.I	4	3	0	1	0	0	1	25%
not specified	6	4	1	1	0	0	2	33%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>68</b>	
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>64%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>65%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>61%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>13%</b>		<b>100%</b>	

Table 3. Intermediary impacts: Policy impacts – Evidence

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	New internal directives	New legislation passed	New legislation proposed	Perception of stakeholders	Unclear	Other (specify)	specification	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	74	38	3	12	1	4	0	16	13	36	49%
1.A	50	22	2	3	4	2	3	14	6	28	56%
1.B	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	67%
2.C	10	2	2	0	0	4	2	0	1	8	80%
2.D	11	8	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	27%
3.E	15	11	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	4	27%
3.F	13	12	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	8%
4.G	23	5	1	2	0	3	1	11	10	18	78%
4.H	12	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	25%
5.I	4	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	25%
not specified	6	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	33%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>68</b>	
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>64%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>64%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>11%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>39%</b>		<b>100%</b>	

Table 4. Intermediary impacts: Institutional impacts – Level

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	National	Regional	Local	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	74	51	10	6	7	23	31%
1.A	50	26	11	8	5	24	48%
1.B	3	2	1	0	0	1	33%
2.C	10	6	0	0	4	4	40%
2.D	11	4	2	2	3	7	64%
3.E	15	13	2	0	0	2	13%
3.F	13	10	0	3	0	3	23%
4.G	23	18	3	2	0	5	22%
4.H	12	7	3	2	0	5	42%
5.I	4	1	3	0	0	3	75%
not specified	6	4	1	1	0	2	33%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>54</b>	
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>64%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>68%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>46%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 5. Intermediary impacts: Institutional impacts – Changes in ...

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	Education and training system	Labour market intermediation structures and processes	Regulatory work arrangements	Structures, processes and measures for the support to business creation	Other (specify)	specification	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	74	50	7	7	1	1	8	1	24	32%
1.A	50	28	7	9	3	0	3	0	22	44%
1.B	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	33%
2.C	10	6	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	40%
2.D	11	4	1	1	1	4	0	0	7	64%
3.E	15	13	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	13%
3.F	13	10	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	23%
4.G	23	17	2	2	1	1	0	0	6	26%
4.H	12	5	1	1	2	2	1	0	7	58%
5.I	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	25%
not specified	6	4	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	33%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>53</b>	
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>67%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<i>29%</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>16%</i>		<i>100%</i>	

Table 6. Intermediary impacts: Institutional impacts – Evidence ...

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	New regulations/directives	Perception of stakeholders	Unclear	Other (specify)	specification	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	74	50	6	5	5	8	9	24	32%
1.A	50	30	6	6	2	6	5	20	40%
1.B	3	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	33%
2.C	10	6	0	4	0	0	0	4	40%
2.D	11	6	1	3	0	1	1	5	45%
3.E	15	13	0	2	0	0	0	2	13%
3.F	13	10	0	3	0	0	0	3	23%
4.G	23	17	1	3	1	1	1	6	26%
4.H	12	5	1	1	0	5	5	7	58%
5.I	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	25%
not specified	6	4	0	1	0	1	1	2	33%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>49</b>	
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>65%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<i>20%</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>31%</i>		<i>100%</i>	

Table 7. Intermediary impacts: Organisational impacts – Changes in ...

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	Access to training	Access of different groups to these jobs	Anti-discrimination policies and monitoring	Career advancement	Recruitment policies	Structure of jobs	Type of employment contracts	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	74	60	5	6	1	0	1	1	0	14	19%
1.A	50	35	3	5	4	1	0	1	1	15	30%
1.B	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
2.C	10	3	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	7	70%
2.D	11	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	18%
3.E	15	9	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	6	40%
3.F	13	2	1	5	2	1	2	0	0	11	85%
4.G	23	18	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	22%
4.H	12	7	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	5	42%
5.I	4	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	100%
not specified	6	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	17%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>55</b>	
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>79%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<i>24%</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>100%</i>	

Table 8. Intermediary impacts: Organisational impacts – Evidence

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	Official statistics	Perception of beneficiaries	Perception of stakeholders	Other (specify)	specification	Ticks	[%] of all cases
no linked Inno	74	58	0	0	6	10	7	16	22%
1.A	50	36	0	0	10	4	2	14	28%
1.B	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
2.C	10	3	0	0	6	1	1	7	70%
2.D	11	10	0	0	1	0	0	1	9%
3.E	15	9	1	0	5	0	0	6	40%
3.F	13	2	0	0	11	0	0	11	85%
4.G	23	18	0	0	4	1	1	5	22%
4.H	12	7	0	0	4	1	0	5	42%
5.I	4	0	0	1	1	2	0	4	100%
not specified	6	5	0	0	0	1	1	1	17%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>53</b>	
<b>[%] specified</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>76%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<i>1%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>29%</i>		<i>100%</i>	

Table 9. Longer-term impacts: Effects on vulnerable groups

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	Improved access to the labour market	Improved access to the policy making processes	More present in publ. media esp. as regards the need of their i	Ticks	<i>[%] of all cases</i>
no linked Inno	74	53	17	1	3	21	28%
1.A	50	28	22	0	0	22	44%
1.B	3	3	0	0	0	0	0%
2.C	10	6	4	0	0	4	40%
2.D	11	10	1	0	0	1	9%
3.E	15	13	2	0	0	2	13%
3.F	13	4	8	0	1	9	69%
4.G	23	15	6	1	1	8	35%
4.H	12	9	2	1	0	3	25%
5.I	4	3	1	0	0	1	25%
not specified	6	5	1	0	0	1	17%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>50</b>	
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>64%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>69%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>89%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 10. Longer-term impacts: Evidence

TF	Count Cases	n.a.	Official statistics	Perception of stakeholders	Unclear	Other (specify)	<i>specification</i>	Ticks	<i>[%] of all cases</i>
no linked Inno	74	58	5	8	3	0	0	16	22%
1.A	50	31	3	9	2	5	1	19	38%
1.B	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
2.C	10	6	0	4	0	0	0	4	40%
2.D	11	10	0	1	0	0	0	1	9%
3.E	15	13	0	2	0	0	0	2	13%
3.F	13	4	0	8	1	0	0	9	69%
4.G	23	15	0	5	0	3	0	8	35%
4.H	12	9	2	1	0	0	0	3	25%
5.I	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	25%
not specified	6	5	0	0	1	0	0	1	17%
<b>COUNT</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>TF specified</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>47</b>	
<i>[%] specified</i>	<b>64%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>73%</b>	
<i>counted as share of ticks</i>			<b>16%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>13%</b>		<b>100%</b>	

## Annex 4: Interview template

Expert conducting interview	Country /OP	Interviewee (name, position within EQUAL, contact	Date of interview

### 1 TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE ACTUAL EXPENDITURE OF THE EQUAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE BEEN TARGETED AT ACHIEVING THE MAIN OBJECTIVES SET IN THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY AND THE SOCIAL INCLUSION PROCESS?

- 1.1 Can you give us some examples of national policies to which EQUAL was linked?
- 1.2 Was EQUAL used as an instrument to complement national policies in an extra policy strain? If so, which ones?
- 1.3 Or was EQUAL mainly used to upgrade standard policy instruments? And if so, which ones?
- 1.4 Can you state the three most important reasons why the EQUAL expenditure contributed to the achievement of the European Employment Strategy objectives?

### 2 TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE EQUAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES THAT PRODUCED RELEVANT AND USEFUL INNOVATION FOR PREVENTING AND COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITY IN THE LABOUR MARKET?

- 2.1 The EQUAL Community Initiative differed from other ESF programmes in that the Development Partnerships had to fulfil several formal requirements, also called 'strategic instruments'. These were partnership, i.e. the inclusion of operational and strategic partners, empowerment of participants and transnational cooperation with other Development Partnerships.
  - 2.1.1 In your view, have these instruments influenced the innovative nature of the outputs produced by the Development Partnerships?
  - 2.1.2 If so, in which way? Could you mention any examples to illustrate this influence?
  - 2.1.3 Were there any aspects of each of these principles that were of special importance to the production of innovation ( e.g. partnership: composition of partnership, distribution of responsibilities, active versus non active partners, etc. )?
- 2.2 How have these principles been evaluated/articulated/interpreted at national level? Have any targets been formulated (e.g. minimum number of partners in a partnership, etc.)? If so, which targets?
- 2.3 Did any other factors affect (inhibit or stimulate) the generation of innovations?
- 2.4 In what ways was innovation useful, i.e. reliable, practical and easy to use/apply in the project contexts? For instance, was there sufficient testing (i.e. tested on a critical mass of beneficiaries) of innovative results so they are proven to be useful in combating discrimination and inequality in practice? Can you mention any illustrative examples?
- 2.5 In your view, did **EQUAL** have any effects on the management of innovation development processes in the social field? If so, which effects? If not, then why?

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2.6 Was there an overall approach to validate the innovations produced? If so, please describe it. Was it applied to all projects or just to a sample?

**3 TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE EQUAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES THAT RESULTED IN THE TAKE UP OF INNOVATION AT HIGH POLICY/INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL OR/AND THE TRANSFER OF INNOVATION IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS?**

3.1 One of the main aims of EQUAL was the take up of supported activities at policy/institutional level. To your knowledge, have there been any changes in relation to policy, legislative or support frameworks for the target groups during the last years? For example

3.1.1 What exactly has changed? At which level (national, regional, local)?

3.1.2 Is there any evidence for these changes, i.e. 'hard' facts that prove these changes (e.g. new programmes, statistics, surveys, etc.)?

3.1.3 In your view: is there any direct linkage between the EQUAL Community Initiative and any of these changes? If so: what linkage?

3.1.4 How likely is it that these changes will last? Why?

3.1.5 Changes in the employment, inclusion and antidiscrimination policies (e.g. new target groups for existing policies, adjustment of existing policies, new legislation promoting new support measures in specific areas)?

3.1.6 Changes in the policy making processes (e.g. new co-ordination mechanisms within policy departments and with civil society actors, new observation and diagnosis mechanisms, etc.)?

3.1.7 Changes in the regulatory work arrangements (e.g. new collective agreements or new clauses, etc.)? If so:

3.2 Have there been any changes in labour market intermediation structures and processes during the last years (e.g. improved organisation of employment services, improved co-ordination with other actors, catering for new target groups etc.)? If so:

3.2.1 What exactly has changed? At which level (national, regional, local)?

3.2.2 Is there any evidence for these changes, i.e. 'hard' facts that prove these changes (e.g. new programmes, statistics, surveys, etc.)?

3.2.3 In your view: is there any direct linkage between the EQUAL Community Initiative and any of these changes? If so, what linkage?

3.2.4 How likely is it that these changes will last? Why?

3.3 Have there been any changes in the education and training system during the last years (e.g. new officially recognised qualifications and curricula; new officially recognised modes of access etc.)? If so:

3.3.1 What exactly has changed? At which level (national, regional, local)?

3.3.2 Is there any evidence for these changes, i.e. 'hard' facts that prove these changes (e.g. new programmes, statistics, surveys, etc.)?

3.3.3 In your view: is there any direct linkage between the EQUAL Community Initiative and any of these changes? If so, what linkage?

3.3.4 How likely is it that these changes will last? Why?



- 3.4 Have there been any changes in Human Resources policies during the last years (e.g. changes in recruitment, access to training, career advancement, pay structure, type of employment contracts? In the structure of jobs and access of different groups to these jobs? etc.) ? If so:
- 3.4.1 What exactly has changed?
- 3.4.2 Is there any evidence for these changes, i.e. 'hard' facts that prove these changes (e.g. new programmes, statistics, surveys, etc.)?
- 3.4.3 In your view: is there any direct linkage between the EQUAL Community Initiative and any of these changes? If so, what linkage?
- 3.4.4 How likely is it that these changes will last? Why?
- 3.5 In your opinion: How has the situation of vulnerable groups been affected by these changes overall? What has changed for them?
- 3.6 Which circumstances influenced the occurrence of these changes (as regards the DPs on the one hand, the context on the other hand)? How?
- 3.6.1 To your knowledge, were there any specific barriers to these changes? If so, what was undertaken to overcome them?
- 3.7 The EQUAL Community Initiative differed from other ESF programmes in that the Development Partnerships had to fulfil several formal requirements, also called 'strategic instruments'. These were partnership, i.e. the inclusion of operational and strategic partners, empowerment of participants and transnational cooperation with other Development Partnerships.
- 3.7.1 In your view, have these instruments influenced the mainstreaming of the results produced by the development partnerships?
- 3.7.2 If so, in which way?
- 3.7.3 Were there any aspects of each of these principles that were of special importance for the process of mainstreaming ( e.g. partnership: composition of partnership, distribution of responsibilities, active versus non active partners, etc. )?

#### **4 WHAT LONG-TERM IMPACTS IS THE EQUAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE EXPECTED TO HAVE?**

- 4.1 If you think of the next five to ten years: do you expect the situation of vulnerable/discriminated groups in the labour market to change? If so:
- 4.1.1 Which changes do you expect? For which groups?
- 4.1.2 Which factors will influence these developments?
- 4.1.3 In your view, have any of these changes been triggered by EQUAL? If so, in which way?
- 4.1.4 If not, why not? Which factors impede an improvement?

## 5 WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY ADDED VALUE OF EQUAL?

- 5.1 Why was EQUAL participation interesting for the national/regional authorities (complemented existing policies, additional source of funding in a scarce environment, opportunity to upgrade existing policy instruments etc.)?
- 5.2 To what extent have the specific features of the EQUAL Community initiative demonstrated a specifically Community value to the inputs, outputs, results and impacts in the selected MS?
- Inputs = resources that have been invested for activities in the thematic fields
  - Outputs = products, services, etc. produced by the DPs
  - Results = take up of innovations
  - Impacts = longer term effects on the situation of the target groups
- 5.3 The EQUAL Community Initiative was targeted especially at vulnerable groups. Were any of these groups a 'new target group' in that it usually did not/ could not participate in comparable national programmes?

Target Group	New (yes = x)
Unemployed	
Migrants, Ethnic minorities	
Asylum seekers	
Physically impaired	
Mentally impaired	
Mentally ill	
Ex-prisoners	
Substance abusers	
Homeless	
People otherwise discriminated against	

- 5.4 In your view, do the results achieved by EQUAL projects differ from other, esp. national actions taken in the same fields? If so, in which respect?
- 5.5 What do you think: could similar results have been achieved in your country without EQUAL support? If not, why not?
- 5.6 What is the present budget (approximately) provided for active anti-discrimination policies? If you compare it to the time before EQUAL: is it lower, the same or higher?

## Annex 5: Case studies

A selection of nine case studies (one per thematic field) was approved in the Interim Report. These are:

Thematic Fields	Country	DP
1.A.	DE	e-Learning in the penal system - e-LIS (DE-EA-91661)
1.B.	ES	Strategies to combat racism and xenophobia - BEMBEA (ES93)
2.C.	FR	Helping micro-entrepreneurs set up and stay in business - PROXY (FR-NAT-2004-42471 )
2.D.	BE/NL	Support unit for local authorities - Work Waardig
3.E.	IE	Clare Life Long Learning Network (IE-34 )
3.F.	PL	Let's build it together - Job Rotation (FO642)
4.G.	LT	FORWARD! Family and Work Reconciliation Development (EQ/2004/1130-23)
4.H.	AT	Policy and Public Service Push Gender Mainstreaming - POP UP GEM(AT-5-18/212)
5.I.	EL	Sustainable, protective and interconnected services towards asylum seekers - ANADRASI-ISTOS (GR-200906201006)

The case studies are presented below.

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## Thematic Field 1.A: e-LIS (DE-EA-91661)

### 1. Title of the case study

e-Learning in the penal system - e-LIS

### 2. Project/innovation description

#### 2.1. Justification for the selection of the particular innovation

Education and the acquisition of skills needed on the labour market enhance the chances for the (re)integration of ex-offenders and reduce the probability of further delinquencies. The starting point of the project were the deficiencies in the provision of education and training to offenders in the German penal system. Right from the start, e-LIS adopted a networking approach that enabled the finding of solutions to problems that were common to all the participating Länder. The main target group were prison inmates, which is very heterogeneous with regard to age, education, personal experience, length of imprisonment etc. Inmates frequently lack qualifications and individual competences that are important for vocational and social re-integration. This hampers their chances of finding a job and of living without committing further delinquencies. Only few women are inmates and their sentences are mostly shorter which reduces the standard training and education offers available. The second target group were teachers, trainers and staff in prisons. High security demands, the need for strong networks between the providers, training of skills adapted flexibly to the different needs of the heterogeneous group of inmates were among the challenges that called for innovation. The strategy focused on the use of information and communication technologies for the mid- and long-term preparation of the (re)integration of inmates in the labour market. The approach is integrative, preventive and curative. It is integrative as it addresses facilities, training, multimedia learning and the extension and upgrading of training centres. It is preventive as skills relevant on the labour market are provided which support (re)integration. There is a close relation between education and skills and the (re)integration of ex-offenders. It is curative as (re)integration reduces the probability of delinquencies.

#### 2.2. Overall objective and purpose: What was the objective and purpose of the innovation?

The overall objective and purpose was to enhance the skills and education levels of inmates and – in the long run – to enhance the employability of ex-offenders and to prepare them for their (re)integration into the job market. Project activities were aimed at upgrading the IT and training system in general, identifying new employment fields, supporting also ‘minorities’ within the target group and reducing the societal cost of exclusion from the labour market. At the same time the cooperation of organisations providing teaching and training was fostered through the electronic platform which allowed the exchange of information, learning materials and experience among trainers and teachers. Information and communication technologies were integrated into existing learning processes and concepts.

#### 2.3. Description of the innovation

At the start of the activities, only a small minority of inmates had access to education and training that was adapted to their needs. Although IT skills are of the highest importance on the labour market nowadays, ‘jail safe’ learning platforms and software programmes available on the open market were missing. Two main problems were addressed, the lack of adequate provision of education and training for the (re-)integration into the labour market and the difficulties of reconciling new flexible processes of individualised learning with the rules and the contextual conditions in prisons.

In a first step, PCs<sup>44</sup> and networks had to be bought, prepared and installed and software developed taking into account the high security demands of prisons. In parallel, research on

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<sup>44</sup> On the initiative of e-LIS, several hundred PCs were bought for the penal system.

relevant e-content was undertaken and learning software was selected for the e-learning platform. In the end, over 300 different software products were available for the users. The e-learning platform was thoroughly tested in six prisons<sup>45</sup> and applied even beyond these six locations. In a third step, learning concepts and didactics were upgraded with the use of e-learning. Partly new vocational fields were developed such as computer recycling and refurbishment and new training models adapted to the needs of imprisoned men, women and young people. Prison staff, teachers and trainers were trained in the use of the new facilities and in the didactics for the integration of e-learning in education and training systems. The new training models were tested in Neumünster. However, all involved prisons did minor tests and adapted the use of IT to the needs of the inmates.

The needs of the target groups were well known in the broad network which prepared the project for two years (see 2.1 and 2.5). The major challenge was to bring changes into the penal system which tends to be very resistant to change. The idea was to transfer the existing know-how on education, training and career development to the penal system, to identify and transfer relevant education and training modules and programmes and direct the system more towards qualifications and skills actually needed on the labour market. As information and communication technologies were an important issue in the antiquated education concepts in the penal system, their introduction was chosen as a lever. Beyond this, e-learning is an important tool as it supports flexible learning also for smaller target groups such as women, inmates from abroad or inmates from small prisons. At the same time, the implementation of the idea of life-long learning was planned with the introduction of skills assessment, training and ongoing support. Training tutors were newly introduced for the ongoing contact with individual inmates in order to regularly discuss his or her development, difficulties and ways to overcome problems. As a milestone during this coaching process the qualification needs are checked thoroughly again half a year before prisoners are discharged. The missing skills are then acquired during the remaining time in prison.

The operative part of the partnership involved six Länder from Northern Germany and consisted of five institutions, whereof one was involved with five regional offices. Besides the University of Bremen and one research institution from the University of Berlin, the partners were training institutions. Strategic partners were the Ministries of Justice from all the involved Länder and several institutions of the social and economic partners, the Federal Agency for Employment (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) and organisations active in the support of ex-offenders at municipal level. The project manager was bfw (Berufsbildungswerk), a training institution with long-standing experience. bfw with its regional offices is part of a group of non-profit companies. This group offers education and training to employees and has close ties to the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB, Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund).

e-LIS was involved in two transnational networks, in Prileares and MIKIRI, both dealing with the re-integration of offenders. Whereby MIKIRI<sup>46</sup>, led by a British organisation, was concentrated on the role of women and the support of families of inmates, Prileares with development partnerships from Austria and the Netherlands focussed on e-learning. During the cooperation e-LIS learned that the same focus of activities allows more transfer of know-how and intensifies learning although the management of complex cooperation processes is sometimes demanding. Frequently transfer took place also through unexpected cooperation and European networks outside EQUAL. The priority was the exchange of experience among teachers and trainers. Transnational cooperation was found enriching.

<sup>45</sup> The testing took place in Berlin (youth, adult women), in Bremen (youth), in Hamburg (adult men), in Lübeck (adult women), in Neumünster (adult men) and in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (adult men).

