

**ANNEX B to the Commission Decision**

**COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME  
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**EQUAL 2000 – 2006**

## **NORTHERN IRELAND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PLAN FOR EQUAL 2000 – 2006**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **What is EQUAL ?**

This document is the Community Initiative Programme to deliver EQUAL in Northern Ireland (NI). Funded through the European Social Fund, EQUAL will test and promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, both for those in work and for those seeking work, through transnational co-operation. EQUAL will also include action to help the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers.

EQUAL is distinguished from the ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT programmes and the Objective 1, 2 and 3 Structural Fund programmes by its thematic approach to testing new ways of delivery for policy priorities in the framework of the European Employment Strategy (EES) and the emphasis on partnership in the context of transnational co-operation. It should help to inform policy developments and ensure that we learn lessons from other Member States. It will also form part of the integrated European Community strategy to combat discrimination (in particular that based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) and social exclusion.

## **Implementation**

EQUAL will operate in nine thematic fields for the first call for EQUAL proposals. Eight of the themes are defined in the context of the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy (EES): Employability, Entrepreneurship, Adaptability, and Equal Opportunities.

The ninth covers the specific needs of asylum seekers. Overall, the aim of the thematic approach is to explore new ways of tackling the problems common to different types of discrimination and inequality, rather than focusing on a specific target group.

The nine thematic priorities in EQUAL under the four pillars and Asylum Seekers.

## **EMPLOYABILITY**

1. Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market which must be open to all
2. Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

3. Opening up the business creation process to all by providing the tools required for setting up in business and for the identification and exploitation of new possibilities for creating employment in urban and rural areas
4. Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs

## ADAPTABILITY

5. Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market
6. Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

7. Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services
8. Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation.

## ASYLUM SEEKERS

9. Helping the integration of asylum-seekers. Depending on the official status of the asylum seeker - an extremely complex area, with variations between Member States - assistance may be for new ways of helping to access the labour market, or to provide training for unsuccessful asylum seekers prior to their leaving the country.

The NI programme will associate itself through the GB programme in support activities to help the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers. Selection of thematic fields and activities has been made according to labour market needs, policy priorities, results of consultation, lessons from previous programmes and opportunities for transnational co-operation. A mainstreaming approach in each thematic field will be implemented in consultation with the Irish National Authority. Work on each theme supported by a network made up of officials from the relevant Government Department, the equality bodies North and South and social partners.

EQUAL will operate by bringing together the key players into Development Partnerships (DPs) in a geographical area or, in exceptional circumstances in a sector of need when the requirements justify it. The different worlds of public administration, non-governmental organisations, social partners and the business sector (in particular SMEs) will work in partnership, pooling their different types of expertise and experience shared with DPs in Ireland. DPs will choose one of the two thematic areas and agree a strategy within which they will try out new ways of dealing with problems of discrimination and inequality. Central to the work of each DP will be its links with at least one partnership from another country (another Member State (alongside Ireland) and possibly non-Member States as appropriate) and its involvement in a network of others dealing with the same theme across Europe. The new ideas will be tested with a view to using the results to influence the design of future policy and practice in North and South Ireland. DPs will also participate in the dissemination and mainstreaming of good practice. Special arrangements will apply with regard to mainstreaming in a North/ South context in Ireland.

Development Partnerships will be selected for EQUAL funding following province-wide calls for proposals. A common approach to selection of Development



Partnerships will be agreed with the GB, NI and Irish Programme Monitoring Committees.

EQUAL will fund activity under the following four actions within each thematic field:

- Action 1: setting up Development Partnerships and transnational co-operation - 5% of the budget
- Action 2: implementing the work programmes of the Development Partnerships - 72% of the budget
- Action 3: thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy –15% of the budget
- Action 4: Technical Assistance to support actions 1, 2 and 3, 8% of the budget

Actions 1 and 2 are sequential. Member States will be expected to be in a position to start Action 3 at the earliest point that results are available to disseminate. Action 4 will provide support from before the commencement of Action 1.

The total UK allocation is 376 meuro for the 7-year period 2000-2006. The financial distribution among the UK territories will give Northern Ireland a budget of 11 meuro. (Indexed to 2001 the GB allocation is 387.91 Meuro and the NI allocation is 11.69 Meuro).

These contributions need to be matched by national funding.

The financial distribution between the pillars/thematic fields will be as follows :

Employability	60%
Entrepreneurship	0%
Adaptability	0%
Equal opportunities	32%
Asylum Seekers*	0%
Technical Assistance	8%

\*The GB EQUAL Programme will cover NI for asylum Seekers

What has informed the programming process?

Five main factors have driven the development of this plan: a thorough analysis of the NI labour market, the GB and EU policy priorities, responses from stakeholders to an extensive consultation process, lessons from the ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT Community Initiatives, and the opportunities for transnational co-operation with other Member States. However in order to adequately deliver the EQUAL CIP within the programme financial allocation of 11.69 Meuro, the preferences identified for activity under the four pillars and associated themes had to be prioritised.

# CHAPTER 1: The Labour Market Analysis

## 1.1 Introduction

Despite rapid growth experienced in recent years and a higher employment rate than the EU average, Northern Ireland continues to suffer from significant labour market weaknesses in a number of areas. These include: -

- high long term unemployment, especially among certain sections of the population;
- low levels of economic activity in certain geographical areas, and among certain groups, in particular disabled people;
- relatively high dependency on benefits such as incapacity benefit and income support;
- lower levels of formal qualifications relative to other parts of the UK;
- low levels of adult literacy;
- a problem of young people (16-17 year olds) not involved in employment, education or training, who have a higher propensity towards unemployment in adulthood;
- comparatively lower levels of female employment activity;
- lower levels of pay for women relative to men;

The subsequent sections will each focus on the regional labour market conditions relevant to the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy (EES) to determine how the four should be prioritised for action.

## 1.2 EMPLOYABILITY

### 1.2.1 Introduction

Northern Ireland's unemployment rate has fallen considerably over the past decade. It has decreased from 17.1% in 1989 (when the EU average was 9.0%) to 10.3% in 1997 (EU average 10.7%) and the trend has continued downwards. In Spring 2000<sup>1</sup>, the ILO<sup>2</sup> unemployment rate was 6.7% (7.9% for men and 5.2% for women) – down 0.9 percentage points on one year previously against the Eur 15 average of 8.5%. The Claimant Count unemployment rate for August 2000 was 5.2% - the lowest since 1975.

Similarly, NI has experienced an increase in its *employment* rate (from 59.3% in 1988 to 64.0% in 1997) at a time when the Eur 15 as a whole experienced a period of little change (Eur 15 employment rate was 61.0% in 1988 against 60.9% in 1997). The NI employment rate stood at 64.9% in Spring 2000. The percentages for men and women were 70.9% and 58.5% respectively.

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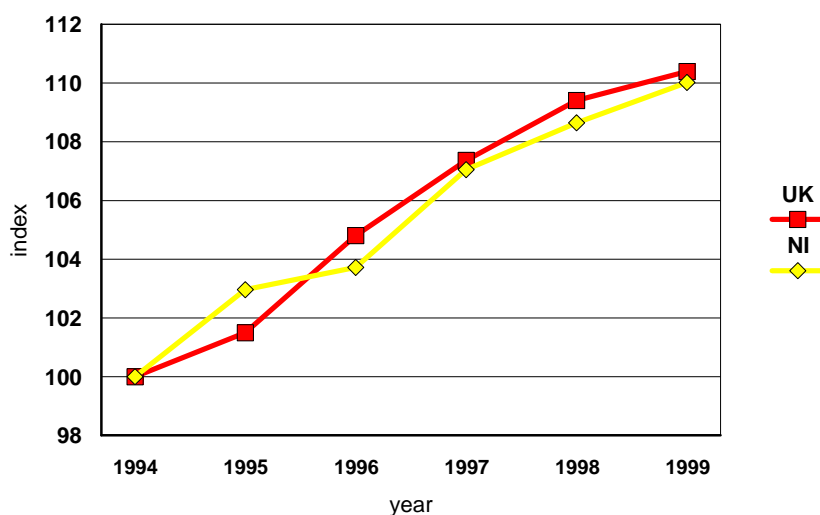
<sup>1</sup> Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey Spring 2000

<sup>2</sup> [International Labour Organisation](#)

## 1.2.2 Employee Jobs

NI has experienced a sustained period of growth in terms of employee jobs. From 1994-99, the total number of employee jobs has increased by approximately 56,000 - an increase of about 10% over the period. This is broadly similar to the rate of increase in the UK as a whole.