<sup>46</sup> Development partnership cooperating in this network were from France, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

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## 2.4. Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries were prison inmates in 12 prisons and their teachers and trainers.<sup>47</sup> A strong focus was on young prison inmates, but adult women and men were also target groups. The indirect beneficiaries were the communities in the respective regions as the improved education and the training offered enhanced the possibilities for an independent life and for re-integration in the labour market after release from prison.

## 2.5. Community value added

Justice administrations from several German Länder had met regularly already two years before e-LIS and had discussed both the issues of the penal system and financing possibilities for future activities. Although these discussions were a major pre-condition for the EQUAL project, this innovation would not have been introduced without EQUAL in this comprehensive and complex way. In the end, e-LIS was one of the largest EQUAL projects in Germany and e-LIS is the only functioning e-learning platform used in the German penal system. The actual added value lay not only in the additional financial means but also in the structure of the partnership. The broad partnership and the compulsory transnationality were crucial for overcoming the different interests among the Länder and for developing concrete work packages on a cooperative basis. This was positively influenced by one partner from Bremen who was very experienced with transnational cooperation in this field and brought enriching contacts into the development partnership. The evaluator identified major added value in the overcoming of structural cooperation and communication barriers between the regional administrations and between different sectoral institutions. This opened up new ways of doing things directed towards forward-looking solutions both for the good of the target group of inmates and for lowering the social re-integration cost.

## 3. Implementation, preferably in a chronological perspective

### 3.1. Project/innovation design and planning

The project idea emerged during the cooperation of partners in a broad network as part of greater awareness that the actual qualification and training offers and concepts in the penal system needed substantial and long-standing change. The experiences and discussions in the network led to the innovation implemented in e-LIS (see 2.5, 3.3). In summer 2003, an analysis of the available education and training offers in the penal system and the roles of training providers was undertaken. A specific needs assessment or research on qualification needs of inmates was not carried out as this know-how was available in detail through the partner organisations in the network.

### 3.2. Management, monitoring and evaluation system

e-LIS was implemented through 32 separate but inter-related projects. That way, actions in a lot of prisons could be tested and implemented under varying conditions and for different parts of the target groups. At the same time, the technology and the software of the e-learning platform were developed centrally. The central management enabled every actor to draw on and benefit from the experience of all project parts through regular exchange. Besides communication on a daily basis, the steering group meetings were important for this (see 3.3). According to a survey among teachers and trainers, IT seminars and work with PCs proved to be useful for many reasons. It motivates inmates to learn, it supports the acquisition of qualifications and improves soft skills. IT systems can be used to support teaching and as a self-learning tool. The evaluation came to the following conclusions: First, different scenarios for the use of IT should be developed adapted to the actual needs of the target groups and their teachers. Second, the teachers need more training for the administration of PC networks and in IT didactics. Third,

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<sup>47</sup> These were the prisons in Berlin, Bremen, Bremerhaven, Bützow, Hamburg, Luckau, Lübeck, Neumünster, Neustrelitz, Oslebshausen, Stralsund and Waldeck.

more public relations work is needed in prison administrations in order to show the benefits of the use of IT in the education and training of inmates. Issues that arose during implementation were small conflicts in prisons because the information and communication technology standards were so low that the regular staff felt discriminated against when the new facilities for inmates were introduced. This was overcome with detailed information on the project activities. Also, unexpectedly, one prison cooperating with e-LIS was closed down during the project activities. The remaining funds were used for another part of the project. This solution allowed the full use of the available funds.

### 3.3. Governance: partnership and leadership

The network of partners was coordinated by bfw (Berufsbildungswerk) in Neumünster in Schleswig-Holstein contracted by the Ministry of Justice which was the actual project promoter. The common interest of all partners was basically developed during the preparation phase and aimed at improving the education and training system for prison inmates and gaining further know-how and experience in this field. The interest of the Universities of Bremen and Berlin to participate was the development of practical innovations and their adaptation to actual needs through testing both the hardware and the software. Beyond this, they had the possibility to overcome the challenge of the security system. The management was supported by a steering group in which all partner institutions and training managers from the penal system were represented. At the beginning the steering group concentrated on expert contributions to the development of over 30 project parts. It also steered all reporting and controlling activities which were conducted by the project manager. National co-financing was provided by the Ministries of Justice. The 'core' of the partnership were the bfw Neumünster as project manager, the University of Bremen as provider of IT technology and know-how and IBI Berlin responsible for the content (i.e. various learning programmes), for monitoring, evaluation and data collection. The training institutions were – in cooperation with the participating prisons – responsible for testing and local implementation of the e-learning platform e-LIS developed by the University of Bremen. The long-standing experience of the project manager facilitated the coordination of the partnership especially during the development of the e-learning platform when a lot of common decisions had to be taken. Obstacles were easily overcome through the openness of all partners to other views and through a solution-oriented approach.

### 3.4. Innovative elements and novel approaches to implementation

During the implementation, innovative elements were found in the management of the project in two ways. First, partners and activities were coordinated in a way that dissemination and mainstreaming were in the foreground. Innovation management gave room to well developed presentations of innovations, their added value and the experience already made. These discussions supported the justice administration with information and ways of implementing change. Second, the management had to deal with conflicts of interests such as different views from different political concepts for the penal system depending on the political parties participating in the Länder governments. The most important method for this were sufficient information, comprehensive discussions and conviction.

## 4. Mainstreaming

The e-learning platform is the main element of the project which was taken up in several ways. First, the 'RESO-Northern Alliance', an alliance of justice administrations from seven Northern German Länder<sup>48</sup>, was founded in March 2005 through a formal agreement by the Ministries of Justice for cooperation in the fields of education, training and labour market programmes for the social integration of offenders. The key objective of this alliance is to develop and validate common standards for the successful educational and vocational integration of inmates. Its

<sup>48</sup> These were Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Schleswig-Holstein and additional to the Länder included in the e-LIS network Lower Saxony.



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decisions are made at the level of higher officials from the Ministries of Justice. Commissioned by 'RESO-Northern Alliance', the server of the e-LIS learning platform is being transferred from the University of Bremen to the University of Berlin. Further online services will be provided by IBI<sup>49</sup> in Berlin. Second, three EQUAL projects were approved in the second application round: BABE in five German Länder<sup>50</sup>, MEMBER in Brandenburg and IMBISS in Lower Saxony allowed the acquisition of further know-how and experience with e-learning in the penal system, with upgraded applications and lecturing materials. Third, additional national funds and some ESF funds have been used for similar projects since 2007. The sustainability of the e-LIS activities was largely secured through national funds from the Ministries of Justice. In Southern German Länder, e-LIS had the role of a pioneer. Recently, the Länder Rhineland-Pfalz, Saarland and Hessen founded the 'South-West Alliance' for the purpose of using the e-LIS learning platform and establishing similar structures. In Thüringen, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt similar initiatives were under discussion at the time of writing. Based on the cooperation with the Ministry for Economy and Labour, 'NEON', a national and transnational network of projects dealing with the penal system took up the experiences of e-LIS.

A series of events and presentations was important for mainstreaming. In 2003 and 2005, the huge transnational event 'Quo vadis' dealing with changes in the penal system was organised in Potsdam. It brought all institutions acting in the field of justice together. The activities of e-LIS were presented on these occasions. At the Länder level a broad variety of events and presentations took place. Rather spectacular were public presentations in prisons. Potential employers, strategic partners, Ministries of Justice were invited as main stakeholders. The media was also invited to see the equipment and specific environments in prisons. After the end of the project, e-LIS results were presented at two events organised by the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Berlin. At one of these events, the procedure a 'new' inmate goes through was demonstrated and visitors could go for instance through assessment centres and workshops. Considerable attention was paid to the presentation of e-LIS at a policy forum in Warsaw in 2008. In general, the acceptance of the developed tools by strategic partners and target groups were the most important facilitating factor for mainstreaming. Hurdles for mainstreaming were qualms and a lack of openness to information and communication technologies. Transnational partners are investigating opportunities for transfer although language is a frequent hurdle. The described follow-up activities would not have been possible in this concentrated way without the complex and successful EQUAL partnership. According to the evaluator, the successful security concept, which was the major issue during the development of this innovation, was at the same time the most beneficial and convincing point for the actual take up in large parts of Germany. This is also the opinion of the University of Bremen, the developer of the e-learning platform, which sees three factors as crucial for its sustainable use: The decision to have a central server, the flexible technical solution for the management and the use of contents which allows the inclusion of commercial software and the inclusion of teachers and trainers as well as prison staff.

## 5. Results and impacts

The main results are changes in the approach to the education and training of inmates. The Development Partnership successfully communicated the idea that the inmates' potential has to be developed throughout their stay in prison from the very beginning and not only a few weeks or months before being discharged. It is a missed opportunity not to utilise the time in prison positively for learning with the perspective of later (re)integration. Frequently the starting points were rather outdated systems of education, apprenticeship and training. Through the implementation of information and communication technologies and updated education and qualification concepts this was changed fundamentally. For instance, it led to the development of education schemes in computerised metal-processing and wood-processing. The newly

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<sup>49</sup> Institut für Bildung in der Informationsgesellschaft (Institute for education in the information society)

<sup>50</sup> These were Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Berlin, Mecklenburg- Western Pomerania and Bremen.

introduced training tutors who provided a thorough needs analysis before the training and ongoing coaching reduced the early leaving rates in the courses and training sessions. With this the immediate objectives of e-LIS were achieved. However, further unexpected results were also achieved. The foundation of the 'RESO-Northern Alliance' is a major result (see section 4).<sup>51</sup> In general, the awareness of the possibilities for and the importance of applying e-learning in prisons was raised and a very positive cooperation climate emerged through the common activities across the boundaries of single Länder in Germany and beyond Germany. Also at higher administrative levels changes have been observed. Whereas the first initiatives in the field of education and training in the penal system were taken at lower administrative levels, e-LIS boosted cooperation at the level of higher officials and at minister level.

From the standpoint of the project manager and training provider the chances for reintegration in the labour market for ex-offenders improved significantly. Their qualification profiles are clearer as they can get officially accepted graduation certificates and can acquire more actually needed skills. For further support after release e-LIS used strategic partnerships with employer's chambers and associations. From the standpoint of the evaluator, the changes for the inmates are attributable to a large degree to the development partnership e-LIS. Effects are expected to be transferred to other prisons and to spread over to more staff in prisons and administrations. Due to the further use of the innovations, strong long-term effects are expected. Considering the broader contextual factors, future expectations are mixed. On the one hand, structural changes in the support of ex-offenders in Germany in 2002 led to a funding cutback which made a direct continuation of support and coaching after the discharge not always possible. On the other hand, from the ongoing demographic change a positive effect is expected for the (re-)integration of well qualified ex-offenders due to the shortage of specialised workers.

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<sup>51</sup> Main action fields of this alliance are the combination of relevant assistance and employment measures inside and outside the penal institutions; the introduction of modular, flexible and individualised education/training processes, based on a common approach to individual assessment and profiling; the joint development and use of IT-based learning systems; ensuring the labour market relevance of education and employment offers in prisons; and the development of an agreed system for the re-integration of ex-offenders after their period of custody. (EQUAL, 2006)

## Thematic Field 1.B: BEMBEA (ES-ES20040093)

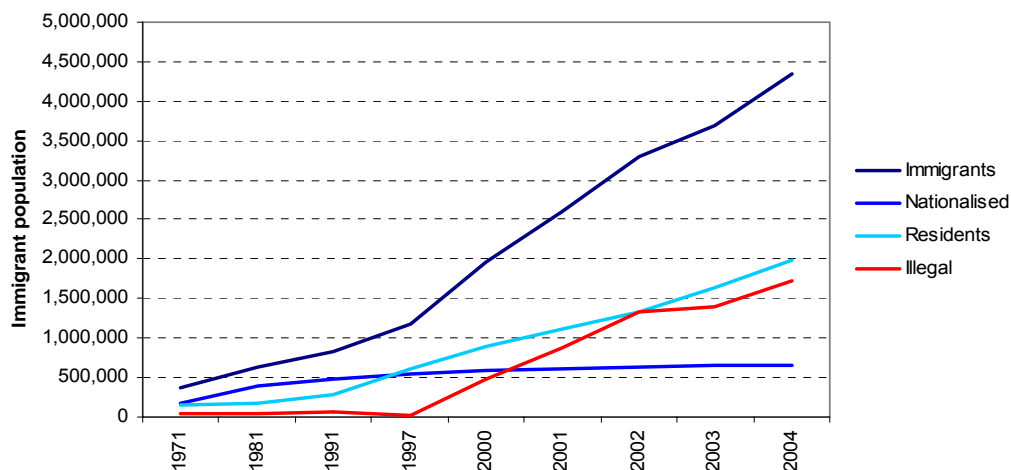
### 1. Title of the case study

Strategies to combat racism and xenophobia - BEMBEA

### 2. Project/innovation description

#### 2.1. Justification for the selection of the particular innovation

Over recent years Spain has moved away from being a typical country of net emigration and has become a net labour-importing country. This is a pattern that started over a decade ago, in 1995–1996. Spain can now be regarded as one of the largest inward migration countries in the European Union. The overall population in Spain between 1971 and 2001 increased from just above 34 million to almost 42 million. While then overall population increase was 22.6%, the immigrant population increased more than 6 times. This trend continued and accelerated between 1997 and 2004. In that period, the overall population grew by around 10%, whereas the immigrant population almost tripled and the number of illegal immigrants in particular increased by nearly 80 times to over 1.7 million<sup>52</sup>. The figure below clearly illustrates the Immigration trends.



Source: National Employment Institute

In terms of gender, the number of foreign women registered in Spain multiplied by five between 1996 and 2003 (almost 1.3 million of immigrants in 2003 were women). In terms of sectoral concentration, immigrant women are employed in 'proximity' type services that include cleaning, cooking, childcare and the care of the elderly, etc. These are generally low skilled, low paid jobs, entailing little responsibility or visibility in terms of social status. Even qualified women immigrants resort to such employment in the absence of other opportunities available to them. Not only are women immigrants employed in low skilled, low paid jobs but they often work without contracts. Employers are more willing to hire illegal immigrants and pay them less and immigrants prefer a low paid job without a contract than no job at all. This makes them vulnerable in case of accident or redundancy. In addition to precarious labour conditions they are also discriminated against on the basis of their family condition (married women or women with children are less likely to get a job), age (older immigrant women have even less possibilities of getting a job), their racial or ethnic background or simply their appearance.

<sup>52</sup> This figure is provided in a report on foreign immigrants in Spain (original title: "Inmigrantes extranjeros en España: ¿Reconfigurando la sociedad?"), in Colectivo IOE, published in Panorama Social, No 1, June 2005. It is based on data from the National Statistics Institute in Spain.

The BEMBEA project addressed discrimination in the labour market in Spain towards immigrants, especially women immigrants. It did so by adopting a twofold innovative approach: increasing the awareness of immigrants themselves on their rights (rights as human beings and rights as employees) and on the opportunities available to them as well as awareness of the Spanish population in general and employers in particular of the benefits from integrating immigrants into the Spanish society and labour market; providing opportunities to immigrants to obtain jobs commensurate with their skills, knowledge and experience and increase their self-confidence and self-esteem.

## 2.2. Overall objective and purpose: What was the objective and purpose of the innovation?

The project had a threefold objective: 1) to analyse and become aware of the reality of migratory processes in order to design strategies intended for social and labour market insertion, paying special attention to immigrant women; 2) to improve the response of the different entities working in the field of migration by designing and implementing training and raising awareness of their staff; 3) to develop a Transnational Cooperation Agreement which involves different European Union and MEDA<sup>53</sup> countries in order to create synergies and procedures capable of giving efficient answers to the migratory phenomenon.

In simple terms, the main purpose of BEMBEA was to tackle racism and xenophobia in the Spanish labour market by focusing on a vulnerable group which faces multiple disadvantages because of their immigrant status and their gender, age or family status. The aim was not only to raise awareness but also to bring a real and sustainable change in the life of women immigrants by enabling them to play an active role in the society they now live in. Even further than that, it was not only about helping immigrants to play an active role in society, but a role filled with dignity, respect and self-esteem.

## 2.3. Description of the innovation

BEMBEA has been pioneer for its awareness raising component which comprised publications, guides and audio-visual material as well as for awareness raising targeted specifically at enterprises. The latter culminated in the production of a guide for the management of cultural diversity in enterprises. The project has also been innovative for introducing a new approach to the inclusion of immigrants, namely their 'professional diversification' in order to facilitate their labour market inclusion. To achieve this, the project worked in an integrated manner with immigrants, enterprises, training centres and the public administration. A number of sustainable success cases (i.e. successful integration of immigrants) have been reported already.

More specifically, an innovative awareness raising campaign to fight discrimination of immigrant women in the labour market was addressed to labour integration centres. The project elaborated a detailed awareness raising concept followed up with a guide on awareness raising strategies called 'Create and Media', including strategies for increasing knowledge about cultural diversity in work environments and guidance on how to effectively manage cultural diversity at enterprise level. The audio-visual material is particularly innovative as it supports the guide with striking presentations of the discrimination against immigrant women during the different stages of the employment process: looking for a job, being interviewed and obtaining a job, the latter often without a contract and in low paid, low skilled, low visibility positions. Discrimination is evident in the lack of respect for personal life, capacities and privacy of the immigrant. The situation is even worse if immigrants are women and even more if they are older, have families/dependants or are pregnant. Real life interviews with immigrants and people on the street are used to further highlight the above.

Given the situation highlighted in the awareness raising material (low skilled, low paid jobs for immigrant women), BEMBEA developed and piloted an innovative methodology for the

<sup>53</sup> MEDA is part of the European Neighbourhood Policy for the EU's southern Mediterranean neighbours.

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professional diversification of immigrants. This targets immigrants (with a focus on women) who have higher skills than those required for the job they obtain in Spain. This is the case when for instance an immigrant with accounting/financial skills is forced to work in domestic service or other lower skilled jobs (cleaning, sorting in a factory, driving, etc.). The diversification methodology pursued the professional orientation of skilled immigrants in order to facilitate the development of a professional career of the same or higher level to the one they originally acquired. Professional orientation is distinct and perceived as complementary to the labour market orientation of immigrants through for instance integrated inclusion itineraries. Professional orientation involved the follow-up of the immigrant by a specific person who helps them re-orientate or strengthen their skills through training (capacity building and on-the-job training) while at the same time looking for opportunities for them to carry out work practices. This requires in parallel awareness raising of employers to encourage them to offer a trainee position to skilled immigrants, which may eventually lead to a permanent position there or elsewhere.

BEMBEA innovated further by linking immigration with gender-based situations of violence. Focus groups were organised with immigrant women who had fallen victims of domestic violence. These were followed up with awareness raising for the identification of domestic violence cases in centres for labour market insertion (job agencies, etc.) where immigrant women usually go when seeking employment. The awareness raising publication 'It is not only about beating' pulls together all the material and results of the focus groups to highlight that domestic violence is not only about physical violence but also about other psychological aspects such as lack of respect, affection and self-esteem.

#### **2.4. Beneficiaries**

Project beneficiaries comprise on the one hand actors who work with immigrants (public sector bodies and NGOs) and, on the other hand, women immigrants themselves. For the former the project achieved increased awareness and improved capacities for supporting social and labour market integration. The project achieved empowerment and labour market integration of women immigrants in accordance with their skills and knowledge.

The project concentrated on six Spanish regions that are amongst those experiencing the highest immigration inflows. They comprise Andalucía, Aragón, Cataluña, Madrid, Murcia and Valencia, with immigration inflows ranging from 6% in Murcia to 28% in Madrid.

#### **2.5. Community value added**

BEMBEA would not have been possible without EQUAL not only in terms of funding but also in terms of the overall approach. EQUAL fell on fertile ground in bodies that had experience of previous EU programmes, especially the EQUAL predecessors, HORIZON and INTEGRA. However, EQUAL introduced innovation and the Development Partnership approach which were unique. Under this framework, entities like the project coordinator CEPAIM (Consortium of Entities for Integrated Action with Immigrants) and the Spanish Red Cross would not have worked together.

In terms of outputs, the project introduced innovative awareness raising approaches in all its actions as well as a specific awareness raising action. It has brought immigrant women to the forefront of the debate and contributed to their integration not merely in labour market terms but most importantly in social terms. Labour market integration can go hand in hand with racism, when immigrants are given jobs that do not respect their skills and their personal situation and safety. Similarly, mistreated women who seek employment will not fully integrate in the host society if their psychological problems stemming from domestic violence are not resolved. In this context, BEMBEA added value by prioritising the social integration of immigrants. This is achieved when immigrants are respected for who they are, are supported in difficult situations and are able to work in their fields of expertise.

### 3. Implementation, preferably in a chronological perspective

#### 3.1. Project/innovation design and planning

The project was inspired by the persistent discrimination that immigrants face in Spain. The rise in immigration rates has not been accompanied by a change in the culture of employers and the population towards this growing segment of the population.

The experience of the project coordinator and partners from the HORIZON and INTEGRA programmes constituted a basis for identifying gaps in the current service provision towards immigrant women and the need for reversing the negative vision of the migratory phenomenon, to a great extent responsible for the discrimination against this target group in the labour market.

Inter-institutional cooperation was organised around seven actions that serve to reduce the barriers for the social and labour market integration of immigrants, especially women:

- Research and action in the field of domestic violence, comprising targeted interventions such as the set up of focus groups in which immigrant women participate. The focus groups helped assess the attitudes of immigrant women towards gender equality, their understanding of gender roles and of the concept and practice of domestic violence. It highlighted the importance of training staff in employment agencies so they acquire the necessary qualifications in order to support immigrant women who have suffered domestic violence and are in the process of searching for employment. Victims of domestic violence have a handicap when looking for employment due to their low self esteem and self-confidence, which can only be tackled effectively if these women encounter adequately skilled staff to support and accompany them in this process.
- Training actions addressed to actors in the field of immigration with an innovative content that highlights the barriers immigrants face in the Spanish labour market.
- Awareness raising strategies that produced publications and audio-visual material, designed protocols and procedures for awareness raising, promoted a positive image of the immigrant woman and created an information network and a network of local resources that serve the needs of this target group.
- Professional diversification that experimented with new formulas for social and labour market integration and the improvement of the employment conditions of immigrants.
- Modernisation of labour market inclusion centres with the aim to improve the quality of support offered to immigrants stressing socio-psychological assistance and intercultural interventions.
- Citizen participation actions that complement awareness raising activities and promote the creation of meeting spaces and inter-cultural communication.
- Transnational cooperation with partners from the PHARE and MEDA programmes in Slovenia and Italy. The gender perspective was the focal point of cooperation actions which consisted of working groups on themes like training of women immigrants, immigrant children and domestic violence.

#### 3.2. Management, monitoring and evaluation system

The overall management and coordination of the project rested with the Consortium of Entities for Integrated Action with Immigrants (CEPAIM). According to the project coordinator, key success factors for the effective management and coordination were the implication and personal interest of partners, their experience and good knowledge of the public and NGO sectors as well as the European Social Fund, the expertise of personnel involved in the project and transparency throughout project implementation (all information on the project and minutes were frequently circulated amongst all partners). The combination of these factors led to a project that was 'everybody's project'.



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Implementation in six different territories did not constitute a difficulty in terms of coordination and management since the two NGOs in the project (CEPAIM and the Spanish Red Cross) split the territories amongst themselves and were assigned specific responsibilities and tasks.

### **3.3. Governance: partnership and leadership**

The partnership was composed of eight partners from the public sector (national and regional administration), universities, NGOs and the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces spread over the six Spanish regions where the project was implemented. Participation of the target group in all project phases was one of the key success factors of partnership and led to their empowerment.

The Consortium of Entities for Integrated Action with Immigrants as coordinator of BEMBEA demonstrated effective leadership in including immigrants in the implementation of project actions and in keeping all partners together at all times. According to the project coordinator, BEMBEA worked 'with' and not 'for' immigrants. At the same time, the interest of partners remained strong throughout the project, with "no-one ever missing from meetings". It is exemplary that agreement was always easily reached in partner meetings which facilitated the implementation of changes in the course of the project if deemed pertinent. Overall, the BEMBEA partnership is distinguished by the smooth and intensive cooperation of its members.

At regional level, associations were reinforced through participation in the project. In some municipalities, mayors promoted inter-cultural issues in local fairs and exhibitions, while the issues of gender and immigration were incorporated in local government interventions. An innovative awareness raising campaign in Murcia used the message "here I live, here I vote" to promote the integration of immigrants in local decision making.

### **3.4. Innovative elements and novel approaches to implementation**

The most innovative element of implementation was the cooperation of actors in distinct territories who address a common target group. Whereas no specifically new planning and management methods were applied, some successful awareness raising tools were innovative. These include: (a) the "Create and Media" campaign which comprised a publication and audio-visual tools that very neatly transmitted key messages concerning the barriers to integration that immigrant women are confronted with; (b) the slogans used in the domestic violence focus groups ("there they beat us, here they kills us", "here you see, here you know", "it is not only about beating", "you tolerate it because of love", to name a few); (c) the diversification audio-visual tool which presents real life stories through a powerful media presentation.

## **4. Mainstreaming**

Almost three years after the completion of EQUAL funding, BEMBEA is still 'alive'. The sustainability of several actions is ensured by the project coordinator (CEPAIM) which has incorporated professional diversification in its labour market inclusion programme and the domestic violence focus groups in its current service provision to immigrants. It is also using the awareness raising tools in all its activities and events. Training of staff in awareness raising techniques and methods continued throughout 2008 and 2009 and further courses are planned for 2010.

A major achievement in terms of sustainability is that CEPAIM constantly promotes the social participation of immigrants by including them in all its processes. The service and support centres of the organisation are staffed with immigrants who are trained to provide services themselves to their counterparts.

In addition, the 'neighbourhood programme' which aims to improve living and infrastructure conditions at neighbourhood level is implemented using the Development Partnership concept



including the participation of all disadvantaged groups (not only immigrants) in close cooperation with relevant local actors such as the Gypsy Secretariat.

BEMEA has also contributed to vertical mainstreaming: The Operational Programme against Discrimination 2007-2013 has been inspired by BEMBEA, while the national Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration 2007-2010 has incorporated the awareness raising strategies developed in the context of BEMBEA and has consulted the Immigrant Integration Forum for its design and evaluation. Key factors that have contributed to mainstreaming include the active participation and strong interest demonstrated by the representatives of national public administration. The same persons who were involved in BEMBEA from the Ministry of Labour were also involved in the design of programmes for the new programming period.

Interestingly, Spain has announced its campaign for an EU-wide protection system for battered women as one of the main themes of its presidency of the EU starting in January 2010. 12 Member States back the initiative on protection for battered women which also calls for new legislation at EU level.

## 5. Results and impacts

BEMBEA has achieved significant results for the immigrants that participated in its actions. 148 women immigrants participated in the 20 focus groups organised on the theme of domestic violence. In the course of the professional diversification action, there were 120 contacts with entrepreneurs, 100 contacts with training centres and 30 contacts with public administration. As a result, 450 professional orientation sessions were organised (an average of 6 sessions per person) and more than 500 follow-up and accompaniment contacts (an average of 7 per person). At least 25 women immigrants, most of them between 35 and 45 years of age were able to find employment using the same or similar skills they had acquired in their home country. In this way, they experienced a significant shift from positions such as carers for children or older people, kitchen assistants or cleaners to positions commensurate with their academic and professional capacities such as veterinaries, administrators, accountants, teachers.

The continuation of the above actions in the current service provision of CEPAIM is expected to bring more benefits in terms of increased self-confidence and self-esteem and more integration of women immigrants in positions that correspond to their skills. There are currently immigrants who entered CEPAIM as users of its services and are nowadays employees of the organisation offering the same services to other immigrants.

Changes in policies through the new Operational Programmes and the active consultation of the Immigrant Integration Forum also set the basis for substantial changes in the future both in terms of increased awareness of public actors and the society at large and in terms of changes in the life of immigrants. There is already evidence that women who participated in the project actions have experienced a change in their life through better qualifications and/or better jobs.

## 6. Information sources

In this section all information sources are listed.

- Interview with DP coordinator on 14 December 2009, Sally Guntín from CEPAIM (Consortium of Entities for Integrated Action with Immigrants, Tel. +34-91- 5483163)
- Information on DP NEXOS from the EQUAL Common Database
- Various project outputs and audio-visual material provided by the DP coordinator
- Application form of the DP NEXOS
- Final Report of the DP NEXOS
- Websites: Website of DP coordinator: [www.cepaim.org](http://www.cepaim.org) (includes access to the project)

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## Thematic Field 2C: PROXY (FR-NAT-2004-42471)

### 1. Title of the case study

Helping micro-entrepreneurs set up and stay in business - PROXY

### 2. Description of the project

#### 2.1. Justification for the selection of the particular innovation

People with empty pockets often have heads full of good business ideas. But motivation is not enough to start up a business and access to credit does unfortunately depend on social status and wealth. ADIE has been working in the field of local employment initiatives since 1988. It is the largest and probably the most successful specialised microfinance provider in the 'old' Member States and has given over 65,000 micro-credits to people excluded from the banking system. This has created employment for 66,511 people and 55,426 enterprises have been set up<sup>54</sup>. With EQUAL support, ADIE (Association for the Right to Economic Initiative), developed a package of new services to help micro-entrepreneurs to set up and, most importantly, to stay in business. ADIE joined forces with some big name companies such as Microsoft, Linklaters, Leroy-Merlin, Max Havelaar and Primagaz to test innovative services and increase the survival chances of micro-enterprises created by the beneficiaries of micro-credits in the framework of the EQUAL DP PROXY. However, ADIE was aware that access to credit is not the end of the story. People that face discrimination are not only excluded from bank loans but also from markets, technologies, training and insurance. The project has developed high quality services which can be replicated and extended across the EU.

#### 2.2. Objective and purpose of the innovation

The purpose of the innovation was to provide people with business ideas but without access to credit with micro-finance and advice to set up and remain in business.

#### 2.3. Description of the innovation

Before EQUAL, ADIE already had support services provided by 850 enthusiastic volunteers and their own 300 employees, but discovered that this was not enough. The Development Partnership PROXY was created to develop new services at national level, with more money, coordination, and a higher level of expertise. PROXY tested ten new services to support the long term success of new small businesses, working with the same people that ADIE had been working for for 17 years. In 2005, 56% of the people financed by ADIE were social welfare recipients (Revenu Minimum d'Insertion or RMI in France) and 35% were unemployed.

The most successful new service so far is a training course called "Information technology in 3 clicks". Microsoft invested €70,000 in the development of the course. The three day course has been run in Toulouse, Marseille, Lyon and many other locations. It is very basic and practical, providing training in Word, Excel, the Internet, how to make business cards, etc.

CIEL (providers of simple software) helped entrepreneurs learn how to use software to do their budgets and invoices. Restos du Coeur, an association that provides food to homeless people, also took part in the training by providing a computer for only 90 €. The second hand computers are repaired by long-term unemployed people. For many of the users it has been the first contact with computers and the classes were full. Around 240 people were trained in 2005, and 75% of them have since bought a computer.

Another successful innovation was a hotline for legal advice. ADIE worked with another big name on this project - the lawyers Linklaters in Paris. Linklaters have provided free legal advice (e.g. publicity swindles, marketing) to almost 100 enquirers since the service was launched in June 2005.

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<sup>54</sup> Yearly Activity report 2008

Retravailler, a partner in PROXY, played the main role in a service implemented in two regions: Ile de France and Normandy. Retravailler are experts in helping people who are unemployed and people with failing businesses. They designed two modules for supporting entrepreneurs in case of crisis for PROXY. The module “RESPOND” helps micro-entrepreneurs to overcome problems in their enterprise. The module “BOUNCE” supports entrepreneurs when they decide to wind up their business. It has the slogan: “You have closed your business. You would like to CARRY on after this experience. Let THE professionals help you”. This module takes place over the course of one month. A further three-hour module with the slogan “Things do not always go the way you thought. If you feel disoriented, let the professionals help you”, helped to find the solutions to a company’s problems. It was for individuals or groups, but the it was found to be more effective as a group module.

Retravailler also targets women micro-entrepreneurs. They set up a women’s group in Marseille that met regularly to discuss business affairs and the particular obstacles women face.

People come to ADIE with a clear idea of what they want. If the loan is granted, in less than three days the entrepreneurs have the money at their disposal. The loans are a maximum of 5,000 €, and the average is 2,800 €. ADIE believes in people’s competences and finances all kinds of projects. The micro-entrepreneurs are happy to be trusted and are very good at paying back the loans. ADIE had default rate of just 2.6% a year.

In the framework of PROXY, ADIE also worked with PRIMAGAZ, one of the main suppliers of gas in France, to provide free training to obtain the certificate in PGP (Propane Gaz Professional). The project was not only about training: it provided access to the PRIMAGAZ network (6,000 professionals) and professional tools. 60 plumbers from French rural areas had already completed the training in 2005.

Leroy-Merlin is another big name to add to the list of professionals who worked within PROXY. The organisation helps craftspeople gain access to markets by referring their clients to the micro-entrepreneurs. This service was launched in Valenciennes (Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region) and has improved the market access of ten craftspeople during 2005.

#### 2.4. Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries were micro-entrepreneurs from disadvantaged groups, in particular unemployed people, Roma, immigrants. It also supported women entrepreneurs. 86% were migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, 76% were women with a high proportion of single parents, 35% were totally illiterate and 30% could only just read and write.

#### 2.5. Project main results

##### 2.6. Expected impact

PROXY was expected to provide micro-credits and additional support to micro-entrepreneurs from ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups in order to help them set up and remain in business.

##### 2.7. Community Added Value

The ARIE approach and products are spreading across France and to the rest of Europe. Maria Novak, the President of ADIE is also the chair of the European Micro-finance Network which brings together the main specialist micro-finance operators in Europe. Through this and other channels, the ideas tested by EQUAL travel across Europe.

EU policy encourages this approach. The European Parliament has adopted a motion on micro-credit in January 2009 and the European Social Fund will be used to support micro-credit schemes from 2007-2013 in its new regulations.

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### **3. Implementation of the project**

#### **3.1. Project/innovation design and planning**

ADIE already had considerable experience helping disadvantaged groups gain access to micro-finance. In a previous EQUAL project, Supporting Income Generating Activities among Ethnic Groups and Communities (FR-NAT-2001-10994), ADIE combined peer support and step lending to establish a successful model of micro-credit that, even working with the most disadvantaged clients, achieves a default rate of just 2.6% a year. The project provided insights into the social reality of groups that employment policy usually ignores. It also made several innovations in micro-lending and business support methodology. Finally, the project used the very limitations of its individual support to press for legislative changes. Several of the project's findings have already been incorporated into the French law on social cohesion, and other changes are being campaigned for at a national level. The project designed and rolled out an innovative credit and support mechanism to cover the whole Paris area. The aim was to help its clients to build up their income step by step – hopefully to the point where they found it was worth their while to leave the informal economy. However, access to credit is just the beginning of the problem. Unemployed people, Roma and immigrants also have difficulty getting access to markets and technology. This is why many new businesses fail even when they obtain finance. So to tackle all these problems ADIE set up a second EQUAL project, PROXY, to develop a ten new services to help micro-entrepreneurs set up and stay in business.

#### **3.2. Management, monitoring and evaluation system**

ADIE has a detailed monitoring system for all its clients which helps to discover what works and what does not work and develop and adapt products accordingly.

#### **3.3. Governance: partnership and leadership**

No information provided.

#### **3.4. Innovative elements and novel approaches to implementation**

The main innovative elements of the project started with the choice of target group which was not exactly the most typical target group of entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs targeted were the migrants and ethnic minorities working in the informal economy. The project discovered interesting facts about the target group and could thus build on this knowledge to develop the appropriate tools and support. For example, the work with the target group revealed that they generally had very high moral standards when it came to borrowing and the loans indeed had a very low default rate. The project also discovered that access to credit is not the only problem faced by potential entrepreneurs from disadvantaged groups but that they also have difficulty gaining access to technology and markets. This accounts for the failure of many small businesses in spite of finance. The support package developed PROXY together with renowned companies provided the entrepreneurs with the additional advice and skills that they needed. The tapping of professional expertise for the disadvantaged target group was certainly one of the novel approaches of the project which also gave it a certain profile and credibility.

Finally, the training modules themselves were innovative in that they offered advice where there usually is none: in the case of 'RESPOND' when micro-entrepreneurs experience problems in their enterprise and in the case of 'BOUNCE' when micro-entrepreneurs decide to wind up their business.

### **4. Mainstreaming**

The innovative solutions in terms of micro-credits and the support packages developed by the project have been extended to the rest of France and the rest of Europe. ADIE is the largest specialised micro-credit organisation in Western Europe with over 100 branches in France, 300 employees and 850 volunteers. A further mainstreaming activity was the lobby for legislative

changes to ease the transition from the informal to the formal economy. This proved successful and the government adopted some of ADIE's proposals in its Law for Social Cohesion. In particular, the law exonerates people who declare themselves as micro-enterprises, under certain conditions, from up to three years' social security contributions, as well as providing them with a more progressive tax regime.

## 5. Results and impacts

ADIE currently provides up to 12,800 credits a year<sup>55</sup>. However, the number of demand for micro-credit in France is estimated to be 30,000. ADIE is campaigning to get excluded micro-entrepreneurs out of a ghetto. Thanks to this lobbying, the environment for micro-entrepreneurs is becoming more favourable.

ADIE's campaign helped to change French banking law in 2004 to allow agencies such as ADIE to make loans even though they are not financial institutions. French law now recognises the creation of a company as a form of employment. ADIE has successfully lobbied for a reduction in the steep social security charges that micro entrepreneurs had to pay in the past.

ADIE is spreading the experience gained in the PROXY project across its 22 regional organisations in France. From the head office in Paris, ADIE proposes a service, tests the service in one region, improves it, and then makes it available in the rest of France. In 2005, for example, five regions provided computer training. In 2006, it was 12.

The partners of PROXY are passing on their expertise to other organisations. Secours Catholique (Caritas in France), the Micro Insurance Foundation and Retravailler have all joined ADIE in the partnership for PROXY.

Finally, PROXY works with major private sector operators that can help spread the message. Craftspeople receiving micro credits are getting work experience with Leroy-Merlin. The big law firm Linklaters are helping micro-entrepreneurs with free legal advice. Microsoft is providing tailor-made computer training and low cost computers. These are all services that make a big difference to micro-entrepreneurs.

## 6. Source :

ADIE  
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Tel:+33156035900  
Email:adie@adie.org  
Web : <http://www.adie.org>

EQUAL, inclusive and social entrepreneurship, 20 innovative solutions, Written and published by AEIDL for the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities - Unit B.4. December 2008 -

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<sup>55</sup> 2008

### 1. Title of the case study

Support unit for local authorities - Werk.Waardig

### 2. Project/innovation description

#### 2.1. Justification for the selection of the particular innovation

The innovative character of Werk.Waardig was mostly with regard to providing support services to public entities, in this case 13 municipalities and centres for social welfare. This target group was new and innovative in itself. Services provided under the project included guidance and counselling; employment aids, including those for self-employment; employment creation and support; guidance and social services; awareness raising, information and publicity; and the training of teachers, trainers and staff. Furthermore, innovations recorded include the response to a request for guidance that had until now gone unheard; using regions to support social economy services; and an integrated view of the social economy.

The most noticeable impact is that after the end of the project the service continues to be provided to municipalities and centres for social welfare at a fee from the beginning of 2009. During the EQUAL programme the service was free-of-charge to the public entities, and the fact that they are now prepared to pay shows that it is highly appreciated and needed in the South of West Flanders.

#### 2.2. Overall objective and purpose: What was the objective and purpose of the innovation?

The chief aim of the Werk.Waardig project was to create a support unit for local authorities throughout SW Flanders. The project's underlying philosophy is to improve the quality of life in the neighbourhood by activating the residents, an undertaking which has both employment and educational aspects. On the employment side, it both creates jobs locally and, by virtue of the services thus provided, enables residents to obtain and hold down jobs with external employers. It also breaks down the isolation some of the residents experience. These innovations at local level are making an impact on broader policy.

#### 2.3. Description of the innovation

The neighbourhood service model combines multiple activities with multiple sources of finance, the most important in this case being service vouchers. The project target groups were municipalities and centres for social welfare. The identification was done through an already existing platform hosted by the lead partner, an NGO called Welzijnsconsortium (<http://www.welzijnsconsortium.be/>). There was a need to find solutions to address the needs of such target groups. Moreover, regional platforms were used to expand on collective learning and cooperation. The process also included the active involvement of existing social enterprises.

More importantly, there was a clear linkage with regional and local strategies. In fact, the project participated in finalising a new decree on local service economy that had already been initiated.

In order to maximise effectiveness, there were three types of partners involved, namely: operational partners, strategic partners, and financial partners. The operational partners did the work on the ground as they had the know-how, e.g. social enterprises; the strategic partners were the members of the Steering Committee (SC) and came from the regional platform of the 13 participating municipalities. Members of the SC included representatives from local authorities, employers, trade unions, employment agencies and the province of Flanders.

In the case of Werk.Waardig, the most important component was the national partnerships and cooperation between different municipalities in the South of West Flanders rather than transnational cooperation. Only 10% of the project budget was spent on transnational activities and DPs from other member states involved included CZ\_37, SK\_60 and UKgb\_145. More



specifically, the transnational element did not really add value to the project. E.g. there were some technical problems as transnational partners had maybe not got as far as the national partners in their projects and therefore a time lag occurred. This was mostly due to the difference between countries with regard to the social economy. However, the Slovak partners had created a so called “web shop” with information on the Roma people. This was later imported to Flanders and the Werk.Waardig project members felt that they learnt something from that specific product.

The rationale behind the project derives from a need to develop a knowledge pool for the social services economy in both the field of individual service and collective services. More importantly, the provision of services ranges from workshops, community and neighbourhood services, work experience projects to ‘labour care’ systems. In the case of businesses, companies receive support from local start-up centres and incubation centres, e.g. Kanaal127 in Courtrai, and they provide know-how and support to young and starting companies that employ deprived groups. Still in 2005, local governments and social-profit organisations did not receive any comparable support; however, they played a crucial role in the social economy. They were asked to develop a service economy within the framework of workshops, and hence, the competencies of local governments have increased remarkably. The main obstacles for local governments are lack of time, means and know-how to fulfil their support role. Therefore, there was a great need for support to develop and implement a social employment policy. Furthermore, there was also a great need for inter-municipal cooperation and combining expertise at regional level. Consequently, the main objectives were: the offering of guidance and support to local governments from South of West Flanders regarding the development of employment in local services (cf 2nd pillar Local Workshops); and the offering of professional advice and concrete tailor-made support (e.g. with regard to management, financing, coaching, marketing & promotion, services quality, etc.) to starters and initiators in the field of the social services economy in the South of West Flanders.