Figure 2.6 : Employee Jobs 1993-1998 : NI and UK  
(indexed to 1993 = 100)



Source: DED, ONS

The composition of the overall increase in the level of employment is, however, important. The overall pattern is dominated by an increase in part-time, lower value added jobs, largely in the non-tradeable services. Of the total increase in employee jobs over this period:

- some 85% was in the service sector;
- over a quarter of the increase was in the wholesale and retail sectors of the economy and a further 15% in hotels and catering;
- part-time employment accounted for almost two thirds of the total increase in employee jobs.

Average earnings of those in work are also lower in NI. In 1999, average gross weekly earnings were 85% of the UK average for men and 90% of the UK average for women. Over the longer term, the earnings gap between NI and the UK has tended to widen for both men and women particularly in non-manual occupations.

In spite of a generally positive situation, NI continues to suffer a number of particular and severe problems in respect of employment, unemployment and employability.

There are three problems that should be especially highlighted and that are felt to be strongly relevant in this context:

1. A problem of unemployment and long-term unemployment which disproportionately affects certain groups in the population and certain geographical areas;
2. A high level of economic *inactivity*, which again disproportionately affects certain groups and areas;
3. A segregated labour market, in which women tend to work part-time, at lower levels of status and of pay than their male counterparts. This issue will be examined further in the sub-section on equal opportunities.

### **1.2.3 Unemployment and long-term unemployment**

Unemployment in Northern Ireland remains above the UK average (ILO unemployment for the UK is 5.5% and the Claimant Count average for the UK is 3.6% compared with 6.7% and 5.2% in NI).

Long-term unemployment as a percentage of total unemployment is extremely significant, with 40% of the ILO unemployed having been so for more than one year in Spring 2000 (Claimant Count long-term unemployment was 30% in July 2000). Although long-term unemployment has also fallen overall, it remains especially high for certain groups and areas, and in NI as a whole it is still much higher than in any other region in the UK (the next highest UK region for LTU is Wales with 34.6%. The UK average is 28.2%). The flows *into* long-term unemployment also continue to be higher than the UK average. This differential persists for longer durations of unemployment. The proportion of claimants who have been claiming for more than five years is 4.6 percentage points higher in NI than that for the UK as a whole.

### **1.2.4 Male long-term unemployment**

The problem of long-term unemployment particularly affects men. In the period March-May 2000, nearly half of ILO unemployed men (46%) had been out of work *and seeking employment* for more than one year.

Very high proportions of male unemployment and long-term unemployment are also evident in certain districts and parliamentary constituencies.

The trends in NI's labour market (increase in part-time jobs and growth of sectors in which men traditionally are less likely to work) mean that the opportunities for many long-term unemployed men to work without much focused support and reskilling are perceived at least to be few.

### **1.2.5 "Status 0" Young People**

"Status 0" defines a category of young people (16-17 year olds) not involved in employment, education or training. Whilst the overall number of unemployed in this age group is comparatively low at around 5%, the "Status 0" group gives particular cause for concern, first for the problems that they experience at this age, but secondly because they are significantly more likely to be unemployed as they get older (aged

18-22). A substantial amount of research has been carried out in Northern Ireland about this group<sup>3</sup>. It finds that young people are more likely to experience a spell of six months or more joblessness at age 18 if they have already experienced a spell of “Status 0”. It also finds that those most at risk of exclusion among this group are those that face multiple disadvantage. “Status 0” young people are more likely to be unemployed when they get older if:

- They are poorly qualified;
- They come from families with experience of unemployment;
- They come from disadvantaged areas;
- They have children (significant for girls only);
- They come from single parent families (significant for boys only).

These socio-economic, spatial and community variations are reflected in the unemployed and long-term unemployed population as a whole and are further explored during the course of this analysis. Suffice to say at this point that the “Status 0” group is one that merits a strong focus for human resource development.

### **1.2.6 Work rich and work poor households**

Despite falling unemployment, an alarming 21% of all working age households (those with at least one person of working age in them) in Northern Ireland were workless in Spring 2000. This means no-one within them was in employment. It compares with a UK average of 15.8% and is the fourth highest proportion of the UK regions. It is clear that most new jobs are being taken up by households where an occupant is already in employment.

### **1.2.7 The skills and qualifications of the unemployed**

In general, NI has a lower base of educational attainment within its working age population than the Eur 15 average. 44% of the NI working age population is categorised as having ‘low’ educational attainment compared to 41% of the EU as a whole. Overall, 54% of the economically active are qualified to GCE ‘A’ level standard or above, whilst 20% have no formal qualifications. Among the unemployed, this figure rises to 32%, and for the long-term unemployed it reaches 48%, compared with 19% of those in employment. However, the unemployed and the long-term unemployed vary considerably in terms of skills and qualifications as well as age and gender.

There is evidence that the skills needs of employers are increasing<sup>4</sup>. At the same time, many people in NI still lack basic skills. There is also evidence that if someone lacks basic skills, they are more likely to be unemployed and at risk of social exclusion, and to be trapped in low-paid, low status jobs if they are employed.

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<sup>3</sup> Northern Ireland Labour Market Bulletin No 14: November 2000 presents statistics on this problem and summarises a number of studies undertaken between October 1993 and March 1999.

<sup>4</sup> See Northern Ireland Labour Market Bulletin issues 13 and 14

### **1.2.8 Economic inactivity**

Economic inactivity is also substantial and has increased greatly since 1984 in Northern Ireland. An economically inactive person is someone who is aged 16 or over, neither in employment nor unemployed according to the ILO definition. Whilst the trend in unemployment is downwards, the same cannot be said for economic inactivity. In the period March-May 2000, there were 24,000 more people classified as economically inactive than there had been one year earlier, bringing the total number to 533,000. Between 1984 and 2000, there has been a startling increase of 41.2% in the number of inactive men and an increase of 5.6% for women. In GB, the percentage increase for men was 26.5% over the same period, whilst there was a decrease of 7.1% for women.

The proportions of people on attendance allowance, Disability Living Allowance and incapacity benefits in NI are more than two times higher than in GB. These figures also reflect a generally higher benefit dependency than in GB. Almost one person in five over the age of 18 is on Income Support in NI compared with one in eight in GB. A recent study found that in the New Lodge area of Belfast, 65% of households were claiming income support.

The inactive population includes potential returners to the labour market as well as those who are inactive and outside the labour market, such as individuals who have left employment or unemployment to take up sickness related benefits. Among the 533,000 economically inactive, 64,000 say they want a job but are not actively seeking work for a variety of reasons. There are significant gender variations here. Of those that want a job but are inactive, 63% are women, and the majority of these say their inactivity is due to family commitments. Among men, on the other hand, 53% give sickness or disability as the reasons for their inactivity.

### **1.2.9 Disabled People**

It is estimated that there are approximately 149,000 disabled people in NI, accounting for around 15% of the working age population in 1998, according to the definition in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The unemployment rate for disabled people in NI is estimated at 16.5%. However, only around 30% of disabled people are economically active, 25% in employment and 5% seeking work. Significantly, of the 70% of disabled people who are economically *inactive*, 21% would like work.