Another aspect for the rationale of implementing such a project was the problem of how to raise income and quality of life in deprived communities.

#### 2.4. Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries were 13 municipalities and centres for social welfare in the South of West Flanders. The final beneficiaries were the long-term unemployed from the area. The indirect target groups included the unemployed (40%), the employed (40%), and 20% others (including those without social status, social beneficiaries etc). The assistance according to age groups was: 20% to people <25 years; 40% to people in the range 25-50 years; and, 40% to those >50 years. All assistance to beneficiary groups was equally spread between men and women, i.e. 50% respectively.

#### 2.5. Project main results

The main results of Werk.Waardig were the creation of services at local level such as flexible childcare that allow (single) parents to obtain & hold down paid jobs; services to encourage circulation of information (e.g. internet access in a canteen); and service vouchers to unlock demand. Furthermore, the project became an EQUAL ambassador for the Social Economy in Flanders.

#### 2.6. Expected impact/impact

The long-term results and impacts in the communities of the South of West Flanders include a reduction in poverty, the regeneration of the local economy and the social fabric. More immediate effects of the project include support to the unemployed. Approximately 70-90 jobseekers found direct employment opportunities in the region. The number is much higher if it were possible to account for opportunities that were found and created through project activities such as training that helped people find employment as a consequence of that activity.



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The project succeeded firstly, and maybe most importantly, in putting the social economy on the local policy agenda. There is more interest and awareness about the subject now. The project also professionalised already existing businesses in the region. Furthermore, inter-municipality cooperation grew and the service is now provided at a fee by another organisation (but with a lower budget in comparison with EQUAL funding).

### **2.7. Community value added**

It is difficult to say whether the innovations of Werk.Waardig would have been introduced without the funding opportunity the EQUAL Community Initiative provided. This project was only possible to realise because it was able to provide a service to municipalities and centres for social welfare for free for two and a half years. It is only now, afterwards, that the municipalities are paying for the service, and they do so because they know how it works and that it works. Consequently, the financial support represented the greatest added value.

There was a paramount need for the services provided under Werk.Waardig and the project has proved to be a success. Interestingly there were no other EQUAL projects in the field of the social economy that addressed social issues in such an experimental way as Werk.Waardig.

## **3. Implementation, preferably in a chronological perspective**

### **3.1. Project/innovation design and planning**

The ideas for the innovations came from former EQUAL projects and the regional platform of municipalities. The innovations, the support services and the subsequent labour market support services provided by municipalities and centres for social welfare were responses to clear gaps that occurred in the South of West Flanders. Therefore, no formal or scientific research took place but services rather filled a vacuum in the communities at local level.

### **3.2. Management, monitoring and evaluation system**

The project had a Steering Committee that met every three months to discuss the project and its progress, and half-way through, or slightly more towards the end of the project, a mid-term evaluation with an external evaluator took place. The evaluators were pleased with the regional aspect of the project and how it had built up a cooperation network between municipalities to support each other.

### **3.3. Governance: partnership and leadership**

There was a working group that comprised the operational partners; a strategic group that included both strategic and operational partners; and, the Steering Committee including important decision makers such as politicians and a mayor of the region. In addition, the operational partners provided the active expertise and worked on the ground. One of these operational partners was the Welzijnsconsortium and Mr. Johan Dejonckheere as the project coordinator backed by this NGO together with the working group became the 'lead' team. Mr. Dejonckheere pointed out that this was a strong and good team.

The most prominent challenge during the project was the high turn-over of staff within the project and therefore much emphasis was put on coaching new personnel and attempts to prevent this from happening. E.g. Johan Dejonckheere left his position at Welzijnsconsortium five months prior to the end of the project but organised this transition in such a way that he then spent 25% of his time overseeing the finalisation of Werk.Waardig from his new position with another organisation. In conclusion, the most interesting component for partners was the financial return together with acquiring and disseminating expertise.

### 3.4. Innovative elements and novel approaches to implementation

With regard to the backgrounds of the project partners, some of them had had some experience with working together on similar projects. One had worked on an EQUAL project.

With reference to the adoption of different practices, group learning, learning networks, learning from each other and from social enterprises were implemented during the project. Mr. Dejonckheere was unsure whether these practices differed from common practices. More specifically, no new communication and dissemination methods were adopted in Werk.Waardig. Such tools included a website and an electronic newsletter and a brochure. However, all project partners made sure that the project logo was in place right from the start so that it would spread awareness quickly.

Finally, the principal project and innovation initiator was Welzijnsconsortium. It is an NGO with a strong background in the social economy and labour support policy projects.

### 4. Mainstreaming

The project impacted on the development of the new decree on the local service economy. In the development process it was important to have personal contacts and networks with local decision makers. With hindsight, it was not an easy and smooth transition from the EQUAL project to today's structure/organisation.

With regard to the actual mainstreaming process itself, it was difficult to convince municipalities that the project services should continue after EQUAL. There was a situation of bigger versus smaller municipalities and the need to convince them that a continuation would bring about a win-win situation for all. However, as a consequence of all the hard work today there are two full-time coordinators providing support services to municipalities and municipalities pay for this service. Without EQUAL the service would not exist today as the public entities would have been very reluctant to pay for a service that they did not know.

### 5. Results and impacts

After two and a half years since project close noticeable results and impacts of Werk.Waardig can be seen. These include the actual service provided to municipalities and the effect this has on jobseekers who find employment opportunities. 87 direct beneficiaries found new employment opportunities.

### 6. Information sources

In this section all information sources are listed. In cases of personal judgement, these are mentioned explicitly in footnotes in the text.

- Interview with project coordinator on 2 December 2009, Johan Dejonckheere, currently a consultant at Mentor consult and previously with Welzijnsconsortium, J.Dejonckheere@mentor-consult.be, tel. +32- 56-237289.
- Ex-post evaluation project screening information, K2 table.
- Project presentations in English and Flemish.
- CIRCA/winning stories file.

#### Websites

- Project website: <http://www.werkwaardig.be/>.
- Information on DP Werk.Waardig from the EQUAL Common Database as of 30 November 2009.

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## Thematic Field 3.E: Clare Lifelong Learning, DP code IE-34

### 1. Title of the case study

Clare Life Long Learning Network

### 2. Project/innovation description

#### 2.1. Justification for the selection of the particular innovation

The Clare Lifelong Learning Network (CLLLN) was set up by the Development Partnership (DP) linked directly to its mainstreaming potential. From the start, it was promoted on the basis that it could be applied in all Vocational Education Committees (VECs) in the country (33). The CLLLN was linked directly to the Irish Government's White Paper on Adult Education (2000) and how aspects of that could be implemented on the ground in adult education in VECs.

The project involved the setting up of five geographic area learning networks with community-based e-learning facilities, offering adult education and training programmes as well as IT infrastructure and services in rural communities in County Clare. This was cross-cut by the setting up of five thematic networks (to develop and implement common strategic interventions). This was innovative in itself in the rural context of County Clare, opening up access to life long learning opportunities to the rural population, by operating at local level and taking advantage of ICT. Supportive activities undertaken by the project included training in community leadership and volunteering (for the network members); training in quality assurance to staff, coordinators and volunteers from each of the five area networks; preparation of a directory of local organisations involved in the delivery of training and courses available and an interactive website to create wide awareness of opportunities available and promote access. The project also developed a guide on promoting digital literacy.

The setting up of the area networks was innovative in terms of building local capacity. A student forum was set up in each of the five areas (networks), promoting involvement of learners (users) and empowerment. A county-wide Life Long Learning Forum was set up to build the cohesion of the Network at county level.

A Management Information System was developed as part of the lifelong learning networks to act as a tracker database providing information and statistics on number of participants, courses taken, completion and drop-out rates and progression. This application was developed for use in Clare Vocational Education Committee (VEC) and all other VECs in the state.

The target group is those individuals with incomplete education and/or qualification and including a rural population (through links into small villages) as well as towns in the county. In terms of the gender dimension, women tend to participate more in adult education compared with men. Thus, there was an emphasis on encouraging men to participate. The network of voluntary organisations included men's groups as well as women's groups. For the capacity building element in the networks, target groups included community and voluntary organisations in the county focused on engagement in partnership building, equality, quality assurance and digital literacy.

#### 2.2. Overall objective and purpose: What was the objective and purpose of the innovation?

The overall objective was to engage in planning, funding and quality improvement of lifelong learning programmes in Co. Clare using a network structure for collaboration and ICT to promote access to lifelong learning. The model was developed to *"enable a wide variety of community groups, voluntary organisations and state agencies to collaborate in the provision of a continuum of lifelong learning opportunities for learners in all parts of County Clare with programmes providing progression from pre-foundation to FETAC Level 3. This model will support the development of an environment attractive to third level promoters, enabling the delivery of third*

*level programmes in Co. Clare” ...”providing a link between the non-formal/ lifelong learning system and the third level system”.*<sup>56</sup>

### 2.3. Description of the innovation:

There was an awareness of the needs of the target groups but access was problematic. Gaps and duplications within the continuum of programmes on offer were identified – particularly in the more rural areas of the county. This was mainly due to lack of information and structures to support promoter collaboration. In the context of the EQUAL project, a baseline study of needs was undertaken.

There was an emphasis at the time (and currently) on promoting access to third level education for groups under-represented in third level education. The Strategic Innovation Fund was established in the region (dedicated funding and involving all third level institutions in the region) to promote access to third level education. The CLLLN project directly fed into this operating at more basic levels of qualification (from pre-foundation up to FETAC level 2, the entry level qualification for third level access).

The development of the innovation was directly linked to the partnership structure in development in County Clare and wider policy and strategic developments in education and training. From the start, there was a direct linkage with national/regional strategies in adult education and third level access. The latter included Government’s White Paper on Adult Education in 2000 (mentioned above) where there had been little progress in terms of implementation, the development of the National Qualification’s Framework and increasing emphasis on quality assurance systems in all organisations offering FETAC Accredited Programmes; the setting up of the Strategic Innovation Fund (mentioned above) and the lack of, and need for, a Management Information System in the VEC sector to track participation and outcomes in adult education.

The partnership structure was in its infancy in County Clare at the time EQUAL came on stream (2004). Key partners/decision-makers and committed individuals came together to consider what could be done to widen participation in lifelong learning and generally to promote quality improvements in the adult education sector. A wide network of 80 statutory and voluntary organisations developed. The focus of work of this network was to improve the quality and scope of adult and community education in the county. The need for geographic area-based networks to reach out to the different part of the county was identified. So too was the need for issue-based or thematic networks. In 2005, facilitated by Clare VEC Community Education Service, CLLN received funding under the EQUAL 2 Community Initiative to formally work on the following five themes which the network had identified as crucial to a quality lifelong learning provision: Partnership, Equality, Curriculum, ICT and Third Level access. Initially twelve and later fifteen organisations became the Development Partnership.

The partners were drawn from the statutory and voluntary sectors and included: Clare VEC (education), Teagasc (agriculture and rural development statutory body), Family Resource Centres in different towns, Disability Organisations and an existing voluntary sector network organisation. Each of the area networks involved the following statutory bodies: the Mid Western Health Board (now HSE), FAS (national training agency), Teagasc, Clare Diocesan Youth Service, Clare VEC Adult Education Service (VTOS, Youthreach, Back to Education Initiative, Community Education, Family Learning and Guidance and Literacy) and numerous community and voluntary bodies including community development organisations, women’s groups/men’s groups, disability groups, estate management organisations, youth groups etc.

The partnership was highly structured into networks and corresponding working groups. These structures led on the development of key tools of e-learning, Management Information Systems (MIS) for the VEC sector, and the website and web-based information service. The Forums set

<sup>56</sup> Source: Original project application.

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up as part of the project – i.e. local learner forums and the County-wide Forum were important for empowerment and better co-operation between providers and learners. The idea was that communication and coherence could be improved by directly involving learners offering views on quality of programmes and progression routes on an on-going basis.

The transnational partnership was not successful in this project and did not contribute to innovation. The partnership (UK-French-Irish partnership) proved to be a struggle. In the French partner organisation, there was an almost total turnover of staff half-way through the project. This was problematic for continuity.

The objectives were clearly formulated from the beginning of the EQUAL project. Key partners and individuals had come together from an earlier stage and the needs/gaps and strategy for EQUAL (area and thematic networks with learner forums) were agreed. EQUAL provided the opportunity to progress the strategy and experiment with implementation.

#### **2.4. Beneficiaries**

The direct beneficiaries of the innovation were as follows: vulnerable target groups with incomplete education/qualification. These were defined as people in receipt of Social Welfare Payment; Rural Disadvantaged Learners; Educationally Disadvantaged Learners; Workplace Learning; Women's Groups; Travellers; People with Disabilities; Older Groups. In relation to NGOs or community/voluntary sector organisations in terms of capacity building; NGOs and training/education providers in terms of ICT infrastructure and digital literacy and quality assurance; the VEC sector in terms of the Management Information System and tracker database.

#### **2.5. Project main results**

The Management Information System was developed, implemented in Co. Clare VEC and subsequently in 23 of the 33 VECs in the state. However, this was not used by the national authorities (Department of Education and Science) to create a national platform for management and tracking participation and progression in the adult education sector.

The method of promoting access via the area-based networks from pre-foundation (courses, qualification along a continuum) up to third level, through linkages with colleges and the SIF, and the continuum in adult education was achieved as planned. Vulnerable groups accessed third level education. There was also improved coordination in courses/qualification and delivery in the county.

New curricula and especially new and improved modes of access using different forms of learning and exploiting the potential of ICT (e-learning, blended learning) were put in place.

Quality improvement and quality assurance of adult education providers.

Improved awareness of adult education provision and how to access it in the county.

Improved capacity of community/voluntary sector organisation and inter-agency / inter-sectoral partnership in the area and thematic networks.

The area networks and user Forums provided an excellent source of learning and review.

#### **2.6. Expected impact/impact**

It was expected that the CLLLN Management Information System would be taken on board at national level as the national platform for managing the adult education sector. While the system was taken on board horizontally (into 23 other VECs), it was considered a "missed opportunity" that the national authorities did not adopt it.

The impact has been significant in that the partnership, area networks, new curricula and modes of access to adult education along the continuum and up to third level and the Forums have remained in place.

Other aspects of the experience/learning have been transferred into other adjacent areas (e.g. training in partnership and capacity building for community and voluntary sector in adjacent counties of North Tipperary and Limerick).

### **2.7. Community Added Value**

The innovations would not have been introduced in this comprehensive and coherent way in the absence of the EQUAL CIP.

The partnership development (networks) was particularly significant.

EQUAL provided very generous funding (financial inputs) for the development of the project, technical support on project development, management and monitoring, a focus and a strategic framework (DP structure) and the possibility for mainstreaming the innovations produced.

There was a genuine need for the project. Much of its success is linked to the fact that it was responding to 'unmet needs' in the target population. The partners were also acutely aware of the need for quality improvements in the sector as well as improved modes of access.

No problematic external events arose during the genesis of the project. However, it did coincide with policy developments (knowledge society, continuum in lifelong learning, promoting third level access for vulnerable groups) which heightened the need for such a project (i.e. positive factors in the national and regional context).

The interviewees are particularly positive on the CAV and the importance of support from EQUAL for the successes achieved (e.g. EQUAL came at an ideal time) and the quality of the project (MA and NSS interviewees and external evaluations).

EQUAL provided the context to develop these innovations and successfully implement them. EQUAL support was crucial to the wider application of the innovation and learning achieved (horizontally into other VECs, other counties).

## **3. Implementation, preferably in a chronological perspective**

### **3.1. Project/innovation design and planning**

The project/innovation came from the ideas of a number of organisations and individuals in the adult and community education sector and community and rural development organisations. It came from a developing partnership and wide network of organisations in the county (80 organisations as described above). It was clear to the partners from the start that a combination of area-based networks and thematic networks (and working groups) were needed and that the potential of ICT was not being exploited.

Baseline research on current levels of provision in parts of the county and needs were undertaken (surveys and focus groups). Studies/surveys were undertaken to get feedback identify progression. Students (users) forums were set up for the purpose of continually getting user engagement (ideas and feedback).

The project innovations (the ideas on what to do) came about from the internal working (working groups) within the partnership and networks. They identified what needed to be done in terms of network structures and fora, and in thematic areas (access, curricula, ICT strategy etc.) and the support activities needed to progress the innovations (capacity building of the local networks/partnerships, ICT infrastructure, directories, web-based information, Management Information System).

### **3.2. Management, monitoring and evaluation system**

The project was run by the following staff: Employment of Co-ordinator, ICT Coordinator, Equality Officer, Third Level Brokerage Director, and Finance Officer with responsibility for ICT. Financial systems and procedures were developed, implemented and approved by the NSS for the financial administration of EQUAL and the administration of the CLLLN generally. In relation to systems and procedures for planning, management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on



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activity within the project, regular meetings (quarterly DP meetings) and reviews (weekly review sheets) were put in place.

Planning and evaluation were encouraged from the outset of the project. A Logic Model Approach (provided and supported by the NSS) to the development of project action plans, budgets, aims, objectives and impacts was adopted from the start. Action plans identified activities, stakeholders input, purpose, proposed activity and proposed outcomes. A comprehensive system of record keeping was put in place at the start.

Inputs and outputs were recorded and reported quarterly to the NSS (WRC), the DP and network members. All events and courses were evaluated; all working groups developed their own remits and actions plans and at the end evaluated their own performance. In terms of the partnership dimensions of the programme, the DP undertook an evaluation of their own satisfaction with the process. Measurement of impact and added value included annual network surveys and focus groups with common questions to help measure progress and stage of network development.

There was detailed reporting of outputs and outcomes by each objective (Source: CLLLN Evaluation Report). Numerous outputs were recorded – from setting up/implementation of systems (MIS), structures and networks, e-learning centres and resources, directories (hardcopy and on-line), courses, website, funding secured, delivery of equality training to networks and outside agencies, specific learner projects, conferences, partnership toolkit, curricula developed linked to programmes delivered and people trained.

The project progressed extremely well. There were no serious issues or difficulties arising over implementation. For instance in the review of the effectiveness of the operation of the DP (i.e. data from the DP evaluation mentioned above), in relation to quality (commitment of each partner, effectiveness of communication, trust), over 85% assessed this as very good/good; 90% assessed management as very good/good; 90% assessed work (i.e. the structure and work of the steering group, the quality of its products, the innovativeness of approach) as very good/good; 85% assessed support (peers and own organisation) as very good/good; 90% assessed resources as very good/good.<sup>57</sup>

### 3.3. Governance: partnership and leadership

The partnership involved promoters in the five geographical area networks. The following state funded agencies were involved in each network: the Mid Western Health Board (now HSE), FAS, Teagasc, Clare Diocesan Youth Service, Clare VEC Adult Education Service (VTOS), Youthreach, BTEI, Community Education, Family Learning & Guidance & Literacy). Membership specific to each of the area networks include the following organisations:

- East Clare Learning Network: East Clare Community Co-operative; East Clare Community Development Project; East Clare Adult Learning Centre; East Clare Youthreach; The Alpha Project; Killaloe Family Resource Centre; The Malua Centre, Killaloe; The Clare Women's Network.
- North Clare Learning Network: Ennistymon Family Resource Centre; Mid-Western Health Board Traveller Education Service; Lisdoonvarna School Adult Education Service; Spanish Point School Adult Education Service; Kilmurry Ibrickane Community Network; West Clare Resource Centre Partnership Group; Schools Completion Programme.
- Shannon Area Learning Network: Shannon Family Resource Centre; Project Shannon; Shannon Youthreach; Curriculum Development Unit, Shannon; PLC & Adult Education Service, St. Patricks Comprehensive School; Respond Housing (Training & Development); Obair, Newmarket-on Fergus; Shannon Hotel School; Sixmilebridge Community Complex; Rural Resource Development (RRD).

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<sup>57</sup> Source: CLLLN Evaluation



- West Clare Learning Network: Eiri Corca Baiscinn, Kilkee; Kilrush Family Resource Centre; West Clare Adult Learning Centre; John Paul Estate Women's Project; John Paul Estate Community Group; Brothers of Charity Training Workshop
- Ennis Area Learning Network: Ennis West Partners; Ennis Community Development Project; Clonroad Adult Education Centre; Cloughleigh Residents Association; Brothers of Charity Training Workshop; Dulick Enterprise Centre, St. Joseph's Traveller Training Centre, Congress Information & Opportunity Centre.

Each of the organisations involved in the Development Partnership had a remit in relation to the design, development, delivery and support of locally based lifelong learning opportunities. For some of the organisations including FAS, School Based Adult Education Programmes and the VEC, education and training is 'core business'. For other partners, provision of learning opportunities is part of a specific 'community development' strategy and the design and delivery of learning programmes forms only part of their community development remit. These organisations, in particular the Family Resource Centres, the Community Development Projects and the ADM Funded Companies have specific remits in relation to 'difficult to reach' target groups.

However, despite the work that was being done by the variety of community/voluntary organisations and state agencies, the sector was characterised by replication, gaps in the system and lack of progression opportunities for learners. This can be attributed to organisations traditionally working in isolation, if not in competition, and the lack of a county-wide strategy to address this.

Initially twelve and later fifteen organisations became the Development Partnership. Clare VEC Adult Education Service became the Designate Partner. While there was a 'core group', the wide partnership and network structure, as described above, was a key aspect of the innovation. The project effectively operated as described – i.e. a combination of highly decentralised area-based networks and engagement of the partners in the strategic thematic networks.

#### 3.4. Innovative elements and novel approaches to implementation

The partnership was in formation at the time EQUAL came on stream. There were ad hoc networks in development in the five areas. EQUAL provided the opportunity to formalise them and improve the quality of provision. Some but not all of the partners had worked together before. A new DP and network structure was set up. This was a central objective of the project and a source of innovation in it.

The design, planning and management did include new practices. The networks were formalised and new structures (working groups/steering groups) set up to progress each thematic issue and develop the area-based networks. A key objective was to build competence and capacity of the network and promoters (reach of vulnerable groups, equality training, new/improved curricula, improved infrastructure, better access). E-learning and blended learning techniques were used in education/training delivery. A new Management Information System was developed and applied. User forums in each of the five areas, and at county level were set up. All of these practices were new.

Local directories, website, conferences, training drawing on the projects' experience in adjacent areas, media reports in the local and national press were the methods used to communicate and disseminate information on the projects, its work and results. The website ([www.clarelearningnetwork.org](http://www.clarelearningnetwork.org)) includes details on more than 150 courses, 80 providers, tutor and learner fora, e-resources including publications, research findings, and a regularly updated newsletter.

The innovation was developed by the DP and the networks.

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#### 4. Mainstreaming

The Management Information System for adult education and tracking progression and the partnership building with voluntary/community groups in the area networks were taken up horizontally, but not in national policy.

Numerous tools were used to support mainstreaming (website, products, directories, curricula and training programmes) and face-to-face meetings with officials in the Department of Education and Science.

The problem is that there is not a national focus on the role of adult education and no overall management of this as an activity at national policy level. Project interviewee commented that the Department do not want the extra work involved in managing the adult education sector and are 'afraid' that the VECs will ask for extra resources. Adult education is managed within the VEC sector and combined with second level schools. Adult education's work on the ground and its mission is different. The e-learning approach is not taken up in a serious way, nor is partnership. When there is not a good understanding of its purpose (addressing educational disadvantage), it cannot make the connections in terms of progression (for instance, into third level access programmes; into training and work opportunities). As such, there are gaps in the structures. There is a need to find better ways of working with the third level sector. That needs a lot of work on the ground (on genuine empowerment) and much more flexible delivery methods (part-time, modular, blended learning, support at levels people are at). Some need support and an environment where they can learn to learn. University access programmes do not operate at this level. A lot of work has been done at FETAC levels 5 and 6 but much more work needs to be done at levels below that (Adult education operates at foundation level, and up to FETAC level 3).

A new 'state of the art' is in place in that the EQUAL project has left behind the area networks, the user forums, the partnership, an ICT strategy for the county, a management information system for adult education and a 'tracker' database.

These would not have been put in place without the EQUAL project and EQUAL funding. Interviewee commented that VECs do not have 'permission' to innovate otherwise.

#### 5. Results and impacts

The main results were as outlined above:

- The Management Information System implemented in Co. Clare VEC and subsequently in 23 of the 33 VECs in the state;
- New methods of access via the area-based networks from pre-foundation (courses, qualification along a continuum) up to third level, through linkages with third level colleges;
- Successful targeting and progression on the continuum for vulnerable groups;
- Improved coordination in courses/qualification and delivery in the county;
- New curricula and especially new and improved modes of access using different forms of learning and exploiting the potential of ICT (e-learning, blended learning) were put in place;
- Quality improvement and quality assurance of adult education providers;
- Improved awareness of adult education provision and how to access it in the county;
- Improved capacity of community/voluntary sector organisation and inter-agency/inter-sectoral partnership in the area and thematic networks;
- The area networks and user Forums promoting empowerment, user involvement and a source of learning and review.

The objectives were achieved as planned and inputs and outputs systematically recorded and reviewed. Evaluation at many levels was undertaken (the project, the functioning and added value of the DP).

With the exception of mainstreaming, the results and impact were as planned.

The groups who participated in adult education in the network showed good results and progression. Some of those went on to access third level education. The situation is not likely to improve for vulnerable groups in the labour market. Some people who are now unemployed are very well qualified; they want a job and not more education. The more disadvantaged need to start at pre-foundation/foundation level and it takes time and considerable support and flexible delivery to enable them to progress on the continuum. With well educated and better qualified people now unemployed, the situation is more difficult for those with incomplete education and lacking qualification.

The changes are attributable to the project. The networks and systems are in place and are likely to last. However, with the current deterioration in public finances, community and voluntary sector organisations under threat of closure, growing unemployment and fewer work opportunities in the recession, conditions are more difficult.

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## Thematic Field 3.F: Job Rotation (PL-69 FO642)

### 1. Title of the case study

LET'S BUILD IT TOGETHER – Job Rotation

### 2. Project/innovation description

#### 2.1. Justification for the selection of the particular innovation

Job rotation is a mechanism which combines vocational training, improvement in an employee's qualifications as well as offering all-encompassing professional assistance to the unemployed to help them gain professional work experience, training and re-introduction to the job market. It aims to integrate all three main labour market policy objectives: promotion of lifelong learning and vocational training for employees, active support for companies through investing in human capital as well as job creation and fighting unemployment.

This job rotation system has been tested and developed by the partnership working under Polish conditions and this system is described in detail in a comprehensive manual which can be used as a step-by-step guide for companies interested in implementing it. Its universal character and elaborated methodology allow easy crossover and adaptation by companies operating in very different areas of business and in different regions.

The cooperation of organisations with very different profiles, such as the Vocational Training Centre, the State Agricultural Property Agency and branch associations has led these organisations to combine their existing structures and support systems to create something truly innovative. The partnership tested the cooperation of counsellors, employers, trainers in achieving common targets. This cooperation is part of the whole conception of job rotation because as a system it demands the involvement of educational/training centres, companies and other labour market institutions. Additionally, engagement of different types of institutions can have a beneficial influence on local development. What is more important is the fact that implementation of job rotation does not require any changes in law as it is based only on an agreement between employers, employees and the unemployed. This means that the solution can be easily adapted on the level of an enterprise.

#### 2.2. Overall objective and purpose: What was the objective and purpose of the innovation?

#### 2.3. Description of the innovation:

The idea of the project stemmed from the diagnosis of the situation on the labour market - at first in the region of Warmia and Mazury, but also identifying and responding to the problems on the national level. The project was addressed to the building and installation industry and the following problems were identified as the basis for the formulation of objectives:

- insufficient level of preparation for structural changes in economy;
- companies' lack of coherent human resources development systems and entrepreneurs not paying attention to vocational training and the improvement of employees' qualifications;
- traditional training methods, inappropriate for the requirements of the modern economy;
- lack of possibilities to recognise and certify competences of workers - people possessing qualifications (and many years of experience) to perform certain trades in building and sanitary industries had no documents proving their expertise;
- outflow of a qualified workforce from building companies is becoming a serious problem and at the same time, employers are not using a big job resource made by the unemployed;
- high unemployment rate present in the region, especially in areas of the former State Farming Companies;
- low qualifications of the unemployed, unsuitable for the modern economy's requirements.

This diagnosis showed the necessity of introducing new forms of all-encompassing professional assistance to the unemployed to help them gain professional work experience, training and re-introduction to the job market, innovative both in contents and in form. In trying to create a comprehensive solution it was also important to build up a diversified partnership (involving stakeholders).

The job rotation mechanism elaborated and developed by the Partnership is an innovative tool to support companies' development, training and educational activities for employees and job creation. The concept is simple: when the employees participate in some training or educational activity, they are replaced by unemployed people who have been previously trained and prepared to work. The important thing is that the job rotation (called also "rotation for education" or "rotation on the labour market") does not mean internal rotation in the company but engaging people from the outside, mostly unemployed. Such a mechanism assumes 'three winners', when all sides are involved in the project – employee, unemployed and employer. Employees improve their qualifications, the unemployed gain new qualifications and experience which can give them chance to find work and the whole process does not affect the sustainability of production and does not provoke work stoppage. The Development Partnership elaborated a comprehensive manual describing a variety of methods in the implementation of rotation projects, which can be used as a step-by-step guide for companies.

Transnational co-operation gave the Development Partnership the chance to test the innovation at European level. The job rotation system used to be implemented only on the national level. In the framework of the transnational co-operation agreement, the unemployed were trained (vocational and language training) and sent to France to replace French workers. That innovative experiment proved that the system can be used on a national as well as on a European level, remaining equally effective.

#### **2.4. Beneficiaries**

Support was directly focused on the unemployed in the region and on employees of the small and medium enterprises. Indirect beneficiaries were: SMEs, training and educational centres, entrepreneurs, institutions of the labour market and HR specialists.

The Development Partnership's target group was mainly made up of people from the building sector, often coming from rural areas, bound to traditional forms of work and traditional professions, as well as to a traditional misconception of gender roles. In the long-term they were prone to losing their jobs due to the rising requirements of the labour market (especially employees over 50 years of age as they had hardly ever used new technologies and employers were unwilling to invest in the training of such people).

#### **2.5. Project main results**

The partnership implemented and tested many innovative solutions to problems identified in the building sector. The project's activities included: the implementation of the job rotation scheme, designing the methodology and testing competences, the adaptation of the branch training fund model, conducting an experiment on new ways of reconciling family life and work, running a free computer laboratory equipped with the newest programmes for designers and architects, the pilot implementation of three ecological technologies and the introduction of innovations in trainings and the organisation of seminars, conferences and training courses. All the actions focused on increasing the workers' level of adaptation to the market and the requirements of the modern economy, as well as on creating a new approach on the part of the employers to the training system in their enterprises and to the possibility of using such a job resource as the unemployed.

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## 2.6. Expected/real impact

The job rotation mechanism, combining vocational training, improvement in an employee's qualifications as well as offering all-encompassing professional assistance to the unemployed, was tested inter alia in areas of the former State Farming Companies which have one of the highest unemployment rates in Poland. That proved the result can be used as a strategic solution in fighting unemployment even in the most problematic and backward area. The designed methodology and tested professional qualifications validation model are used in elaborating the National Qualifications Framework in Poland.

## 2.7. Community value added

The leading partner had planned to implement a project concerning job rotation and competences validation for many years. Such an opportunity would not have arisen without the EQUAL CIP. The problem was mainly raising the funds necessary for implementation, but also the co-operation of the key actors in the job rotation system. The idea of partnership imposed by the EQUAL CIP encouraged and forced labour market institutions to cooperate and to elaborate and develop systematic and more effective solutions in tackling unemployment. The transnational co-operation showed the universalism of the system, its adaptability and flexibility.

The organisation had previous experience in partnership through the implementation of the project under the Phare Partnership Programme. Work with foreign partners was also a source of information for them about the possibilities of the EQUAL Programme. Their partners had participated in the 1st round of the CIP. That encouraged the Warmińsko-Mazurski Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego (Vocational Training Centre in Regional of Warmia and Mazury) to prepare the project to apply in the 2nd round of EQUAL and to start creating the future partnership.

To recapitulate, in the framework of EQUAL it was possible to elaborate a comprehensive system which could provoke real change in policy on the labour market, not only focus on ad hoc supportive actions. The idea of partnership has two main aspects: on the one hand a properly built up partnership, engaging key institutions has a significant impact on project effectiveness and results, on the other hand it can influence local initiative and development.

## 3. Implementation, preferably in a chronological perspective

### 3.1. Project/innovation design and planning

The idea of the project was designed by the lead partner who involved other stakeholders in the planning and preparation process. Opportunities given by EQUAL made the implementation of a comprehensive approach to the problem of unemployment possible. The partnership tested new ways of professional assistance to the selected social groups. A vocational training scheme based on the job rotation concept, which brought together the educational aims of the unemployed and employees, became a precious experience for employers interested in gaining a well-prepared new worker whose competences could be verified within the company prior to making final decision on hiring him/her. The system of validation of professional competences, which more and more often are gained through informal education, when implemented within the project showed the scale of the problem and was the real answer for common needs. The results were tested in the environment of the construction industry in which it used to be possible to gain qualifications by performing supporting jobs and further improving them, sometimes even without legal employment. The problem was that even employees with high competences, could not validate them due to the lack of proper regulations.

In a holistic approach, the DP focused primarily on the validation of non-formal competences, trades skills certification and a trial of new ways of organising work (job rotation). This contributed to strengthen the adult education system and social policy towards the unemployed, as well as the capacity of economic sectors and its human resources.

### 3.2. Management, monitoring and evaluation system

The decision-making process was designed in a democratic system – each partner had one vote in the Steering Group. The information about the project's implementation was exchanged between national partners on a day-to-day basis, which gave them full awareness and the availability to join in any action taken by the project. All partners also actively participated in the dissemination and mainstreaming processes, according to their resources and abilities.

Including all partners in the process of planning and implementation of the project provoked an increase in their activity and entrepreneurship. The participation of the branch associations in the mainly training project led by a large and experienced educational organisation (lead partner) enabled them to adopt good practices and gain experience, which could allow them in future to implement training projects for their members by themselves.

The project's evaluation strategy embraced the following aspects: key documents analysis (quantitative and qualitative); tasks monitoring, surveys and qualitative methods – individual interviews (including empowerment analysis). The project was evaluated at every stage which allowed the Partnership to assess possible and real impacts of the results, as well as to create a strategy to mainstream them. According to the conclusions and interim assessment, the main elements of the dissemination and mainstreaming strategy were specified: the dissemination and mainstreaming network in the region; a detailed list of target groups ('results recipients') and methods to reach them; proposition of legislative changes and the engagement of decision makers.

Constant monitoring of the project implementation had a positive influence on project activities and results – in particular the regular meetings of experts and the steering group allowed an immediate reaction to any problems which arose.

### 3.3. Governance: partnership and leadership

The Development Partnership consisted of four institutions:

- Leading Partner: Warmińsko-Mazurski Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego (*Vocational Training Centre in Regional of Warmia and Mazury*)
- Partner 1: Olsztynska Izba Budowlana (*Building Sector Institution in Olsztyn*)
- Partner 2: Polska Korporacja Techniki Sanitarnej, Grzewczej, Gazowej i Klimatyzacji (*Corporation of Sanitation, Heating, Gas and Air Condition Technologies*)
- Partner 3: Agencja Nieruchomości Rolnych oddział terenowy w Olsztynie (*State Agricultural Property Agency in Olsztyn*)

The project's main objectives were focused on the elaboration of new mechanisms for supporting employment in the construction and installation sectors and on the implementation of new technologies and innovative ecological solutions in SMEs in urban and rural areas.

Partners were chosen in order to meet beneficiaries' expectations in the best possible way. The project was lead by an educational association having vast experience in conducting professional training for employees and the unemployed. Two branch associations included in the partnership responded to the expectations of the building companies and the fourth partner – the State Agricultural Agency – was responsible for contacts with the unemployed, especially coming from rural areas. The lead partner played a major role from the very beginning and influenced the decision making process in the course of the project. However, the participation of the partners in the process of planning, applying and forming project into shape made them fully engaged in every stage of the project. According to the idea of partnership, the partners were not only responsible for their tasks but for the whole management and implementation process.



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### **3.4. Innovative elements and novel approaches to implementation**

Although the lead partner was the initiator of the project, all the partners actively participated from the planning stage to the dissemination and mainstreaming stage, sharing information and taking decisions together. Each partner was assigned the responsibility for a part of the project's actions.

The idea of partnership, transnational co-operation and mainstreaming - which constituted the main rules of the EQUAL CIP - imposed a new way of implementing a project on project promoters, engaging all those institutions essential to achieving the objectives on national and European level. It also influenced the way of managing a project, as well as the planning and implementation process (based to some extent on the PCM methodology), characterised now by a comprehensive approach to formulating objectives and tasks.

### **4. Mainstreaming**

The whole Partnership was involved in designing and implementing the mainstreaming strategy. In the framework of the strategy, the dissemination and mainstreaming network in the region was created as well as a detailed list of target groups ('results recipients' on the level of region and country) and methods to reach them; legislative proposals and the engagement of decision makers.

Two main results of the project were disseminated and taken into account in the mainstreaming process – the job rotation system and the professional qualifications validation model. In both cases the mainstreaming strategy focused on dissemination and promotion. Many conferences, seminars, workshops, training and individually designed meetings were organised. All activities were accompanied by a promotional campaign on TV, in local, regional and national newspapers and on billboards. Promotional activities were aimed at local governments, institutions of the labour market, non-governmental organisations, entrepreneurs, job and training centres, as well as representatives from the government, state agencies and ministries. A special lobbying strategy was designed to involve decision makers.

### **5. Results and impacts**

Regarding the job rotation mainstreaming strategy, the emphasis was put on the benefits for all parties (i.e. the unemployed, employees and employers), on the systematic approach which made all activities in fighting unemployment more effective and on the role of co-operation. The implementation of job rotation does not require any legal changes or changes of policies/strategies, but it does require the commitment of all stakeholders and the coordination of actions. The comprehensive manual describing the methodology in detail allowed easy implementation. Such activities supported by the promotional campaign made the elaborated tool (job rotation) fully available for every institution interested in using it. Additionally, the organisations which were part of the Partnership established profitable co-operation on local (new local partnerships were created) and trans-regional level (co-operation between branch organisations and self-governments).

Apart from a promotional and information campaign, the professional qualifications validation model focused on political lobbying to try to reach decision makers in the business and education sectors. The DP elaborated comprehensive 'bottom-up' propositions for legislative changes which were necessary to introduce the model into the education system. That proposition, together with the description of the validation methodology and necessary documentation were presented to representatives of the Ministry of Education and other influential institutions. In effect, the result is now being used in elaborating the National Qualifications Framework in Poland.

An important result was also the experience gained by all institutions participating in the project and the profound and long lasting impact of e.g.:

- creating the partnership (including the proper match of partners/stakeholders);
- the comprehensive approach to the problems which should be addressed (including formulating of objectives and activities, as well as the sustainability of results which require detail planning of e.g. dissemination activities).
- The implementation of the project under EQUAL influenced significantly the way of implementing projects in general which can be observed in the new programming period.

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## Thematic Field 4G: FORWARD! Family and Work Reconciliation Development, DP code: EQ/2004/1130-23

### 1. Title of the project

FORWARD! Family and Work Reconciliation Development

### 2. Description of the project

#### 2.1 Justification for the selection of the particular innovation

The idea of the innovation came from the Women's Information Centre and Vilnius Municipal Boarding House for Mother and Child since these are two organizations that work closely with women and for women, especially women at risk of difficulties in the family. These organisations had good prior knowledge of the kind of problems women experience and one of them was that kindergartens' working hours were not aligned with the working hours of most service companies (for example, supermarkets are open until 10 p.m. or 12 a.m. while kindergartens close at 6 or 7 p.m. and in country communities even earlier, at 4 p.m.). This problem was aggravated by the lack of transportation between the capital city and the adjacent settlements. During the second stage of the project it was discovered that the primary reason for the unemployment of many women was that they could not leave their children to be looked after anywhere. But problems with the reconciliation of work and family life were not limited to the lack of kindergartens and the poor alignment of their working hours. Families suffered a number of other complex problems and needed professional support. Thus the DP proposed (a) prolonging working hours of kindergartens, and (b) providing a complex set of support for families – psychologists and social workers working with families on relations between parents and children.

#### 2.2. Objective and purpose of the innovation

The purpose of the innovation was to prolong the working hours of kindergartens until 10 p.m. in the city, and for the country communities to have a night shift in the kindergarten thus creating conditions for the target group to enter the labour market. In addition, the complex family support was aimed at helping to solve greater social problems regarding family and work.

#### 2.3. Description of the innovation

The needs of the target groups were not identified by asking parents with children in the kindergartens before submitting an application - at that time the demand for such innovations was known because of constant work with this group. During the first stage the parents of potentially includable kindergartens were surveyed on issues of whether special night shifts were necessary, and what kind of problems they were experiencing with the working hours. The working hours were subsequently set according to the results of this survey. There was one partner kindergarten from the beginning; the others became partners after the demand had been established. Naturally, parents who expressed the desire to join these special groups of longer hours were selected according to their income (wealthier ones could afford a nanny). Proof that their working hours extended beyond the kindergartens' working hours was required.

There was no linkage with national, regional or sectoral strategies during the creation of the project. However, the result of this thematic network was the creation of family and work reconciliation models that were included into the Human Resource Development Operational Programme for 2007 at the national level.

The Development Partnership started from two initiators (The Centre and the Boarding House) and later partners were added according to the needs of the project. Since the project was concerned with kindergartens, the support of their owner – Vilnius Municipal Administration - was needed. Research assistance to assess the effectiveness of the innovation was requested from Vilnius University. Later on, the Social Workers Training Centre (operating under the Lithuanian labour marker training authority), trade unions and other kindergartens joined in. The DP was

formed according to what every partner could do best. During the first stage, responsibility, accountability and communication among partners and the required work was clearly determined, which later led to an efficient administration of the whole project.