The Labour Force Survey shows that around 50% of disabled people have no qualifications compared with 23% of the total labour force. For those disabled people in employment, hourly working rates are lower than the norm.

Research findings from the NI Omnibus Survey (November 1998) highlight a range of problems relating to the employability of disabled people. A number of barriers to work were perceived among disabled people who were not working, some of which reflect (perception of) discrimination among employers, and some of which are evidence of a wider range of barriers, from the “benefits trap” to a straightforward lack of opportunity. Within the survey some 78% of disabled people indicated that their illness or disability had affected their chance of employment.

Tables 1 and 2, below, show the economic activity and unemployment rates; and the age distribution of disabled people.

Figures on age and sex distribution actually reflect the age and sex distribution of the economically inactive for the population as a whole. Among the latter, in the 16-24 age group, 20% of men and 15% of women are inactive. In the 25-34 age group, this changes to 6% men and 12% women, and the distribution is 7%, 12% in the 35-44 age group, then the differences between men and women reduce gradually with each older age group. The trend for women is affected by the impact of domestic commitments.

**Table 1**

**Economic activity of disabled persons in NI- Spring 1999**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>All Persons</b>
<b>Economically Active</b>	26,000	18,000	44,000
<b>In employment</b>	19,000	17,000	36,000
<b>ILO Unemployed</b>	-	-	-
<b>Economically Inactive</b>	53,000	53,000	106,000
<b>Total</b>	98,000	88,000	186,000

Source: Labour Force Survey

**Table 2**

**Age Distribution of disabled persons \* in NI- Spring 1999**

<b>Age range</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>All Persons</b>
<b>16 – 24</b>	9,000	-	9,000
<b>25 – 34</b>	13,000	14,000	27,000
<b>35 – 44</b>	12,000	19,000	31,000
<b>45 – 59</b>	31,000	33,000	64,000
<b>60 – 64</b>	16,000	Not available	16,000
<b>Total</b>	81,000	66,000	147,000

Notes:-

\* Numbers disabled from the Labour Force Survey are only available for those of Working age i.e. males 16-64 and females 16-59.

- denotes too small for a reliable estimate.

Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand and, therefore, may not sum.

Above estimates are subject to sampling error.

Source: Labour Force Survey

Research results from the survey summarise the following barriers to work for disabled people not in employment:

- Lack of opportunities for disabled people to undertake work
- Available work is in low paid jobs
- Disability benefits provide more income than available jobs
- Employers discriminate against disabled people

Disabled people who were not working identified the following barriers to employment:

- If they started to work and could not cope they would not gain entitlement to the previous level of entitlement to benefit
- Benefits offer security in disabled persons lives
- Many disabled people felt there were few job opportunities flexible enough to suit their individual needs. This applies for instance to those who suffer severe pain, severe fatigue and tension headaches
- The perception that employers are not interested in employing disabled people
- The perception that available work is low paid and they would be better off on benefits
- Travel difficulties combined with lack of opportunities in their local area
- Access problems for people with mobility problems
- Advice from doctor/psychiatrist that they are incapable of work
- Fear that working would make their disability worse
- Fear of colleagues learning of their illness, especially those with mental health problems.

Disabled people in work identified the following problems:

- Attitude of other employees eg not being invited to social functions, social occasions organised in inaccessible locations, jokes in the workplace about disability, lack of awareness about disability issues including the need to take time off from work, patronising attitudes, low expectations of a disabled person's capabilities, unwillingness to learn more about disability especially as regards mental health
- Low expectations from employers
- Many felt that they have to try harder and perform better than able bodied colleagues in the same job
- Many felt their career progression to be limited and that employers do not give them a chance
- Difficulties and cost of travel
- Hours worked – some cannot work full hours
- Communication problems for visually or hearing impaired
- Access problems for people with mobility problems

Most of the respondents could give examples where, in the past they had been discriminated against in applying for jobs. Most felt that job opportunities in the private sector are severely limited for people with disabilities and that career progression was limited. Most felt that jobs available to disabled people were low



paid. Some felt that that it was harder to access training. A number had to change jobs when they became disabled and some were forced to give up work entirely.

### **1.2.10 Sub-regional spatial variations in unemployment and long-term unemployment**

In common with employment and unemployment in general, there is significant sub-regional variation in unemployment. Claimant Count data for September 2000 shows that percentages vary enormously among Districts and among parliamentary constituencies, from 2.7% in Lagan Valley constituency and 2.9% in Belfast South to 8.1% in West Tyrone, 9.2% in Foyle and reaching as high as 13.9% in Belfast West. Further, almost one third of all claimants in Belfast had been claiming unemployment related benefits for more than one year in August 2000. **Male unemployment** in the Belfast West Constituency as measured by the Claimant Count is 22%. And for men in West Tyrone (10.1%), Foyle (12.9%) and North Down (9.2%), the percentages are also well above average.

As far as long-term unemployment is concerned, district level data shows that it is principally the districts in the West of Northern Ireland that show the highest concentrations of long-term claimant unemployed. In Fermanagh the proportion of long-term unemployed was 34% in August 2000; in Derry City 34.8%; and in Omagh 34.6%. Newry and Mourne also has more than one third long-term unemployment. Belfast is an exception to the generally more positive picture in the East, with nearly a third of Claimants claiming unemployment related benefits for more than a year.

A similar picture is presented by an analysis of Travel to Work areas. Claimant Count rates are highest in the West. Strabane has the highest at 10.2% and Dungannon the lowest at 4.3%.

Similarly, there are spatial variations in respect of economic activity. Data taken from the 1997 Labour Force Survey database and published in July 1999 shows that male economic activity for those of working age ranges from 62.4% for Strabane District Council area to 80% for Ards District Council area. Activity rates within Districts may also be expected to have fallen since this time, reflecting the overall increase in inactivity.

#### **1.2.10.1 Community variations**

Official socio-economic data also point to certain differences between the two communities. The multiple factors underlying these differences continue to be assessed and debated. In 1998, the respective proportions of Catholics and Protestants in *employment* were in line with the representation of the two communities in the Northern Ireland workforce. The measured *unemployment* rate for Catholics was 10% compared with 5% for Protestants whilst 50 % of all Catholic unemployed had been without work for at least a year compared with 37 % of Protestant unemployed. These differences were more marked for males than females. In 1995/96, average gross weekly incomes for Catholic households represented 84 % of the corresponding figure for Protestant households

Problems of local deprivation and disadvantage, however, are not confined to predominately Catholic communities. 30 years of conflict in Northern Ireland has created derelict areas within many towns and cities, particularly in the centres, which have led to some serious social and economic problems.

### **1.2.10.2 Urban deprivation**

Urban estates with widespread multiple deprivation have grown up over the last 30 to 40 years with deprivation persisting from one generation to the next. These areas are characterised by a reliance on social housing; high rates of unemployment and inactivity; and dependence on state benefits. They have high levels of poverty; low skills and qualification levels; above average levels of disability, incapacity and long-term sickness; below average standards of health; and higher than average rates of crime and vandalism. There are continual civil disturbances. Much of this occurs in interface zones which are generally in urban areas and which are subject to ongoing physical destruction of property.

The Robson Index of Deprivation shows that over 12% of Northern Ireland's population live in the top tenth of the most deprived wards. Despite the fact that Belfast District Council is the largest urban area within the region, 15 of the 20 most deprived wards in Northern Ireland are located within the Council boundaries.

Entitlement to Free School Meals (EFSM ) is a means tested benefit, which has been shown to be an accurate indicator of deprivation. EFSM at Primary Schools in the Belfast area is over twice the Northern Ireland average (59% compared to 27%). In some primary schools within the Belfast area the EFSM rate is as high as 98%.

This analysis concentrated on Belfast (as the largest urban area within the region). However the nature and extent of problems highlighted here are also experienced by many urban communities outside of the Belfast urban area. In parts of the West of Northern Ireland in particular, we have seen that unemployment and inactivity rates are high. But throughout the region, there are pockets of severe deprivation whose problems may be masked by conventional statistics because of their relatively more affluent surrounds.

### **1.2.10.3 Rural situation**

Neither are Northern Ireland's problems of disadvantage confined to urban areas. Its rural areas are facing particular difficulties related to high dependency on an agricultural sector in decline and the impact of 30 years of violence leading to increasing polarisation in the composition of and relationships within rural communities.

NI has a relatively greater share of employment in agriculture and in services relative to the Eur 15 and a lower share in industry.

Research undertaken by the Arkelton Centre for Rural Development Research at King's College, University of Aberdeen released in July 2000 at an international conference on European Policy at the Crossroads produced the following conclusions in relation to Northern Ireland. With the continuing decline in the agricultural sector,

only 31% of farming households were totally dependent on farm income, 58 were partially dependent and 11% totally independent. Furthermore, recent events in the textile and food processing sectors, have had serious consequences for job opportunities for rural women.

Significant problems exist for both men and women in the rural areas. Only 43% of farm females are engaged in the labour market (as against 57% of non farm females) compared with 81% of farm males. (This may not reflect the work that is done on the farm by these women, however). Rural women’s employment is concentrated in the areas of education and health reflecting a higher level of public sector dependency among women in work in rural areas. The survey indicated that the level of educational attainment, specifically higher education, of farm-based females was significantly higher than that of their male counterparts. Unfortunately this is not reflected in their entry to professional employment. A particular obstacle is the relative inadequacy in rural areas of adequate childcare provision and transport services.

Relatively few males on farms work in the growing tertiary sector.

<b>Employment</b>	<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>	
	<b>Non-farm (%)</b>	<b>Farm (%)</b>	<b>Non-farm (%)</b>	<b>Farm (%)</b>
Manual/unskilled	22	34	11	15
Skilled/semi-skilled	55	49	26	25
Clerical/secretarial	1	4	18	35
Sales	3	N/A	4	N/A
Professional/Managerial	19	13	41	25

Only 8% of farm males had achieved a university and/or college qualification compared with 16% of non-farm males.

Recorded economic activity rates are lower in the disadvantaged rural areas than the NI average and long-term unemployment is significantly higher.

### **1.2.11 Other groups facing disadvantage in the labour market**

There are a number of additional groups, in particular concentrated within the most disadvantaged urban and rural areas, who face multiple disadvantage and discrimination. They include people who have experienced drug or alcohol addiction, homeless people, ex-prisoners and ex-offenders. Although the statistics in NI that evidence this are limited, much research has been undertaken in the UK and elsewhere that demonstrates the difficulties faced by these groups. In Section 2, an attempt is made to set out some of the issues faced by these people.

## 1.3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### 1.3.1 Introduction

Key features of entrepreneurship in the Northern Ireland economy are:

- a higher proportion of self-employed people than the UK average, but a significant proportion of whom are employed in agriculture
- Fewer than average firms operating in the service sector
- Strong spatial variations in start-ups
- Strong spatial variations in survival rates of small firms.

Northern Ireland is relatively underdeveloped in terms of the proportion of VAT registered businesses operating within the Business Services sector. The proportion of people that are self-employed is high (the self-employment rate is 13.3%), but this is largely explained by the comparative significance of agriculture in the region and reflects the number of self-employed farmers. It is not an indicator of high levels of entrepreneurship in other areas of the economy or of new start-ups. The low level of VAT registered businesses is particularly evident in the hotel and catering sector, reflecting at least partly the negative impact of political instability. However, the largest *number* of self-employed people in Spring 2000 was in the service industries (41,000 people). Agriculture and fishing accounts for the next highest (19,000). The latter was the sector with by far the highest proportion of its workforce classed as self-employed (68.8%). In construction, 27.7% were self-employed and in the service sector, 9.2% were self-employed.

In terms of sectoral trends, the Northern Ireland economy has failed to develop growth sectors and to move away from dependence on declining sectors. Existing industrial employment has been retained even if it was located in sectors with poor long-term prospects of growth and development. These effects, together with the very low level of development of the tourism industry, community divisions, degraded urban environments and a sense of political instability leading to a lack of business confidence have all created a context not conducive to economic development. The “troubles” have also produced additional employment in the police and security sectors and in other public sector occupations. However, many of these non-market related jobs are ultimately unsustainable and the diversion of human resources into these sectors has reduced the economy’s productive potential

### 1.3.2 Present situation

Over the last decade, there has been a considerable degree of fluctuation in the level of self-employment. The self-employment rate reached a peak of 15.9% in 1987, falling to 12.7% in 1993. Now at 13.3% it remains slightly above the UK rate, but still substantially lower than that of the better performing UK regions, both urban and semi-rural. It is considerably higher than Merseyside and the North East, but reliance on agriculture in these regions is very low. In general, the comparatively high proportion of self-employed farmers in Northern Ireland suggests that the low differential between NI and the UK average masks a significant difference in respect of wider entrepreneurial activity and start-ups.

Self-employment varies significantly between areas and between men and women, and the qualifications of the self-employed also differ from their employed counterparts.

Men are much more likely to be self-employed than women, (but again, men are also much more likely to be farmers than women). However, the percentage of self-employed women has increased slightly since 1993, whilst the percentage of self-employed men is down slightly on the 1993 level. Rates for both men and women have fluctuated during the 1990s.

**Self-employment rates by gender: 1993-98**

Year	Males	Females	All Persons
1993	20.0%	3.1%	12.7%
1994	21.7%	4.1%	14.0%
1995	21.3%	4.7%	13.9%
1997	19.2%	5.4%	13.0%
1998	19.8%	4.4%	13.0%
2000	19.6%	5.0%	13.3%

Source: NI Labour Force Survey

Self-employment also varies with qualifications. For 23% of the self-employed, a trade apprenticeship was the highest qualification compared with only 14% of those in employment for whom this was their highest qualification. The self-employed tend to have more vocational qualifications.

**Highest qualification of the self-employed and those in employment, 1998**

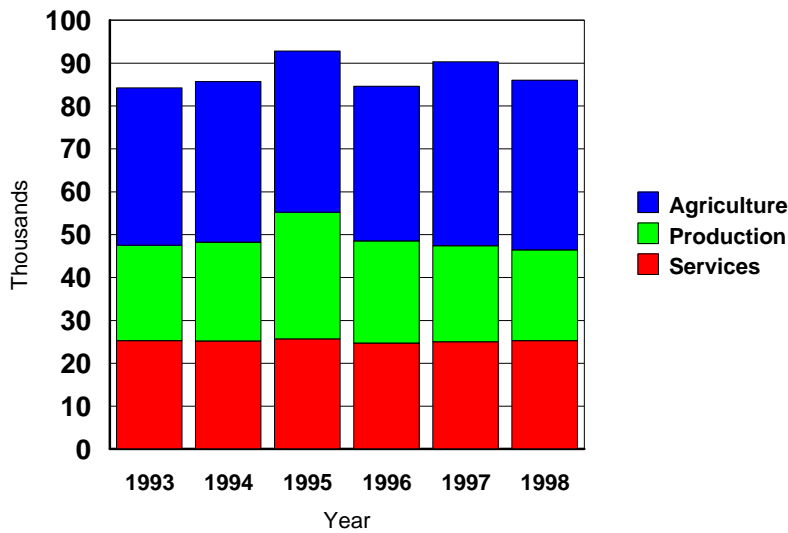
Qualification	Self-employed	In employment
Higher education	18%	24%
GCE A level	11%	15%
Trade apprenticeship	23%	14%
GEC O Level	11%	18%
Other qualifications	8%	10%

Source: NI Labour Force Survey

There are strong spatial variations in terms of business start-ups and survival rates. It is significant that over the period 1992-1996, business start-up activity has been increasing slowly in areas of greater socio-economic disadvantage<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [LEDU Self Start Programme : Evaluation Report, NIERC/KPMG, 1997.](#)

Figure 2.7 : Self Employment NI, 1993-1998



Source: DED

The majority of self-start enterprises begin small with no employees other than the principal. Relatively few jobs are added in subsequent years. Most of these businesses are established within the service sectors.