The DP had two transnational partners: Improving childcare DP (Luxembourg, Belgium, Italy, Germany) and Countries for Equality (Portugal, France, Italy). All foreign partners contributed interesting experiences. However, the first one (Improving childcare) was more useful in terms of final products (the CD, the book, the internet page were created with their support). There was no final product from the second DP and the overall failure is attributed mainly to the language barrier (French).

The initially formulated objectives were changed minimally and stayed the same during the second stage.

#### **2.4. Beneficiaries**

The direct beneficiaries were families with children. Indirect beneficiaries were kindergartens and society at large.

#### **2.5. Project main results**

The model of family and work reconciliation has been created and incorporated into the Programme Complement of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme for 2007-2013. If it were not for the economic crisis, this model would have been supported more. Nevertheless, some impacts remain such as the recommendation that children under 12 cannot be left unsupervised. Groups with prolonged working hours in kindergartens also still exist – every year the need for such a service is surveyed; kindergartens also still have psychologists and the social workers.

#### **2.6. Expected impact**

There was an increase in the number of families that could reconcile family and work obligations. Approximately nine people found a job; others changed jobs to a better one with a higher salary due to the change in working hours.

#### **2.7. Community Added Value**

It is difficult to assess whether the innovation would have been introduced if it were not for the EQUAL CIP. The demand for the innovation might have spurred the changes or perhaps private kindergartens would have broached the problem. However, in the short to medium term, the innovation of complex family help would not have been created without the project. The EQUAL programme was particularly conducive to the development and testing of new ideas, while other programmes (including those funded by the ESF) are inherently risk-averse and tend to punish risky policy ideas. There were no other factors that influenced the decision to launch the project and no key external events during the genesis of the project.

### **3. Implementation of the project**

#### **3.1. Project/innovation design and planning**

The idea of the project/innovation came from the Women's Information Centre and Vilnius Municipal Boarding House for Mother and Child.

The project is based on a specific needs assessment since at first the Boarding House for Mother and Child defined the problem from its experience with the target group, later on there were meetings with working parents (in supermarkets, for example), and after that came the coordination with the kindergartens.

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### 3.2. Management, monitoring and evaluation system

The system of project management, monitoring and assessment was set up during the first stage. The managing partner of the DP was the Women's Information Centre; other partners were given clear spheres of responsibility. During the preparation of the project there were frequent meetings and discussions, after that the number of meetings decreased, but they were still held at least once a month. There was also a researcher in charge of monitoring and assessment, who conducted surveys and used other research methods. The findings were presented during the meetings, but all partners received a confidential report on their work, deficiencies and spheres to be improved.

### 3.3. Governance: partnership and leadership

The composition of the partnership was as follows:

1. Vilnius Municipal Boarding House for Mother and Child;
2. Women's Information Centre;
3. Vilnius City Municipal Administration;
4. Social Workers' Training Centre under the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority;
5. Vilnius University;
6. Vilnius Municipal Kindergarten "Kurpaite";
7. Vilnius Municipal Kindergarten "Mazylis";
8. Vilnius Region Municipal Kindergarten "Peledziukas";
9. Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation.

The composition of the partnership enabled the project to include those who shape both policy and practice. The partners were included on the basis of what was needed for the project and which organisation could achieve this in the best way. There was no clear single leader in the partnership, all the organisations were active and contributed their share. The partnership evolved on the basis of training for partners. There were no internal conflicts.

### 3.4. Innovative elements and novel approaches to implementation

Many partners knew each other before the project, e.g. the Women's Information Centre had co-operated with the Boarding House for Mother and Child. The two organisations also had a long experience of co-operating with kindergartens. Some contacts had been made with the trade unions and the Social Workers Training Centre in the field of giving lectures on gender equality. New partnerships were created based on the needs which arose.

The design, planning and management of the new project did not include practices different from common practice since all the management was based on previous experience with projects. It was only novel in terms of the number of partners.

There were new methods used to communicate and disseminate the project's ongoing work and results: firstly a short film of about 25 minutes was made for the general public, and then during the second stage there was a 30 seconds clip broadcasted by the national television and also a cycle of radio programmes.

## 4. Mainstreaming

There are no elements yet that have been taken up into the legislative/policy environment, but the results and elements were presented in the Tripartite Council (including Government, trade unions and employers' representatives) and they were met with a positive attitude. There were proposals for equalising the terms of unpaid vacations and amending corporate income tax legislation to which members of Parliament have in principle agreed to. However, the economic crisis represented a huge setback to implementation.

The following tools were used to support/promote mainstreaming: participation in meetings in the Tripartite Council, inviting members of Parliament to every organised event, constant presentation of results and progress of the project. Unfortunately, neither the proposed legislative amendments, nor the complex family support model were implemented. However, this is a continuing process and the recommendation to use the family and work reconciliation model was included in the recommendation inventory, but only with regard to prolonging working hours, not the whole complex offer of support.

Even though it is difficult to predict what would have happened without EQUAL and the DP, the EQUAL support gave a strong push in the direction of solving relevant problems. EQUAL not only helped to push for the necessary solutions, but also made them more visible to the wider public and the policy makers.

## 5. Results and impacts

The main results were the publication of information on the project and its methodology as well as instructions to the kindergartens on how to adopt the model; the publication of information material on solving certain social problems (like family violence or unemployment); and the translation of transnational partners' material on how to include fathers into childcare.

All immediate objectives of the DP were achieved. Moreover, more publications were published than planned, childcare services were planned to be provided to 60 families, but they were in fact provided to 78 families.

Some problems of violence in the families of the target group were solved because they got divorced. Some women now have the possibility to work. When training was organised (such as computer proficiency training) there was a requirement to know Lithuanian which provided an incentive for some citizens to learn the language, thus also increasing their chances in the labour market. Some people changed their jobs to better ones. The survey indicated that there was also a qualitative impact – after consulting psychologists and social workers, parents started using different methods of punishment and incentives, therefore relations between parents and children have changed for the better.

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## Thematic Field 4H: POP UP GEM (AT-5-18/212)

### 1. Title of the case study

Policy and Public Service Push Gender Mainstreaming - POP UP GEM

### 2. Project/innovation description

#### 2.1. Justification for the selection of the particular innovation

Based on a thorough analysis of the status of gender equality on the labour market and the experience of the development partnership JUST GEM from the first application round, POP UP GEM had three starting points: First, the barriers women face on the labour market are complex in nature. Second, gender relations on the labour market are established and maintained through social, political and organisational structures. Third, changes with regard to gender mainstreaming are possible only through a comprehensive approach which includes actors from labour market policy and regional policy as well as companies. In JUST GEM the participating employment organisations learned basics about the implementation of gender mainstreaming (e.g. planning instruments, appropriate products, relevant structural changes, targeted policy interventions).

POP UP GEM aimed not only at contributing to the sustainability of the results of this predecessor Development Partnership, it went a major step further and developed innovative products for the implementation of gender equality on the labour market (see 2.3). In doing so, the target groups from the first project took on the role of project partners whilst also remaining the target groups for specific actions. An additional new target group were the managers and HR managers of companies. In order to address the complexity of gender mainstreaming an innovative integrated approach was taken which comprised and brought together actors from the public administration at different levels and from the private sector.

#### 2.2. Overall objective and purpose: What was the objective and purpose of the innovation?

The overall objective and purpose of the innovation was to contribute to gender equality on the labour market, to combat gender discrimination, to reduce gender gaps and to improve access to the labour market for women in the province of Styria. The specific objectives were the anchoring of gender mainstreaming at strategic and company level in Styria, the strengthening and deepening of gender mainstreaming in policy fields relevant for employment, capacity building for more gender equality and the steering and implementation of gender mainstreaming in personnel policies at company level.

#### 2.3. Description of the innovation

Project activities were based on the regional and local policy strategy for gender mainstreaming. In 2002, the Styrian government decided to implement their gender mainstreaming strategy. The city of Graz took this decision in 2001. In 2004, the Austrian Council of Ministers set the objective to implement gender budgeting. Since 2007, its implementation is obligatory in administrations at national, regional and local levels, which set the need for the participating institutions to learn about details of implementation possibilities. Shortcomings were identified and addressed in development strategies at the Land and the local level as well as in spatial planning more generally. The thorough knowledge about the status of gender mainstreaming implementation from the partners allowed the formulation of well elaborated objectives from the very beginning. The transnational cooperation had the functions of broadening the horizon of the participating partners and learning from others about the implementation of gender mainstreaming, especially in companies.

Based on the results and experience with a predecessor project (see 3.1), innovative activities included the development of tools for the implementation (data coaching, manual, monitoring methods and gender budgeting) and the development and implementation of a series of workshops and seminars. More than 400 persons participated in training activities and more than



1,200 persons used the counselling offered. Among them were the public administrations, politicians and specific project teams of the two piloting cities Graz and Kapfenberg, staff of the alliance of the Austrian trade union<sup>58</sup>. Workshops for spatial planners and architects were organised. In four companies checks of the gender mainstreaming status were applied and measures for the improvement of work places were developed and piloted.

#### 2.4. Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries were actors influencing the regional labour market policy and the labour market, namely:

- officials developing policy and funding programmes related to employment policies, higher officials in the public administration, politicians
- Managers and staff of the Public Employment Service
- human resources managers and entrepreneurs, managers of public and private organisations/institutions
- work councils and trade unions
- experts involved in spatial planning in Styria and Carinthia

Indirect beneficiaries were

- the (potential) staff of the public administration in the cities of Graz and Kapfenberg, their citizens as users of their services;
- the clients of the Public Employment Service;
- the employees of the involved companies and their families, the clients of the involved companies;
- the employees of the involved trade union and their clients, the clients of the work councils, i.e. the staff they represent
- citizens of Graz and Kapfenberg

#### 2.5. Community value added

The concentrated learning processes and the implementation of manifold gender mainstreaming measures would not have been possible without EQUAL. The only exception is the Public Employment Service, which had already implemented gender mainstreaming measures and for which this project was a possibility for further learning and experimentation. At the stage of project preparation national and regional strategies were already designed and it was clear that gender budgeting will soon become obligatory for the public administration. However, a lack of understanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming and of know-how about the implementation possibilities made public administrations reluctant to take the initiative for a thorough preparation. The situation was different in companies, but the lack of understanding of what gender mainstreaming is was also strong. In this context they were not prepared to finance something which was not really familiar to them. Beyond this the prices of the offered seminars, workshops, counselling and tools were not market-driven and could be used as threshold activities. Key events during the genesis of the project and one closure event supported mainstreaming. In the preparatory phase, all potential partners were invited to an event which could successfully communicate the commitment which is needed for a successful implementation. At the kick-off meeting, a strong focus was laid on the activation of the strategic partners. At the end of the project, a peer review took place with around 150 participants from all over Europe with workshops, presentations and discussion.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB).

<sup>59</sup> This peer review was financed by CoP (Community of Practice) Gender Mainstreaming.

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The added value of POP UP GEM is that it could address these fundamental and clearly identified deficiencies and at the same time initiate change processes. According to the project coordinator these particular circumstances and the knowledge from the previous project were decisive for the added value which was reached. From the point of view of the evaluator, it is remarkable how well this project could utilise EQUAL funds in a time span with strong concrete need for innovative implementation know-how. The evaluator identifies the added value mainly in taking the initiative and boosting the thorough understanding of gender mainstreaming in general and its implementation in a network of organisations from different sectors specifically.

### **3. Implementation, preferably in a chronological perspective**

#### **3.1. Project/innovation design and planning**

The project and its innovations was designed and planned on the basis of the experience made in the predecessor project (see 2.1). The initiative was taken by the project coordinator, but the design was developed in very close cooperation with all partners. This secured the integration of the specific needs of the target groups from the very beginning. The need for this innovation was a result of JUST GEM which identified four major deficiencies: First, the actual possibilities to use data were limited. There was a need for a systematic approach to data analysis and for the development of planning competencies for funds and support programmes in employment organisations. Second, inequality between men and women was frequently not considered in all employment policy fields although these have relevant impacts. Therefore, POP UP GEM set up a partnership structure with the public administrations of two cities, the Public Employment Service and institutions with specific expertise as operative partners, who could define and implement relevant actions directly in their organisations. In the steering group, social partners, a representative of the Land government and further specific expertise were included. Third, more organisations were included in comparison to the predecessor project because there was a need to broaden the knowledge about gender mainstreaming and the initiation of changes toward more equality. Fourth, companies were included as a new target group and gave the partnership the possibility to pilot the developed products. The broad network allowed the implementation of specific mainstreaming activities and the network management had a strong focus on the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the organisations of the involved partners.

#### **3.2. Management, monitoring and evaluation system**

The project was managed and coordinated by a management team led by an experienced network manager who had coordinated the predecessor project. The team consisted of three non-profit organisations with long-standing expertise in the field of gender equality and mainstreaming. The management tasks were defined in a concept paper at the beginning, which allowed the monitoring of management activities. According to the coordinator, this specific approach to network management, which focuses both on coordination tasks and the support of networking, was important for the success. The coherence of a network is secured by the common aim and the coordinator has the task to make this and the consequences clear, which means the implication of gender mainstreaming measures also in the partner organisations. This approach implied that the representatives were (made) aware of their task. POP UP GEM was a huge partnership. This and the cooperative exchange among partners were decisive factors for the results and changes which were reached. The common cooperation experience among persons from different institutions and organisations who could not cooperate outside EQUAL in this way and for a period of two years deepened the participants' understanding of the complexity of gender mainstreaming and the complex approach which is needed.<sup>60</sup>

Monitoring activities and internal assessments of the progress were undertaken in regular team meetings. A major challenge were the formal requirements for reporting and accounting which needed a lot of resources. Other major issues did not arise during the implementation. The

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<sup>60</sup> Interview with coordinator of the Development Partnership.

implementation of a few tools was adapted to the actual needs of the participants. For instance, the research about monitoring of gender mainstreaming focused in the end very much on gender budgeting because this got higher priority in the context of the new regulation.

### 3.3. Governance: partnership and leadership

The partnership was composed of 23 partners with different roles. A 'core' of four institutions formed the most active group and comprised the coordination of the development partnership, the financial management, and specific expertise. The latter role was also taken over by another two institutions. Ten organisations comprised the target groups, among them four companies and the piloting cities Graz and Kapfenberg. Seven organisations were members of a broadly assembled steering group (mainly chambers, the regional employment pact, regional development agencies).

Except for the companies, these partners cooperated already in the predecessor project JUST GEM and had a clear interest in being involved in POP UP GEM on the basis of their previous positive experiences. Especially the 'core group' and the partners representing the target groups had a clearly developed interest, namely the further capacity building and product development in the field of gender mainstreaming. Less clear was the motivation of some of the social partners in the steering group. This could be due to their obligatory participation in Austria. Both the dynamics of the partnership and the leadership developed in a very organised way and no major obstacles were faced. This might have to do also with the fact that the target groups were represented mostly by leaders and higher officials.<sup>61</sup>

### 3.4. Innovative elements and novel approaches to implementation

Whereas most partners collaborated already in the predecessor project, POP UP GEM integrated companies for the purpose of piloting for the first time. Specific gender mainstreaming measures were developed in cooperation with these companies and implemented. The size of the four partner companies ranged from one large one with around 600 workers, two medium-sized companies and one small one with eleven employees.

Whereas no specifically new planning and management methods were applied, some successful dissemination tools were innovative. These were the film 'Fairplay' which presents and explains an approach to gender mainstreaming in six steps supported by practical examples from all partners. In cooperation with artists, a calendar with statements of politicians and the Public Employment Service about their planned activities to reach specific aims was designed. An exhibition which introduced gender mainstreaming in a practical and sensual way was organised to inform the general public.

## 4. Mainstreaming

In 2007, the public administration at the Land level in Styria took on board up the know-how and tools of POP UP GEM and started the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the administration in all programmes and measures. This project is financed from regional public funds and will be supported by external experts until 2010.

The city of Graz has changed administrative structures and planning processes in a sustainable way. A series of tools (e.g. funding instruments) have undergone already a gender check and further checks were planned at the end of the Development Partnership. Gender mainstreaming was integrated in the monitoring system ('Balanced Scorecards') and is checked also by the auditing authority of the city. The municipality of Kapfenberg has integrated gender mainstreaming in all their activities and development plans (e.g. in the land development plan). A gender budgeting process was initiated by the expertise of POP UP GEM the results of which

<sup>61</sup> Interview with coordinator of the development partnership.

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were taken into account in the upcoming budget. Sustainable results were also found in the companies with piloting activities. (see 5.)

A variety of tools was used to support and promote mainstreaming. Beyond general information material for the public, workshops designed for the target groups were implemented, a website and a film were developed. Of highest importance were the ongoing work with the press and the coordination meetings with the gender mainstreaming agents from the Regional Employment Pacts. Due to the good preparation of the development partnership no major issues arose during the implementation. POP UP GEM was successful with mainstreaming and sustainability. This success has to be seen in the context of the reality: Mainstreaming needs know-how, initiative and time to be implemented.<sup>62</sup> The project showed that capacity building and a clear understanding of gender mainstreaming are crucial for the achievement of results.

## 5. Results and impacts

The results were achieved through counselling and training on gender mainstreaming topics both at the level of leaders and managers from the public and private sectors and at the level of company structures. Piloting activities in four companies led – among others - to thorough revisions of the reporting systems and treatment of data, awareness raising and capacity building and training at management level and the integration of the piloted tools in the regular company policies (recruiting, marketing, controlling, internal communication etc). These were developed in accordance with the specific needs of the respective company. Among the specific tools were an assessment centre for leadership positions which takes into account gender equality, checks of websites, intranets and template management according to gender criteria and the integration of gender mainstreaming in process management tools and quality assurance systems. An unexpected result was the foundation of a nursery school for toddlers up to three years on the initiative of the participating technology centre.

A series of changes with regard to gender equality were implemented in the participating institutions and organisations. Strategies, products and services were checked and adapted or new ones introduced. Of specific importance are the structural – and thus sustainable – changes in Graz and Kapfenberg. (see 4.) In the alliance of trade unions in Styria a gender mainstreaming agent was established. In a social support association which is among others the operator of hospitals the higher awareness about gender mainstreaming led to checks of a series of services such as care services and housing offers for older people. Gender equality was integrated in the guidelines for spatial planning and development plans in Kapfenberg and Graz.

The specific objectives (see 2.2) were achieved with a comprehensive approach. Some partners' institutions initiated further activities with their own budget which went partly far beyond the objectives of the Development Partnership. One example is the initiative at the Land level to implement gender mainstreaming in the administration over the next three years. The starting point for this initiative was the obligation to introduce gender budgeting. (see 4.) Another example are the manifold activities of the city of Graz, which was awarded the European Public Sector Award in November 2009. In 2008, Graz already won the Austrian Public Administration Award.

POP UP GEM has changed a lot for the target groups, which were mainly leaders and managers. Participating administrative institutions and companies could build up capacities and skills. Through the piloting activities a series of structures was changed and a variety of tools was implemented in the regular procedures. The Public Employment Service applied further know-how and the companies adapted parts of their tools and structures. In the medium-term, the know-how and experience gained through POP UP GEM will spread further to the administration and other companies. Important indications for this are that the Austrian city

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with coordinator of the development partnership.

league has put gender mainstreaming on the agenda and the multiplier activities of the participating companies. The city of Graz has introduced a new regulation according to which each political party has to provide a gender agent with twelve days of training and the Land has introduced a new panel with gender agents at the highest level to which the regional parliament is due to report about gender mainstreaming activities. From the standpoint of the target groups, the main influential factor for the successful implementation and widespread impacts was the capacity building which allowed the thorough understanding of gender mainstreaming as an integrated concept which optimises the existing strategies and products. Although at the level of companies there is still a long way to go the correct understanding of gender mainstreaming was the starting point of the success.<sup>63</sup>

From the view of the evaluator, the analysed results and impacts are sustained to a large degree. In the case of gender budgeting activities it is difficult to attribute the initiative to POP UP GEM because of the new regulation. However, the other activities had a powerful impact on capacity building and the sustainable introduction of gender mainstreaming measures. Important for the success was also the network management. The project took place at the right time in the right place.

## 6. Information sources

In this section all information sources are listed. In cases of personal judgement, these are mentioned explicitly in footnotes in the text.

Interview with DP coordinator on 30 November 2009, Heide Cortolezis, NOWA – Netzwerk für Berufsausbildung, [heide.cortolezis@nowa.at](mailto:heide.cortolezis@nowa.at), Tel. +43-316-482600

Information on DP POP UP GEM from the EQUAL Common Database as of 16 November 2009

Application form of the DP POP UP GEM

Final Report of the DP POP UP GEM

### Websites

Website for planning tool: [www.gendermainstreaming-planungstool.at](http://www.gendermainstreaming-planungstool.at)

Website with tools for download: [www.peripherie.ac.at](http://www.peripherie.ac.at)

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with coordinator of the development partnership.