Northern Ireland has a dedicated small business agency LEDU and its network of Local Enterprise Agencies. LEDU offers a Business Start Programme to help individuals move into entrepreneurship. It is aimed at firms which normally employ fewer than 50 people in the manufacturing and tradeable services sectors.

The Business Start Programme Package has a range of services and courses available and provides ongoing support for the first six months of trading.

It also seeks to encourage under-represented groups to consider starting a business. A recent evaluation of the programme provides important evidence on the characteristics of its clients. It showed that little change was reported in the extent of involvement of women, whilst the programme had proved significant for the unemployed. The proportion of start-ups in the worst off (TSN) areas has been increasing, but there are marked spatial variations in respect of survival rates, that are not fully explained.

Support to women to start up in business is an area where more targeted promotion and a greater marketing effort is required in order to raise awareness of this option. On the other hand, evidence tends to suggest that the self-start programme is an important programme for the unemployed. For example, one estimate suggest that around 2500 unemployed people were assisted to set up their own business in the period 1992-95.

In general, there is evidence that self-employment does represent a valid route out of unemployment, and not necessarily for the better qualified.

In terms of the breakdown of start-up activity across the region and within TSN areas, evidence shows that shares of start-up activity tend to fluctuate quite considerably:

**Ratio of share of LEDU Self-Start Employment to share of economically active population.**

District Council Area	1992	1993	1994	1995
Antrim	1.7	0.5	0.8	0.4
Ards	1.0	1.2	0.9	1.0
Armagh	0.5	0.7	1.1	0.8
Ballymena	0.7	1.1	0.7	0.5
Ballymoney	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.4
Banbridge	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.8
Belfast	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.1
Carrickfergus	0.3	1.2	1.0	0.5
Castlereagh	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.8
Coleraine	1.4	1.1	1.0	1.2
Cookstown	2.1	1.6	0.5	1.6
Craigavon	0.6	0.5	0.7	1.1
Derry	0.9	0.8	1.6	0.6
Down	0.8	1.1	1.1	1.3
Dungannon	1.2	2.1	0.9	1.5
Fermanagh	1.6	1.7	0.2	2.1
Larne	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.6
Limavady	0.6	0.4	0.8	1.0
Lisburn	1.0	0.6	0.8	0.8
Magherafelt	1.0	2.1	1.6	1.1
Moyle	0.8	1.5	1.8	1.2
Newry & Mourne	0.8	1.6	1.3	1.2
Newtownabbey	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.5
North Down	1.6	0.7	1.0	1.1
Omagh	0.7	0.6	0.6	1.0
Strabane	0.4	0.4	1.8	1.3
Source: NIERC 1997				

In terms of employment survival rates, there is also considerable variation between District Council areas from a rate of only 41% in the case of Moyle District Council area to extremely high survival rates of over 100% in areas covered by Castlereagh, Lisburn and Armagh. Carrickfergus and Craigavon record survival rates of 62% and 56% respectively. These findings reinforce evidence of a considerable variation at the local level in the characteristics and performance of the labour market.

<b>Employment Survival Rates by District Council Area for 1993 New Firm Cohort</b>			
District Council Area	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Antrim	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Ards	100.0%	147.0%	90.0%
Armagh	100.0%	117.1%	122.0%
Ballymena	100.0%	90.7%	77.3%
Ballymoney	100.0%	96.9%	87.5%
Banbridge	100.0%	106.7%	93.3%
Belfast	100.0%	93.3%	103.2%
Carrickfergus	100.0%	62.0%	62.0%
Castlereagh	100.0%	116.3%	120.4%
Coleraine	100.0%	84.8%	84.8%
Cookstown	100.0%	66.0%	100.0%
Craigavon	100.0%	66.0%	56.0%
Derry	100.0%	96.4%	77.4%
Down	100.0%	93.3%	108.0%
Dungannon	100.0%	88.7%	95.3%
Fermanagh	100.0%	87.0%	89.0%
Larne	100.0%	85.7%	62.9%
Limavady	100.0%	106.7%	86.7%
Lisburn	100.0%	97.4%	113.0%
Magherafelt	100.0%	109.4%	100.0%
Moyle	100.0%	66.7%	41.7%
Newry & Mourne	100.0%	102.8%	76.2%
Newtownabbey	100.0%	89.6%	81.3%
North Down	100.0%	101.6%	103.3%
Omagh	100.0%	89.7%	89.7%
Strabane	100.0%	66.7%	66.7%

Source: NIERC

## **1.4 ADAPTABILITY**

In Northern Ireland:

- 44% of the working age population has ‘low’ educational attainment compared to 41% of the EU as a whole;
- Approximately 20% of the region’s economically active are without formal qualification compared with an equivalent 13% in England and Scotland;
- In-company training is considerably lower than the UK average for both manual and non-manual workers;
- Technical vocational qualifications appear to be below the standards achieved in other advanced economies;



- Skills shortages persist in particular at intermediate levels within the labour market, though it remains difficult at times to distinguish between these and recruitment difficulties.

Over recent years, the number of pupils leaving school with few or no formal qualifications has been reducing, but the proportion of low or under-achievers remains significant. Tackling low and underachievement is of crucial importance.

Northern Ireland shows very low workforce qualification levels. Approximately 20% of the region's economically active are without formal qualification compared with an equivalent figure of 13% in both England and Scotland. Around 48% of the long-term unemployed in Northern Ireland have no qualifications. In addition, results from the International Adult Literacy survey reveal that almost one-quarter of the region's adult population (16-65) is at the lowest level of literacy.

Technical vocational education in Northern Ireland falls below standards set in other countries. In addition, comparative survey evidence shows that a far lower proportion of Northern Ireland employees have received off-the-job training compared to any other region in the UK. Compared with other regions in the United Kingdom, employers in Northern Ireland recorded lower levels of achievement in terms of the Investors in People (IIP) standard and with National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

Among UK regions, Northern Ireland has the lowest proportion of its economically active population engaged in managerial, professional and associate professional and technical occupations.

Literacy and basic skill levels as well as ICT skills remain low for a large proportion of the unemployed and employed population. Lifelong learning is only slowly expanding in the training and education sectors, the latter also hit by under achievement and early school leaving. Investment in human resource development in companies remains low, as are the levels of self-employment. Levels of self-employment and the development of the social economy are lagging behind UK averages.

In February 1999, a **Northern Ireland Skills Task Force** was established with broad representation from the public and private sector to advise on the skills needs of the NI economy. The Task Force is supported by a dedicated Skills Unit as part of Research and Evaluation Branch which is responsible for the day-to-day management of research commissioned by the Task Force or of relevance to their remit. The first actions taken have been the establishment of a centre of excellence in skills forecasting at the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre, the Priority Skills Unit, and skills monitoring systems established by the Skills Unit. Membership has been chosen to ensure the involvement of all major actors (education/training, the private sector, economic development agencies) and in keeping with the need for broad consultation, interested parties (e.g. Sectoral training Councils etc) will be asked to add value by responding to and commenting on this research.

Currently NI has 17 Sectoral Training Councils of which 14 have completed training needs analyses ranging from tourism and hospitality to plastics.

A Skills Needs Survey undertaken by DfEE showed that smaller firms were less likely to provide training and where it did take place, it tended to be reactive to meet immediate needs. There is a concern that the UK has a high proportion of SMEs (19%) which see no need to raise their levels of training. There was clear evidence that the most highly qualified are more likely to receive training than those without any qualifications. These findings imply the need to concentrate support in SMEs and among those employers with lower skills and thus the need for more strategic, targeted approach to SME.

## **1.5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **1.5.1 Introduction**

Women make up 43% of all those in employment, and 48% of all employees. The activity rate among women has increased by 19% since 1984. Women are less likely to be unemployed than men, but they still remain much more likely to be inactive, to work part-time and to be concentrated in certain sectors of the economy.

The Northern Ireland labour market is still characterised by a significant gender gap in particular in respect of full-time and self-employment, economic activity, progression and pay. Further, some women, in particular lone parents and those with low levels of qualifications, remain significantly disadvantaged in the labour market.

### **1.5.2 Unemployment**

The ILO unemployment rate for women is comparatively low (5.2% compared with 7.9% for men in Spring 2000), but the activity rate is also low compared with that of men. The activity rate for women of working age is 61% compared with 78% for men of working age. Unemployment is higher for single and separated women – 6.8%.

### **1.5.3 Educational attainment**

Women and girls perform much better than their male counterparts in terms of educational attainment. In 1998/99 (the latest figures available), 66% of girls achieved five or more GCSE passes, compared with 49% of boys; 44% left school with at least one 'A' level compared with 30% of boys; and 71% of girls progressed to further or higher education compared with 52% of boys. The comparatively better performance is not reflected in women's position in the labour force, in respect of occupation, pay or status. At the same time, more highly qualified women are much more likely to participate in the labour force than those with no qualifications (*see below*).

### **1.5.4 Part-time employment and underemployment**

In Spring 2000, 41% of female employees worked part time compared with 6% of male employees, and 85% of part-time employees were women. This is not in itself a statistic that represents inequality and discrimination. It is significant, however, firstly that 19% of women working part time *would* like to work longer hours, and secondly that for all of those women working part time, there may be a number of disadvantages that follow from this situation.

Further, figures on *underemployment* in NI for Winter 1999/2000 taken from the Labour Market Bulletin of November 2000 show that 6.2% of women in employment indicated that they would like to work longer hours (compared with 4% of men), if possible in their present job. In most cases, extra hours were not available from their employer.

The highest increase in employment between June 1993 and June 2000 has been in female part-time employment. However, female full-time employment experienced the *lowest* increase, behind male full-time employment and male part-time employment.

It is also significant that 8% of female employees are temporary compared with 4% of male employees.

### **1.5.5 Industrial and occupational distribution of women in employment**

Concerning the sectoral distribution of female and male employee jobs, both men's and women's jobs are strongly represented in the service sector. Service sector jobs account for 60% of male employee jobs, and 89% of female ones

But in contrast with men, low proportions of women work in other sectors: 9% of female employee jobs are in manufacturing compared with 24% male employee jobs.

Looking in more detail at occupational groups, overall less than 8% of working women are managers or administrators compared with 20% of men. Conversely, 25% of women work in Clerical and Secretarial occupations compared with 9% of men. Women are less likely to be managers and administrators in NI than in GB (25% of all managers and administrators are women, compared with 33% in GB).

Among female full-time employees, 50% are employed in the public administration, education and health sectors (a much higher percentage than for GB, where the figure is 39%, representing the heavy reliance on public sector employment in NI) compared with 26% of males. Further, 20% of working women are in personal and protective occupations, such as catering, domestic services and hairdressing (compared with 7% of men in NI, and 16% of women in GB). Other main work areas for females are distribution, hotel and restaurants (15% - the same as for men in NI and the same as for women in GB).

**Composition of Employee Jobs at March 1999**

	<b>%</b>
<b>Male Full-Time</b>	<b>41.3</b>
<b>Male Part-Time</b>	<b>8.2</b>
<b>Female Full-Time</b>	<b>26.5</b>
<b>Female Part-Time</b>	<b>24.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Economic Activity Rates by Age for Males and Females – March 1999-May 1999**

Age Group years	Male	Female	Total
16-17	29.0%	34.8%	31.8%
18-24	76.6%	61.7%	69.4%
25-49	89.0%	71.5%	80.1%
50+	42.8%	23.9%	32.5%

**Employment by occupation males and females, Spring 2000.**

Occupation	Males	Females
	%	%
Managers	20%	8%
Professional	9%	10%
Assoc. Prof & Tech.	11%	5%
Clerical, secretarial	9%	25%
Craft and related	26%	3%
Personal, protective	7%	20%
Sales	4%	11%
Machine Operatives	13%	3%
Other	7%	7%

Source: DED

### 1.5.6 Earnings

Women are likely to earn less than men. In April 1999, the New Earnings Survey shows that average weekly earnings for women excluding overtime were 82.8% of men's. Women's average hourly earnings excluding overtime were 86.9% of men's. The gap in weekly earnings is larger because women tend to work comparatively fewer hours than men.

The gap in earnings has narrowed over time, and part-time workers have seen a larger increase in earnings over the period 1998-1999 than their full-time counterparts. But women are much more likely still to be concentrated in the jobs that pay less, and part-time work continues to pay substantially less pro rata than full time.

New Earnings Survey (NES) data for 1999 shows that in general, women are more likely to be low paid than men. According to the data, 2.9% of all employees earned less than the National Minimum Wage (NMW) in April 1999 – 3.6% of women and 2.3% of men. In manual occupations, 7.8% of women earned less than the NMW compared with 3.1% of men.

Low pay is concentrated in the sectors and occupations in which women tend to work. Of those earning below the NMW according to the 1999 NES, 84% were employed in

the service sector. At the level of occupation, 20% of those earning below the NMW were employed in personal and protective services, which we have seen includes a high proportion of female workers. Within this occupational group, there are some high paid jobs, but the low paid ones tend to include the ones in which women are concentrated, for example hairdressing and nursery nursing<sup>6</sup>.

Among women working part time, data from the NES indicates that 5.2% earned less than the NMW in 1999, compared with 2.6% of full-time female workers.

There is evidence<sup>7</sup>, though, that women have benefited from the introduction of the NMW combined with the Working Families Tax Credit, and that they should benefit further from the increase in the main rate of the NMW from £3.60 to £3.70 per hour from October 1999. The statistics presented above remain nonetheless significant and should be addressed by a combination of domestic and EU initiatives.

### **1.5.7 Self-employment**

There is a lower level of self-employment among females compared to males in NI. Women account for only 16% of the self-employed, compared with 27% in GB. While accounting for 20% of the total number of male jobs, self-employment makes up around 4% of female employment.

### **1.5.8 Economic activity and inactivity, in particular for women with dependent children**

We have seen that the economic activity rate for women of working age is 61%, and has risen by four percentage points since 1989. Among women that are *inactive*, 88% do not want a job, whilst the other 12% want a job but were not seeking work in the past four weeks, or were unable to start work. Of those that want a job but are inactive, we have seen in Section 1.2.8 that 63% are women, and the majority of these say their inactivity is due to family commitments. Among men, on the other hand, 53% give sickness or disability as the reasons for their inactivity.

Women in Northern Ireland tend to be less likely to be economically active if they are married with no children than if they are single with no children (although the rise in participation rates has been most significant for married women); and less likely to be economically active if they have dependent children. Activity also decreases with the number of children. Although the number of childcare places available has increased substantially in recent years, these continue to fall short of UK or EU standards.

The economic activity rate for women of working age with dependent children is 57%, compared with 66% for those without children. Both percentages are quite considerably lower than GB, where the figures are 68% and 77% respectively.

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<sup>6</sup> Northern Ireland Labour market Bulletin, November 2000

<sup>7</sup> Some such evidence is presented in the NI Labour Market Bulletin, November 2000, which also draws on the Low Pay Commission's report of February 2000. It is acknowledged that several years data will be needed to assess the full impact of the NMW

There is an increase, however, in the overall economic activity rate of women with dependent children. It rose by over three percentage points between 1992 and 1998 with the largest rise being for women whose youngest child was aged 5-10. This rise may well be due at least in part to improvements in childcare, although childcare in number of childcare places in NI remains low.