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## Thematic Field 5.I: ANDRASI-ISTOS (GR-200906201006)

### 1. Title of the case study

Sustainable, protective and interconnected services towards asylum seekers - ANADRASI-ISTOS

### 2. Project/innovation description

#### 2.1. Justification for the selection of the particular innovation

The ANADRASI-ISTOS Development Partnership addressed an urgent need stemming from the increase in the number of asylum seekers. As an external border country of the EU, Greece is the entry port for many asylum seekers. In the first quarter of 2005, Greece was the only country to see a major increase of 177%. The real figure is much higher because only people who have been interviewed by the police and received a red card (a kind of proof of registration) are included. This dramatic increase, coupled with the difficulties that asylum seekers face getting a job (it takes 1-2 years due to administrative procedures to obtain a red card that allows them to work), has significant socio-economic consequences both for the recipient country (Greece) and for asylum seekers themselves. In addition, even when the right to work is finally obtained, they are further discriminated against, getting mainly short-term low profile jobs as most of them do not speak Greek and arrive without their diplomas and certificates of education and work experience. Even for those who were able to bring these documents, it is extremely difficult to get them validated. They are therefore characterised by a multiple disadvantage: their status as asylum seekers, delays in their social and labour market integration and no recognition of their real qualifications and competences.

The project originated as a response to this multi-faceted problem and culminated in the creation of an electronic network, connecting all actors who provide services to asylum seekers via a common online database, called ESTIA. This has been a major innovation in Greece where there was practically no coordinated action by relevant actors towards asylum seekers before. In addition to linking all relevant actors together through this database, ANADRASI-ISTOS has innovated by offering real solutions to the problems asylum seekers face since this database goes far beyond their mere registration. Through a comprehensive system of referrals, asylum seekers are accompanied and supported until their specific problem, need or request is resolved.

#### 2.2. Overall objective and purpose: What was the objective and purpose of the innovation?

The overall objective of the innovation was to create an integrated model of specialised interventions that would ensure a sustainable, protective and linkage fabric for asylum seekers from the moment they enter the country until the final decision by the Greek state on their application for asylum. The specific objectives were the building of trust amongst actors that work in the field of asylum seekers, the recognition of common objectives and goals, the complementarity of services provided by different actors towards a common target group and common acceptance of the individual priorities of asylum seekers. In this way, the innovative model produced by ANADRASI-ISTOS maximises the effectiveness of each actor in their field of specialisation for the benefit of the target group.

#### 2.3. Description of the innovation

The central innovation of the project is the online database ESTIA which offers an effective electronic tool through which a network of cooperation and coordination is created for the rational organisation of service provision to asylum seekers. For the first time in Greece, ESTIA provides a common interactive electronic network connecting actors who provide services to asylum seekers. With simple commands, they can refer asylum seekers to each other in order to give them effective specialised assistance. ESTIA is not just a database; it comprises a range of interlinked functions, namely, registration of asylum seekers' personal data and requests,



referrals to the relevant actors to address requests, advisory services and links to the labour market.

One particularly innovative element of ESTIA is the unique registration of asylum seekers. Personal information is only recorded once, electronically, by the first agency the asylum seeker goes to. The other agencies, linked to the database, can then access this information by simply entering the name of the asylum seeker or the number connected to their record. It is a very user-friendly tool, which does not allow the 'user', i.e. the person registering the data, to move on to the next section without filling in the required information.

The referral system is also innovative as it avoids double-registration and duplication in the provision of services and it not only registers the asylum seeker's request but also follows it up until it is resolved by the relevant actor. In this way, both target groups and actors benefit, since asylum seekers are spared the endless referrals of the past from one actor to another while service providers specialise and concentrate their resources on offering the service that corresponds both to the asylum seeker's request and to their competences (e.g. housing, legal advice, medical care, social or psychological support, job search, etc.). This is what makes ESTIA a 'one-stop-shop' for asylum seekers.

Furthermore, ESTIA offers an electronic matching of labour supply and demand and therefore promotes the employment of asylum seekers. When asylum seekers are registered they are asked for information on their language skills, past education and work experience (in any country), state of health and also about their job preferences. This information is then used by those agencies that help asylum seekers find employment. This is done by fully respecting the personal data protection rights through: adherence to the Data Protection Agency rules; selective viewing of personal data by the different actors so they only view what is absolutely necessary for them to take action in favour of the registered person; and obtaining written agreement from asylum seekers that the information they provide may be shared. Within the main ESTIA network, which links different actors such as legal experts, reception centres and the Red Cross to each other there is a smaller network of agencies specialising in employment. These agencies have made an agreement clearly setting out their roles in the network, including looking at different sources to find work opportunities, for instance searching in newspapers or on the Internet and contacting employers pro-actively. After contacting employers they put the work description and the employer's details in the database, which automatically matches the details of suitable asylum seekers to the job at hand and provides a list of candidates. The employer ultimately decides who to hire.

#### 2.4. Beneficiaries

Project beneficiaries comprise on one hand actors who provide services to asylum seekers and on the other asylum seekers themselves. For the former, the project offered a new way of providing services through coordination and specialisation. For the latter, ESTIA and its components reduced the burden of registering several times in different agencies without necessarily obtaining the required service.

#### 2.5. Community value added

The development of a common interactive and integrated tool that links relevant actors and asylum seekers would not have been possible without EQUAL. The impetus provided by the ISTOS coordinator (the National Youth Foundation) is unique and certainly not achievable without the EQUAL funding, since such organisations in Greece have limited resources to carry out projects on a similar scale.

Projects like this demonstrate the benefit of linking relevant actors who were previously unaware of the advantages of such coordination. These benefits constitute value added in terms of outputs, firstly by effective resource allocation; in the past, several agencies were approached and expected to provide the same service to asylum seekers, whereas now each agency



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concentrates on providing the service in which it specialises (e.g. legal advice) and leaves other services to other agencies. ESTIA makes this distinction possible since every user is aware at any time who is providing what and to whom. Secondly, ESTIA enables a faster resolution of asylum seekers' requests through referrals targeted to the most appropriate agency and follow-up. In this way, a speedy and high quality response to asylum seekers' problems is achieved, which constitutes a major change from the past where asylum seekers would endure endless referrals and duplication of services (there were cases of different agencies offering the same service to the same asylum seeker without knowing anything about what each other was doing). In summary, the project has confirmed in practice the value added of the partnership principle of EQUAL.

Furthermore, the value added of ANADRASI-ISTOS is that it could address fundamental and clearly identified deficiencies in the provision of services to asylum seekers and at the same time initiate change processes. According to the project coordinator, the project has not only boosted the quality and speed of services provided to asylum seekers but has also intervened in the financing processes of the Greek Manpower Organisation so it now offers subsidies to asylum seekers that were previously only targeted at the unemployed and immigrants.

Finally, ANADRASI-ISTOS has managed to mobilise actors who participated in the project at their own cost. This was the case of 'Doctors Without Frontiers' who offered medical and socio-psychological support in Athens, the 'Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims' which offered socio-psychological support in Thessaloniki and the Ministry of Public Order which provided equipment and interpretation services.

### **3. Implementation, preferably in a chronological perspective**

#### **3.1. Project/innovation design and planning**

The project was designed and planned as a response to the sudden and dramatic increase in the number of asylum seekers which, coupled with the uncoordinated approach to addressing their problems, entailed severe social consequences for both the newcomers and for Greece as the recipient country.

ANADRASI-ISTOS was initially designed as two separate projects: ANADRASI coordinated by the Greek Red Cross and aimed at the rehabilitation of reception centres and the provision of quality support services to asylum seekers within and outside reception centres; ISTOS coordinated by the National Youth Foundation, aimed at linking actors dealing with asylum seekers through a common interactive database. Given that both projects were targeted at asylum seekers and included complementary approaches and actions, a decision was made to merge the efforts, know-how and experience of partners in the two projects in order to address the target group more effectively. Hence the ANADRASI-ISTOS Development Partnership was born.

The project is centred on the interactive common database ESTIA. It was supported by the following actions:

- design and development of the database (framework, specifications, approval by the Data Protection Agency, piloting);
- organisation of four working groups for different project aspects, namely, dissemination towards the target group and relevant actors dealing with them, lobbying of NGOs towards Ministries, addressing mass arrivals of asylum seekers and transnational cooperation;
- advisory and support services, more specifically socio-psychological and medical support offered by NGOs, interpretation services offered by the Ministry of Public Order, legal advice offered by specialised legal agencies and information services offered by a newly

created information centre run by the target group itself (association of asylum seekers) in cooperation with the Social Work Foundation;

- small infrastructure works at reception centres for asylum seekers;
- training of asylum seekers: on one hand, on-the-job training by encouraging entrepreneurs to employ them on a pilot basis (entrepreneurs subsidised for one month) and, following this, with a potential permanent job offer; and, on the other hand, training focusing on Greek language skills via learning computer skills. According to the project coordinator from the National Youth Foundation, contacts with entrepreneurs were particularly innovative as they supported flexible employment of asylum seekers through an innovative leaflet called “Give a Chance” addressed to employers and aiming to increase their awareness of this target group and the role they themselves could play in their integration;
- employment promotion of asylum seekers through the intervention of intermediaries who acted like ‘mentors’ for asylum seekers and guided them to the ‘Network of Offices for Promotion to the Labour Market’. This network was composed of Development Partnership partners, comprising the National Youth Foundation, NGOs, a public development agency, an employers’ organisation and a social work institute.

### 3.2. Management, monitoring and evaluation system

The overall management and coordination of the project rested with the Greek Red Cross, while the National Youth Foundation was, and continues to be after the completion of EQUAL, the manager of the ESTIA database.

The design, development and use of the database has been effectively managed and monitored throughout the project. ANADRASI-ISTOS has been characterised by the strong motivation of the ESTIA coordinator whose enthusiasm and dynamism have greatly contributed to promote the use of the database by all partners connected to it even after the EQUAL programme was over. A further achievement as a result of effective monitoring has been the expansion of the network of actors connected to the database outside the Development Partnership.

Monitoring activities and internal assessments of progress were undertaken in regular team meetings. A major challenge was the formal requirements for reporting and accounting which needed a lot of resources and the complexity of dealing with a large partnership comprising practically two joint coordinators (the Greek Red Cross and the National Youth Foundation).

The Greek Red Cross and the National Youth Foundation were responsible for the internal evaluation of each of the programme components (upgrading of reception centres and services of ANADRASIS and development of the interactive database ESTIA of ISTOS).

### 3.3. Governance: partnership and leadership

The partnership was composed of 29 partners with different roles. Each project action comprised its group of implementing partners, with a focal group and a participating partners group which consisted of actors outside the Development Partnership. Every partner was assigned specific responsibilities within each project action. The capacity of ANADRASI-ISTOS to mobilise and involve actors outside the formal EQUAL partnership is a major achievement and value added of the project, because it has brought together a range of different agents who all address the same target group.

The National Youth Foundation as coordinator of ESTIA demonstrated effective leadership in carrying out key functions of training the users of the database, ensuring a smooth operation of the online system and its components, raising awareness and mobilising more actors, therefore constantly stimulating the connection of more and more relevant organisations to this online database. The initial target to involve around 10 organisations in the ESTIA network was almost tripled: there are currently 27 actors connected via the online system with several joining at their

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own initiative. Particularly active have been the NGOs working with asylum seekers in Greece, a number of municipalities (especially those located in entry points of the country), trade unions and vocational training institutes. These actors have signed a 'code of conduct', establishing the rules of cooperation of the network.

ESTIA makes it very easy to refer asylum seekers to other agencies when needed. The system provides a unique referral function, allowing problems to be identified and forwarded to the relevant organisation by a simple 'click'. Network partners have agreed the 'click' should always be followed by a phone call to avoid queries being missed. The system records response times to encourage prompt action. The person who referred the case can follow it by checking the subsequent entries and comments in the database. In this way, ESTIA makes it possible for each actor to know at any point in time who has registered an asylum seeker, who is dealing with his/her request and whether that asylum seeker eventually resolves his/her issue or finds a job.

According to the National Youth Foundation, the key success factor of ESTIA has been the cooperation of all relevant actors within and outside the Development Partnership. They comprised prominent partners such as Doctors Without Frontiers, the Social Work Foundation, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Greek Council for Refugees as well as several NGOs specialising in housing, health, legal, socio-psychological and employment issues for asylum seekers, rehabilitation centres, local and regional public authorities, Ministries and social partners. Regional and local authorities are connected to the database in the entry points of asylum seekers (islands, borders). The variety and specialisation of the connected partners enables the timely and effective response to the asylum seekers' needs and problems.

### **3.4. Innovative elements and novel approaches to implementation**

The most innovative element of implementation was the cooperation of a large number of actors who address a common target group. Whereas no specifically new planning and management methods were applied, some successful awareness raising tools were innovative. These include the "Give a Chance" campaign which comprised a leaflet and contacts with entrepreneurs. The central message of the campaign was "use the chance to try their skills and give them a chance to prove that they are worth it". With this approach, employers were given information about asylum seekers (their conditions, needs and prospects in the country) and were offered an EQUAL subsidy for employing asylum seekers for up to one month in order to meet them and try out their skills. After expiry of this period, employers were free to either dismiss the person from his/her position or employ them on a permanent basis. Another innovation was that coordination of this action was carried out by distinct actors such as a municipal enterprise, the National Youth Foundation, Doctors Without Frontiers, the Social Work Foundation, the Association of Northern Greece Exporters and the National Youth Foundation regional branch in Crete.

### **4. Mainstreaming**

ESTIA has provided more benefits than the partners had originally envisaged. On one hand, it provides an impressive range of statistical information. Data on entry, registration, unemployment, housing and health issues has identified weaknesses in the asylum application system that can be improved. On the other hand, it improves services to asylum seekers through networking and facilitates the speedy and quality resolution of their problems. By extending to 27 actors dealing with asylum seekers, ESTIA is a good example of horizontal mainstreaming. Dissemination actions like seminars, workshops and awareness raising publications produced by several partners of the Development Partnership have contributed to increase visibility of the project and its content and supported mainstreaming.

ESTIA has also proved to have a high mainstreaming potential since it can be constantly expanded to include more actors who offer services to asylum seekers. It can also potentially be

adapted and used for the monitoring of other target groups such as immigrants or refugees. It has a big potential for offering the same services to different target groups or different services to the same target group.

Six years after it started (December 2003), ESTIA is nowadays a sustainable network comprising almost 90% of NGOs in Athens, Thessaloniki and Crete as well as local and regional authorities, one Ministry, social partners and the UNHCR. The connection of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the UNHCR are particularly relevant for vertical mainstreaming. UNHCR already uses the information when they check the reception centres for availability and compares the statistics with those they receive from the Ministry of Health. The involvement of the Ministry of Health is of special importance given the barriers to participation of Ministries as a result of high bureaucracy that limits their capacity to absorb funds.

After the completion of EQUAL, the National Youth Foundation continues to train new users of the online database who then use it in their regular work. The next stage will be to connect the police in order to make ESTIA an even more powerful instrument for registering asylum seekers and addressing their needs in an even more coordinated manner.

With its specific focus on employment, and its success in getting a very difficult disadvantaged group into the labour market, the database approach of ESTIA was also included as a good practice in Greece's National Action Plan for Employment.

## 5. Results and impacts

Results can be distinguished in relation to asylum seekers and in relation to agencies/organisations dealing with them. For asylum seekers the main results concern their faster integration into Greek society and labour market. Illustrative data demonstrates that there have been 4,588 requests and referrals since December 2003 (e.g. housing, legal, medical, social support or job search requests), there were 117 interventions of intermediaries to support 82 asylum seekers in their employment search, while 49% of asylum seekers' requests were resolved and another 41% were under examination at the time of writing (only 3% of requests were not resolved).

Agencies and organisations dealing with asylum seekers have benefited from a common electronic tool where all relevant data on each asylum seeker is stored, a coordinated network of referrals that reduces duplication and achieves cost savings through the specialisation of services, the capacity to follow-up and monitor the services provided to asylum seekers by other agencies, the effective matching of labour supply and demand and the use of statistical information about asylum seekers' profiles and needs that can help improve the services each organisation offers.

ESTIA and its components (links to different actors that can help asylum seekers obtain medical, legal or socio-psychological help or employment) can bring significant changes to the situation of this target group. Successful cases provide examples of the impact this online interactive system can have on the lives of asylum seekers through social and labour market integration. It is also expected to bring an impact in terms of changing the mentalities of employers and promoting diversity and inclusiveness at work.

Finally, the use of ESTIA by public sector actors, especially at central government level (at this stage by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare) can have an impact on policy making by drawing on the statistical information in order to design policies and adopt measures to address the issue of asylum seekers in Greece.

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## 6. Information sources

In this section all information sources are listed.

- Interview with DP coordinator on 5 and 6 November 2009, Lora Pappa, EIN- National Youth Foundation and Mary Siganou (EIN), Tel. +30-210-7299972
- Information on DP ANADRASI-ISTOS from the EQUAL Common Database
- Various reports and presentations provided by the DP coordinator
- Application form of the DP ANADRASI-ISTOS
- Final Report of the DP ANADRASI-ISTOS
- Websites: Website of DP coordinator: [www.ein.gr](http://www.ein.gr) (includes access to the project)

## Annex 6: Glossary

<b>Actions*</b>	The stages in which EQUAL operates and allocates funding. Under Action 1 (preparatory phase), Development Partnerships (DPs) further develop their strategy and specify their main activities which take place in Action 2 (implementation phase). Action 3 covers dissemination, mainstreaming and thematic networking activity.
<b>Action 1*</b> <sup>64</sup>	Provision of funding for the preparatory phase lasting up to six months. It is intended to consolidate the partnership, to further elaborate its development and mainstreaming strategy, to agree on the national and transnational work. This phase will be concluded by a <a href="#">Development Partnership Agreement (DPA)</a> and a <a href="#">Transnational Co-operation Agreement (TCA)</a> which will precede the confirmation of the selection for <a href="#">Action 2</a> .
<b>Action 2*</b>	Provision for funding the main delivery phase of the work programme, nationally and transnationally, lasting 18 to 36 months.
<b>Action 3*</b>	Provision of funding to support thematic networking, and to disseminate and mainstream good practice from Action 2 into appropriate policies, institutions and structures at local, regional, national and transnational levels.
<b>Community Added Value (CAV)</b>	We distinguish three dimensions of CAV: A first dimension is characterised by two alternative – but not mutually exclusive – patterns, according to which CAV is constituted either by an additional benefit for stakeholders, in particular for the target beneficiaries, accruing out of European interventions or as a fresh impetus for the political project of a unified Europe (e.g. via promotion of the ‘European Idea’, strengthening of social and economic cohesion, visibility of Europe for citizens, etc.) The second dimension is more operational, asking for measurement and requesting a measurement concept and a tool for discriminating according to usability and benefit of central interventions. In this kind of discourse the focus lies on additionality and net-effects, instead of counting gross-effects. In a third dimension the guiding question is whether CAV is a mere result of additional money (European added input) or if a qualitative aspect is dominant, resulting from the various specific and obligatory institutional and procedural provisions (general principles, Horizontal Priorities, check and control, controlling, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) introduced by the Commission e.g. in the frame of Structural Instruments implementation.
<b>Community Initiative (CI) *</b>	Community Initiatives are Structural Funds programmes to tackle common issues based on Commission Guidelines for applying common approaches, methodologies, principles and implementation arrangements. EQUAL is a CI.
<b>Community Initiative Programme (CIP) EQUAL*</b>	Chief Programming document which describes the principal strategy, main actions, financial allocations and commitments of a Member State to implement the CI EQUAL Before adoption by the Commission the document undergoes a negotiation process. There were 17 EQUAL OPs for the period 2000-04, given that Belgium and the UK present each 2 OPs. The total number as from the second round is 27 with the addition of the 10 new Member States.
<b>Development partnership agreement (DPA)*</b>	Document formalising a common strategy (context, objectives, work programme, etc.) which is adopted by all national partners within a DP. The agreement is established at the end of Action 1.
<b>Development partnership (DP)*</b>	Strategic partnership that implements EQUAL activities. EQUAL commits key players (public, semi-public or private organisations) in a geographical area or sector into Development Partnerships to develop and implement a common strategy and work programme designed to tackle issues of a particular theme and how these issues impact on a wide range of disadvantaged groups.
<b>Dissemination*</b>	It is the process of spreading results and lessons from the activities, through reports, events, papers and media.
<b>ECDB (EQUAL common Database)*</b>	European database containing information on all EQUAL DPs (rationale, objectives, activities etc.), their national and transnational partners (contact addresses etc.) which can be consulted via the Web.
<b>Empowerment*</b>	In the field of <a href="#">social inclusion</a> , process of mobilising resources and developing skills of people who are targeted for support with a view to partake actively in one's own future. In

<sup>64</sup> The definitions marked with an asterisk\* are quoted from the EQUAL homepage:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/equal/about/glossary-en\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/about/glossary-en_en.cfm). These may be subject to modifications.

	EQUAL this notion applies to all actors of the <a href="#">DP</a> by encouraging a balanced share of the power and participation between all. <a href="#">Empowerment</a> is one of the <a href="#">key principles</a> of EQUAL.
<b>ESF*</b>	The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the Structural Funds. It is the financial instrument of the European Union that aims to improve the employment situation in the EU by investing in people. EQUAL is an ESF Community initiative
<b>European employment strategy (EES)*</b>	Common European response to employment problems that spurs member States to coordinate their policies and to meet commonly agreed targets. It encourages exchange of information and joint discussions by all Member States, thus trying to find solutions or good practices which could help creating more and better jobs in every Member State. This strategy involves the annual adoption of guidelines and the preparation of National Action Plans for Employment (NAP Employment) for each Member State.
<b>Final beneficiaries*</b>	According to the regulations for the structural funds, these are the public or private organisations and enterprises responsible for the implementation of the activities. In the case of EQUAL it is the DP. (Not to be mistaken with those benefiting from the action, often referred to as “ultimate” beneficiaries).
<b>Gender mainstreaming*</b>	Systematic approach to address the causes of inequalities between women and men in our societies and identify appropriate strategies to tackle them.
<b>Impact</b>	We are looking for impacts in terms of whether EQUAL was able to trigger the development of potential innovations, and to support the transfer of these into the ‘state of the art’, rather than in terms of number of participants in measures. It is not so much the individual status change of target beneficiaries which is decisive for the success (positive impact) of EQUAL, but the impact on systems and on their capacity to foster human capital. Thus, the impact of EQUAL has to be found in the field of policy design, in the regulatory frame (e.g. definitions of state of the art), and in the sphere of organisational change of the involved partners.
<b>Innovation</b>	‘New and better’, i.e. it has not been done before in this area or sector and it brings about an improvement. We distinguish between goal, process and context-related innovation. Process oriented innovation covers the development of new approaches and methods and the improvement of existing ones; Goal-oriented innovation refers to the formulation of new objectives including the identification of new qualifications and the opening up of new areas of employment; Context oriented innovation, which relates to political and institutional structures and systems development.
<b>Mainstreaming</b>	For the purposes of this evaluation we are looking at mainstreaming both in itself and within the wider context of sustainability. We are also taking a more strict view of mainstreaming – i.e. as innovations which specifically influence or are taken up into policy and practice at the institutional political, regulatory or administrative levels. This specifically excludes dissemination.
<i>Vertical national<sup>65</sup> mainstreaming</i>	Transfer of lessons learnt and integration of all or part of results into policy and practice at the institutional, political, regulatory or administrative level. Here we are looking for clear evidence of take up at national level.
<i>Horizontal mainstreaming /take-up national</i>	Transferring lessons learnt to similar organisations at national or regional levels. The transfer can be specific (e.g. a particular tool) or broad (e.g. contributing to a change of practice). In this case, regional is understood in the national, rather than trans-national context.
<i>Horizontal mainstreaming /take-up transnational<sup>66</sup></i>	Transfer of lessons learnt and integration of all or part of results into policy and practice between Member States, social partners and the European Commission.
<i>Vertical transnational mainstreaming</i>	Where innovations/results influence the institutional, political or regulatory environment in other Member States or at European Commission level.

<sup>65</sup> ‘National’ here means within the Member State (i.e. could also be at regional level)



<b>Managing authorities*</b>	The public authority (mostly the Department of Employment) responsible at national level for administering EQUAL.
<b>Measure*</b>	Sub-category within a <a href="#">priority</a> that enables activities to be financed. These are mainly the <a href="#">thematic fields</a> .
<b>Monitoring Committee*</b>	Committee overseeing the implementation of the <a href="#">CIP</a> . It is established by the Member State and made up of a range of key stakeholders.
<b>Networking*</b>	Collective work that brings together <a href="#">DPs</a> as well as other key actors. It contributes to the identification and validation of outcomes and good practices and supports <a href="#">dissemination</a> and <a href="#">mainstreaming</a> .
<b>Partnership*</b>	Collaborative working is one of the <a href="#">key principles</a> . Bringing different actors (private, public and non-governmental organisations) to find integrated solutions to common labour market challenges. An EQUAL project was known as an EQUAL Development Partnership, DP for short.
<b>Priority</b>	The strategy adopted in a CIP comprises of a number of priorities to which objectives and financial resources are assigned to. These are Employability, Entrepreneurship, Adaptability, Equal opportunities for women and men, asylum seekers and technical assistance.
<b>Social inclusion (Strategic co-operation on)*</b>	Process launched at the Lisbon European Council in 2000 to strengthen the fight against poverty and exclusion. Through this each Member State sets out its National Action Plan defining priorities and objectives to enhance social inclusion (NAP inclusion).
<b>Thematic approach*</b>	EQUAL operates in <a href="#">thematic fields</a> defined within the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy (EES): Employability, Entrepreneurship, Adaptability and Equal Opportunities. In addition to these pillars, the programme supported a further theme of activities to help the socio-economic integration of asylum seekers. EQUAL differed from previous initiatives and programmes by its thematic approach to testing new ways of delivering policy priorities. The thematic approach explores new ways of tackling the problems common to different types of discrimination and inequality, rather than focusing on specific target groups.
<b>Thematic fields*</b>	EQUAL operates across nine themes, linked to the four pillars of European Employment Strategy as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access and return to the labour market</li> <li>2. Employability - Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market</li> <li>3. Setting up businesses</li> <li>4. <a href="#">Social economy</a></li> <li>5. Life long learning</li> <li>6. Adaptation to structural and economic change, especially ICT</li> <li>7. Reconcile family and professional life</li> <li>8. Reducing the gender gaps and supporting job desegregation</li> <li>9. Socio-economic integration of <a href="#">asylum seekers</a></li> </ol> Each DP addresses one theme of its choice
<b>Transnational co-operation agreement (TCA)*</b>	Document formalising the <a href="#">Transnational co-operation Partnership (TCP)</a> , established at the end of Action 1 between several <a href="#">DPs</a> from different Member States. It states the partners involved, work programme, planned activities, the indicative budget, role of the partners and details of the monitoring and evaluation arrangements
<b>Transnational co-operation partnership (TCP)*</b>	Grouping of at least two <a href="#">DPs</a> from different Member States to develop, test and assess joint transnational activities such as: training, studies, products, services, methods, exchange of trainees or trainers etc.
<b>Transnational cooperation*</b>	This is one of the <a href="#">key principles</a> of EQUAL. To take part in the programme, DPs must build a work programme with at least one DP funded in another Member State and get involved in thematic networks at European level. This transnational emphasis makes sure that lessons are learned across the Member States and examples of good practice are exchanged.
<b>Validation*</b>	A systematic and reproducible assessment by peers and experts of the innovative solution, in particular its relevance, its advantages over current practice, and its potential for transfer and scaling up.

<sup>66</sup> 'Transnational' here means between Member States

## Annex 7: Bibliography

We have developed a list of documents as a tool for our work which is given here in lieu of a bibliography. The documents are categorised as follows:

- EU-wide evaluation reports
- Additional EU level reports
- Evaluation reports produced at national level in accordance with regulatory requirements or commitment in the OP
- Annual Implementation Reports (AIR)
- Other national level evaluations including topic-specific reports
- Guidelines
- Regulations
- Studies and papers produced at EU and at national level
- Miscellaneous reports

### EU-wide evaluation reports

Country code	topic
EU	EU wide evaluation 2000-2006 of the Community Initiative EQUAL - Final Report
EU	EU wide evaluation 2000-2006 of the Community Initiative EQUAL - Mid Term Report
EU	EU wide evaluation 2000-2006 of the Community Initiative EQUAL - Synthesis Note 2nd Interim Report
EU	EU wide evaluation 2000-2006 of the Community Initiative EQUAL - 2nd Interim Report
EU	Synthesis of the Evaluation Reports of the EQUAL Programme in the EUR-15 Member States submitted to the Commission in 2007 and up to June 2008
EU	Synthesis of the Evaluation Reports of the EQUAL Programmes in the EUR-10 Member States submitted to the Commission within 2006 and 2007
EU	Synthesis of the Evaluation Reports of the EQUAL Programmes in the EU10 Member States Submitted to the Commission within 2006 and 2009
EU	Evaluation of 10 selected EQUAL Communication and Learning platforms run in 2007, Synthesis Report

### Additional EU level reports

Country code	for year	special thematic focus?
EU	2006	Report on Equal Evaluation Conference 2006
EU	2006	Background Document Equal Evaluation Conference 2006
EU	2007	Minutes of the Evaluation Partnership Meeting
EU	2008	Minutes of the Evaluation Partnership Meeting

**Evaluation reports produced at national level in accordance with regulatory requirements or commitment in the OP**

Country code	Title
AT	MTE update 2005
BE-FR	MTE update 2005
BE-FR	Final evaluation report 2007
BE-NL	MTE update 2005
BE-NL	Final evaluation report 2008
CZ	Interim evaluation 2005
CZ	Annual evaluation report 2006
CZ	Annual evaluation report 2007
CY	Annual evaluation report 2007
DE	MTE update 2005
DE	Final evaluation report 2008
DK	MTE update 2005
EE	Interim evaluation 2005
EE	Annual evaluation report 2006
EE	Final evaluation report 2007
EL	MTE update 2005
ES	MTE update 2005
FI	MTE update 2005
FI	Final evaluation report 2007
FR	MTE update 2005
HU	Interim evaluation 2005
IE	MTE update 2005
IT	MTE update 2005
LT	Interim evaluation 2005
LT	Annual evaluation report 2006
LT	Annual evaluation report 2007
LU	MTE update 2005
LU	Final evaluation report 2007
LV	Interim evaluation 2005
LV	Annual evaluation report 2006
LV	Annual evaluation report 2007
LV	Final evaluation report 2008
MT	Interim evaluation 2005
MT	Annual evaluation report 2006
MT	Annual evaluation report 2007
MT	Final evaluation report 2008
NL	MTE update 2005
PL	Interim evaluation 2005
PL	Final evaluation report 2008
PT	MTE update 2005
SE	MTE update 2005
SI	Interim evaluation 2005
SK	Interim evaluation 2005
SK	Annual evaluation report 2007
UKGB	MTE update 2005
UKNI	MTE update 2005

### Annual implementation reports (AIR)

Country code	covering the year
AT	2001
AT	2002
AT	2003
AT	2004
AT	2005
AT	2006
AT	2007
BE-FR	2001
BE-FR	2003
BE-FR	2004
BE-FR	2005
BE-FR	2006
BE-FR	2007
BE-NL	2004
BE-NL	2005
BE-NL	2006
BE-NL	2007
CY	2004
CY	2005
CY	2006
CY	2007
CZ	2004
CZ	2005
CZ	2006
CZ	2007
DE	2001
DE	2002
DE	2003
DE	2004
DE	2005
DE	2006
DE	2007
DK	2001
DK	2002
DK	2003
DK	2004
DK	2005
DK	2006
DK	2007
EE	2004
EE	2005
EE	2006
EE	2007
ES	2001
ES	2002
ES	2004
ES	2005
ES	2006
ES	2007
EL	2001
EL	2002
EL	2003

Country code	covering the year
EL	2004
EL	2006
EL	2007
FI	2001
FI	2002
FI	2003
FI	2004
FI	2005
FI	2006
FI	2007
FR	2001
FR	2002
FR	2004
FR	2005
FR	2006
FR	2007
HU	2004
HU	2005
HU	2006
HU	2007
IE	2001
IE	2002
IE	2003
IE	2004
IE	2005
IE	2006
IE	2007
IE (Final Report)	2009
IT	2001
IT	2002
IT	2003
IT	2004
IT	2005
IT	2006
IT	2007
LT	2004
LT	2005
LT	2006
LT	2007
LU	2001
LU	2002
LU	2003
LU	2004
LU	2005
LU	2006
LU	2007
LU	2008
LV	2004
LV	2005
LV	2006
LV	2007
MT	2004
MT	2005

Country code	covering the year
MT	2006
MT	2007
NL	2002
NL	2003
NL	2004
NL	2005
NL	2006
NL	2007
PL	2004
PL	2005
PL	2006
PL	2007
PT	2001
PT	2002
PT	2003
PT	2004
PT	2005
PT	2006
PT	2007
SE	2002
SE	2003
SE	2004
SE	2005
SE	2006
SE	2007
SE	2008
SI	2004
SI	2005
SI	2006
SI	2007
SK	2004
SK	2005
SK	2006
SK	2007
UKGB	2001
UKGB	2002
UKGB	2003
UKGB	2004
UKGB	2006
UKGB	2007
UKNI	2002
UKNI	2003
UKNI	2004
UKNI	2005
UKNI	2006
UKNI	2007

**Info to METIS on EQUAL reporting expected for 2008**

GENERAL INFO	No obligation for 2008 AIR. Closure report is expected. In some cases it will be included in the ESF AIR 2008. Below you will find replies the Evaluation and Impact Assessment Unit has received from the EQUAL helpdesks in our ESF geographical desks.
AT	From AT, DE and SI a report for 2008 is no longer required. The Final Report is expected by end of March 2010.
BE-FR	As regards the EQUAL programme for the French Community in Belgium, the 2008 report will be joined to the report of closure which is to be sent to the Commission in September 2010 at the latest.
BE-NL	The managing authority will submit a final report before September 2010.
CY	No 2008 AIR expected. Waiting for info on closure report, probably part of ESF 2008 AIR.
CZ	Pour les rapports annuels d'exécution (RAE) 2008, qui normalement auraient dû nous être envoyés endéans le 30 juin 2009, il a été convenu que les autorités de gestion -qui le souhaitent-, les enverrons à la Commission en même temps que le rapport final. Le rapport 2008 constituera une partie du rapport final, qui contiendra également un chapitre décrivant les activités du premier semestre 2009 (puisque dans la majorité des pays, il y a eu prolongation de la période).
DE	From AT, DE and SI a report for 2008 is no longer required. The Final Report is expected by end of March 2010.
DK	Closure report expected probably before the deadline. The deadline is as far as I understand it the same for all the countries, 15 months after the final date of eligibility of expenditures (30 April 2009)
EE	Closure report expected by 15th December 2009.
FI	"the Finnish authorities are preparing the closure documents for the Equal programme, including the final report. Thus no separate AIR for 2008 will be sent. I have no knowledge of an exact date, when they intend to send the documents, but they are hoping to do the closure in autumn."
FR	No 2008 AIR expected. Waiting for info on closure report. Info from geo desk: Selon le règlement général relatif aux fonds structurels (1083-2006), le rapport final doit être transmis au plus tard 15 mois après la date finale d'éligibilité des dépenses, ce qui, compte tenu du report de 6 mois de cette date dans le contexte de la crise, donne le 30/09/2010.
EL	No 2008 AIR expected. Waiting for info on closure report, probably part of ESF AIR 2008.
HU	The 2008 AIR will be submitted as a separate chapter of the Closure Report (programme eligibility deadline extended to 30 June 2009, closure 2010)
IE	No AIR 2008 planned. A Final Report will be sent by March 2010 (deadline).
SI	From AT, DE and SI a report for 2008 is no longer required. The Final Report is expected by end of March 2010.



### Other national level evaluations including topic-specific reports

Country code	topic
AT	Mainstreaming unter der Lupe. Bedingungsfaktoren für nachhaltige arbeitsmarktpolitische Innovationen durch Equal
BE-NL	Focusgroep met VMC leden - Evaluatie van impact
CZ	Evaluation of approaches of Czech and foreign development partnerships within CIP EQUAL in the application of the horizontal topic gender mainstreaming - 2nd Interim Report
EE	Evaluation of Mainstreaming Processes and Impacts of the EQUAL Programme - Final Report
EU	Evaluation of 10 selected EQUAL 'communication and learning platforms' (CoP) run in 2007
PL	Ewaluacja bie aca Programu Operacyjnego 'Program Inicjatywy Wspólnotowej EQUAL Dla Polski 2004-2006' - RAPORT TEMATYCZNY

### Guidelines

Country code	topic
EU	ToR Independent Evaluators in NMS
EU	Guidelines for Systems of Monitoring and Evaluation ESF 2000 2006
EU	COM 2000.C 127 02
EU	Guide on Transnationality
EU	Guide Transnational Cooperation
EU	Making Change Possible - Guide Mainstreaming
EU	Measuring and Sustaining Innovation - Guide for DPs
EU	Partnership Development Toolkit - Guide Partnership
EU	Guide for DPs
EU	Guidance Note on Evaluation. Equal Support Unit: Guidance Note for Development Partnerships
EU	Technical Guide for EQUAL Common Database
EU	Evaluation process in Equal
EU	Proposal for a common approach in EQUAL evaluation 2007 – 2008

### Regulations

Country code	topic
EU	COM 2000 853
EU	Council Regulation 1260 1999
EU	Council Regulation 1784 1999
EU	COM 2003 840

## Studies and papers produced at EU and at national level

Country code	topic
AT	EQUartAL 5 - Schwerpunktheft: Arbeit mit Jugendlichen und jungen Erwachsenen
AT	EQUartAL 6 - Good Practice aus EQUAL Antragsrunde 1
AT	EQUartAL 7 - EQUAL 1. Antragsrunde Nachhaltige Ergebnisse aus EQUAL 2002 – 2005
CZ	EX- ANTE HODNOCENÍ PROGRAMU INICIATIVY SPOLEČNOSTVÍ EQUAL
DE	Internationale Entwicklung der Evaluierungsmethoden für arbeitsmarktpolitische Programme
DE	Ein Rahmen für die Integration des Grundsatzes der Geschlechtergleichstellung in die neuen ESF-Programme. Bericht der Ad hoc-Arbeitsgruppe der Mitgliedstaaten für Geschlechtergleichstellung und Gender Mainstreaming
DE	Innovation in ESF-Programmen im Programmzeitraum 2007-2013. Ein Rahmen für die Programmplanung
DE	Transnationale und überregionale Zusammenarbeit bei ESF-Programmen im Programmzeitraum 2007-2013. Rahmen für die Programmplanung
DE	Integrating Partnership in ESF programmes 2007-2013. A framework for programming
DE	Angepasster Entwurf der Mainstreamingstrategie im Rahmen der Gemeinschaftsinitiative EQUAL zur Bekämpfung von Diskriminierungen und Ungleichheiten im Zusammenhang mit dem Arbeitsmarkt in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Zeitraum 2000 bis 2006
EE	Examples for successful mainstreaming in Estonia
EE	Project stories
EE	'EQUAL projektide teemaailiste töörühmade juhtimine'- LÕPPARUANNE
EU	EQUAL success stories: Development Partnerships working against discrimination and inequality in Europe
EU	EQUAL, Free movement of good ideas - Working against discrimination and inequality in Europe
EU	EQUAL Policy Briefs
EU	Practical examples of EQUAL projects
EU	Thematic papers
EU	EQUAL: New ways of tackling discrimination and inequality in the field of employment
EU	Reflection notes
EU	Holding a job – Having a life
EU	The social partners' groundwork on innovation
EU	Methodological note. A framework to describe the Community Added Value of the ESF
EU	Discussion Note on ESF Community Added Value
EU	The Enigma of European Added Value
EU	Towards the evaluation of impacts and added value in EQUAL. A contribution by the co-ordination team of the EU-wide evaluation of EQUAL
EU	The added value of the structural funds: a regional perspective. IQ-Net report on the reforms of the structural funds
EU	Evaluation of information systems and monitoring arrangements for the programmes supported by the European Social Fund
EU	EQUAL: Opportunities for all. Delivering the Lisbon Strategy through social innovation and transnational cooperation
EU	Study on the relevance and reliability of available information for the ex post evaluation of the European Social Fund (2000-2006)
HU	Ex-ante evaluation
IT	The national catalogue of ESF best practices: learning from the past to govern the future
IT	Buone pratiche. FSE in Italia 2000-2006 – esempi di buonepratiche
IT	Equal: idee, esperienze e strumenti nelle buone pratiche dei Partenariati di Sviluppo
LT	Ex-ante evaluation
PL	EX ANTE EVALUATION OF EQUAL SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT FOR POLAND
PT	Equal em foco 2007
PT	Seleção produtos Equal
SI	EX-ANTE EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME EQUAL 2004-2006 FOR SLOVENIA

### Miscellaneous reports

Country code	topic
All countries	Minutes of monitoring committees
All countries	Mission Reports
BE-NL	Voortgangsrapport 2001. Communautair Initiatief EQUAL
CZ	Příloha Závěrečné implementační zprávy CIP EQUAL – Přehled projektů, jejich výstupů a výsledků
EL	2de Temporary Evaluation Report. Executive Summary - Assessing Innovation in the CIP EQUAL
EL	2η Προσωρινή Έκθεση Αξιολόγησης - Η καινοτομία στην Κ.Π.EQUAL
EL	1η Έκθεση Αξιολόγησης Β κύκλου της Κ.Π.EQUAL
ES	Informe Adicional de Evaluación de la 2ª Convocatoria de la Iniciativa Comunitaria EQUAL
IT	Servizio di Valutazione Indipendente del PIC EQUAL. Secondo rapporto intermedio
IT	SERVIZIO DI VALUTAZIONE INDIPENDENTE DEL PIC EQUAL. Primo rapporto intermedio
LT	Evaluation of the EQUAL CIP in Lithuania. Ongoing Report 2005
LU	EVALUATION INTERMEDIAIRE de la mise en oeuvre du PIC EQUAL entre 2000 et 2002
PL	Ewaluacja Działania 1 Programu Inicjatywy Wspólnotowej EQUAL dla Polski 2004-2006. RAPORT KOŃCOWY
PT	Estudo de Aviação Intercalar da IC EQUAL . Relatório Final 2003
SE	Interimsrapport Styrning och ledning Halvtidsutvärdering II Gemenskapinitiativet EQUAL