It is interesting to see that the activity rates in Spring 2000 do not vary significantly with the age of the youngest child. The rate for women whose youngest child is 0-4 is 57%; the same as that for women whose youngest is 5-11; and only one percentage point lower than the rate for women whose youngest is 11-15. This compares with respective rates of 58%; 73%; and 76% in GB.

The increase in female participation rates over the last decade has been most significant for married women. Between 1988 and 1998, the rate for married women rose by 7.8 percentage points, compared with three percentage points for all women.

However, in NI, unlike GB, married women without children still have a significantly lower participation rate than single women without children. In 1998, the activity rate of married women without children was 64.7% - nearly 10% lower than the rate for single women without children. The pattern of marriage reducing the likelihood of participation is no longer apparent in GB, and trends suggest that it will become less evident in NI.

### **1.5.9 Lone parents and those with low qualifications**

Activity rates of single women with dependent children are considerably lower than those for married women with children (49.5% compared to 63.6% in 1998). Lone mothers are on average younger than married mothers and therefore have less work experience; they also have lower levels of qualifications, and activity rates tend to be lower for women who are less qualified. Higher qualified women are much less likely in any case to be economic active than lower qualified women. The cost and availability of childcare is also likely to influence their level of participation.

#### **1.5.9.1 Qualifications and participation**

The differences between those women with high levels of qualification and those with lower levels is significant. Among women with degrees, the participation rate was 90% in Spring 1998. But it was only 38% for women with no qualifications.

Further, whilst the overall economic activity rate for women rose by three percentage points between 1988 and 1998, it *fell* by eight percentage points for women with no qualifications.

Among women with no qualifications and pre-school children, only 17% were economically active in Spring 1998. The type of employment offered to women with no or low qualifications is less likely to be flexible or to offer sufficient remuneration to cover childcare costs than that offered to better qualified women.

### 1.5.10 Childcare Provision

Between 1989 and 1999, the overall number of day care places in NI rose by 71% to 40,085. (In England they rose by 39% to 931,000). The number of day nursery places per 1000 children aged 0-4 in NI was 34.8 in March 1998 rising to 39.7 in March 1999. This compares with a figure of 80.6 in England for March 1999. The region had 18,807 places with registered childminders (compared with around 328,200 in England) and some 16,450 playgroup places.

**Day care places by type in 1989 and 1999.**

<b>Number</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1999</b>
Day Nursery	684	4,828
Registered Childminders	8,956	18,807
Playgroup	13,835	16,450
Total Places	23,475	40,085

Source: DED

Since October 1984, help with childcare charges has been available to families receiving Family Credit, Disability Working Allowance and Housing Benefit. This is to assist low income families in work and act as an incentive to encourage the uptake of work. Family Credit has now been replaced by the Working Families Tax Credit.

According to the Inland Revenue, At 30<sup>th</sup> April 2000, 2,674 families in Northern Ireland were receiving higher Working Families Tax Credit awards as a result of help with childcare charges.

Nonetheless, according to the childcare strategy, Children First:

*“Childcare in Northern Ireland still falls far short of the Government’s vision. Access to day nursery and out of school....places compares unfavourably with Great Britain and other regions of Europe...Provision is uneven and not properly co-ordinated...Childcare projects in receipt of short-term funding are financially vulnerable.”*

### 1.5.11 Survey evidence of obstacles facing women returners to education

The number of women entering further and higher education is increasing; women outperform men in their achievement of educational qualifications; and activity rates are much higher for better qualified women than for their less well-qualified counterparts. Women who can access education and improve their qualifications are therefore much more likely to be able to participate in the labour market and to increase their earnings capacity in work. Women with children in particular often cannot afford to accept low-paid jobs.

A small transnational comparative study recently examined the obstacles facing women returners to education. The survey looked at women in NI and Germany and found greater obstacles among the women in NI with regard to a number of issues. The greatest divergence lay in “lack of confidence” which was experienced by 74% of the NI women compared with 39% of the German women. In some cases, time constraints were also experienced by the women linked to with their day to day running of a farm as well as the demands made on their time from looking after husbands and children. Lack of information on training and educational opportunities was a common problem in both countries indicating a need for more and accessible information. “Lack of money” and “time constraints” were major obstacles for women in NI. This reflected the need to meet new financial commitments arising such as transport and childcare. Lack of creche facilities was a barrier cited by 29% of respondents in both NI and Germany.

<b>Obstacles/ Difficulties facing women returners to education-</b>		
<b>Comparison of survey findings from Northern Ireland and Germany (1995)</b>		
<b>Obstacles /Difficulties</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Northern Ireland</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Fear of failure	30%	34%
Lack of confidence	39%	74%
Lack of creche facilities	29%	29%
Lack of money	38%	49%
Attitudes of spouse/partner	8%	11%
Attitudes of family	8%	9%
Attitudes of friends	0%	6%
Lack of information on training/ Educational opportunities	60%	63%
Attitudes of training providers	4%	6%
Time constraints	25%	40%
Timing/scheduling of courses	13%	29%
Lack of counseling	13%	23%
Previous educational experience	1%	17%
Lack of motivation	19%	40%
Geographical location of training	9%	26%
Other	3%	6%
None	0%	9%
<b>Total number of participants</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Source:</b> Murphy P and Kelly G (1995) Overcoming obstacles for women Returners: Evaluation report of an EC Funded Transnational Action- Research Project. <b>University of Ulster</b>		



## 1.6 ETHNICITY

There are no reliable official statistics available as yet for the small ethnic minority populations (including travellers) in Northern Ireland. The Multi-Cultural Resource Centre (on whose figures the NI Equality Commission relies meanwhile pending the results of the 2001 Census of Population) have arrived at the following estimates:

Community	Numbers	Main Geographical areas within Northern Ireland
Chinese	8.000	South/East Belfast, Craigavon, Londonderry, Down, Lisburn
Indian	1.500	Hindi Belfast and various Punjabi Belfast, Derry
African	1.500	Belfast, Ballymena
Irish Travellers	1.500	West Belfast, Derry, Craigavon, Newry
Pakistani	1.000	Greater Belfast, Craigavon
Jewish	500	North Belfast
Bangladeshi	450	Various
Central/Eastern Europeans: Albanians, Polish, Romanian, Serbo-Croat and others	300	Various

### 1.6.1 Communities with 20 to 300 persons

Iranian, Arab (including Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian, Libyan, Saudi, Iraqi, Moroccan, Algerian and other nationalities from the Middle east and North Africa), Vietnamese, Filipino, South Korean, Australian, Japanese, Turkish, Malay, New Zealanders, Guyanese, Thai, Indonesian, Sri Lankan, Kurdish.

There is no suggestion that all of these minority communities are discriminated against in the NI labour market, but there is some evidence that a number do face discrimination. This is set out in Section 2.5.2.10.

## 1.7 Priorities for Support

When considering the priorities for EQUAL we have had to be clear about nature of inequalities, and the work which is currently being taken forward in Northern Ireland to address these issues. This should help identify specific areas which would benefit from further support on a transnational basis. In order to reach these conclusions we have taken account of the priorities set out in the UK Employment Action Plan and the ESF Transitional Objective 1 and PEACE Community Support Framework for Northern Ireland and have taken account of the Joint Employment Review recommendations on the 1999 and 2000 Employment Action Plans, (Chapter 2 explores the policy context in detail). We have also consulted widely and considered the lessons to be learnt from EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT, (this is detailed in Chapter 3).

The Commission called for, among other things, greater financial support to direct employment measures, including the creation of new jobs in personal services worker co-operatives, the development of job-seeking skills, greater employment of people with disabilities by agencies funded to provide services to people with disabilities, greater formal assistance in self-employment schemes, disability awareness, access and equality training which have the potential for creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Participation under all actions and themes under the CIP must be “disability-proofed” including the participation by people with disabilities in all Development Partnerships, including physical access to relevant buildings, meeting places, means of transport etc. Similarly, the Managing Authority for the CIP and the Development Partnerships must ensure that any information material (publications, websites etc) are easily accessible and made user-friendly to people with disabilities.

According to the initial EQUAL Commission Guidelines Member States were required to choose at least one theme under each of the four pillars as well as a separate action in respect of asylum seekers. Drawing upon the consultation responses, it can be concluded that, in many respects, there are common cross-cutting issues between pillars and between themes within pillars including action on asylum seekers. Therefore, because of the overall horizontal nature of the Initiative, it should be possible to integrate similar Themes within the Pillars priority structure and flexibility will be given for some cross-over or cross-cutting even between Priorities.

Northern Ireland’s ESF contribution to EQUAL is a relatively modest figure of some 11.69 million Euro (indexed) over the period 2000-2006. Therefore to ensure that the fund is used in a strategic and focused manner and as an added-value tool, complementary in particular, to the CSF for Northern Ireland and the NAP it was agreed with the Commission that the NI CIP would apply to two rather than four pillars.

Labour shortages can be addressed by promoting access to the labour market by those currently excluded, while skills shortages can be addressed by providing high quality skills and training to those who experience inequality and discrimination and by removing the institutional and cultural barriers to their participation and advancement in the work force.

For these reasons and in order to optimise the scope for transnational co-operation at both Member State and Development Partnership level the CIP will operate primarily within the following selected thematic areas:

### **Employability (Theme a)**

Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market which must be open to all.

### **Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Theme h)**

Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation

### **1.7.1 Overall focus**

The EQUAL working group and the external consultation exercise identified employability as the most important issue to be address through EQUAL, as this remains the most significant barrier to any individual. In addition as the lack of basic skills within the Northern Ireland labour market remains a significant concern, the working group agreed that EQUAL should have a strong focus on developing models to enable the acquisition of basic skills by the non-traditional learner. However there should be scope for exceptions which meet the aims of the EQUAL. For example :

- IT - where there should be scope to examine both IT higher level skills and the IT skills for those with no or low IT literacy
- models for tailored skills acquisition which will enable an individual who is currently disadvantaged to make rapid progress eg customised re-training for long-term unemployed, women returners or tailored support to help a person who is disabled whilst employed to retrain for alternative work

### **1.7.2 Targeting**

EQUAL must be well targeted to make best use of the resources. Targeting will need to be delivered by ensuring that themes are as specific as possible and that they identify the intended policy impact at the outset.

When examining the priorities for support under EQUAL the intention was to identify the real policy gaps that could usefully be informed by EQUAL and where DPs would benefit from transnational co-operation. The work that was already being taken forward through domestic funding and mainstream ESF was taken into account. It is essential that EQUAL maintain close links with new policy developments and key developments related to basic and IT skills. The priority activities mentioned in the table below allow for policy developments over the 6-year period, the activities described provide a general guide which will be further clarified in the guidance to applicants. The project selection criteria will make clear the requirement to:

- i) deliver the objectives set out in the CIP
- ii) have close links with and be able to inform policy development
- iii) demonstrate innovation and added value (domestic provision plus mainstream ESF and Community Initiatives).

The tables at the end of this section set out the priorities for support under each theme. This shows the link between the perspective of the Joint Employment Review (JER) on the Northern Ireland context of UK Employment Action Plan, the domestic policy context and the priorities for support. The priorities are in line with the comments from the JER 2000 Employment Action Plans - which highlighted the fact the lack of basic skills remains a challenge for the UK, and the lack of IT skills as a risk to competitiveness. The focus in EQUAL on gender de-segregation as a means to address the gender gap, takes account of the fact that this is an area which could be improved significantly.

### 1.7.3 Financial allocations

The financial allocations take account of the relative priority of each theme and are set out in detail in Annex A to the Commission Decision. The split for Northern Ireland is given and for comparison purposes the GB split is also shown;

<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>Budget Meuro</b>	<b>11.896437</b>	<b>Indicative split to theme</b>
<b>Employability</b>	7.014 Meuro	59%	A 60%
<b>Equal opportunities</b>	3.741 Meuro	31%	H 32%
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	1.141437 Meuro	10%	

<b>GB</b>	<b>Budget Meuro</b>	<b>394.760200</b>	<b>Indicative split to theme</b>
<b>Employability</b>	157.904080 Meuro	40%	A 30% B 10%
<b>Entrepreneurship</b>	78.952040 Meuro	20%	C 10% D 10%
<b>Adaptability</b>	98.690050 Meuro	25%	E 12.5% F 12.5%
<b>Equal opportunities</b>	19.738010 Meuro	5%	G 0% H 5%
<b>Asylum Seekers*</b>	19.738010 Meuro	5%	-
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	19.738101 Meuro	5%	

NB:

The Asylum seeker provision covers all of the UK - and is based on the assumption that this support is restricted to those seeking asylum, and immediate support in their transition to the labour market once a positive decision is taken. The more general needs of refugees will therefore be able to be addressed through the rest of the EQUAL programme

Pillar, thematic fields & EC feedback on NAP	LMA, Policy focus & analysis	Objectives and Activities for EQUAL in Northern Ireland
<p>• <b>Pillar 1: Employability</b></p> <p><b>Theme A:</b></p> <p>Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market which must be open to all</p> <p>Unemployment has fallen in NI in recent decades, but long-term unemployment remains high (40% of ILO unemployed), is the worst of all UK regions and is very significant for certain groups and areas.</p> <p>Inflows into long-term unemployment in NI exceed the UK average, and the JER 2000 points out that in-flows in the UK among young people and adults (17% and 11% respectively) are themselves higher than those of the best performing Member States.</p> <p>It also states that although LTU is falling, there are still persistent problems concentrated in specific groups, especially within households with no-one in work, among disadvantaged groups and in a number of geographical areas</p>	<p>NI will focus on theme A, to address high rates of unemployment, long-term unemployment and inactivity that is particularly concentrated among:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ men: in March – May 2000, 46% of ILO unemployed men had been out of work and seeking employment for more than one year;</li> <li>◆ status ‘O’ young people (those not in employment, education or training) who show a much higher propensity to become unemployed when they get older. DHFETE (and before it, T&amp;EA) have done much work to identify and follow the issue of this group;</li> <li>◆ disabled people: of whom only 30% are economically active and 50% have no qualifications. Studies, including the NI Omnibus Survey 1998, show experience and perception of discrimination and disadvantage among disabled people, many</li> </ul>	<p><b>Objective: to increase understanding among policy makers and practitioners of the supply and demand side barriers faced by those that are disadvantaged in the labour market, excluded or at risk of exclusion.</b></p> <p>Activities will include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ new work to understand who the people are who face discrimination and disadvantage, eg further disaggregation of statistics on disabled people or minority ethnic groups for instance;</li> <li>◆ testing means to help employers and peers in the workplace understand the needs of those that have difficulty being integrated, with a focus on identified groups whose needs are not well understood.</li> </ul> <p><b>Objective: to identify new methods and produce new guidance for support packages for the labour market integration of the</b></p>

<b>Pillar, thematic fields &amp; EC feedback on NAP</b>	<b>LMA, Policy focus &amp; analysis</b>	<b>Objectives and Activities for EQUAL in Northern Ireland</b>
<p>Inactivity has risen alarmingly in NI between 1984 and 2000 and the proportions on Disability Living Allowance, attendance allowance and incapacity benefits are twice as high as the UK average. Inactivity is a particular problem among lone parents and disabled people. High inactivity levels among the former are particularly highlighted for the UK as a whole in the JER 2000.</p> <p>The JER 2000 emphasises a continued problem of low basic skills levels in the UK. In NI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ 47% of the long-term unemployed have no qualifications;</li> <li>◆ 50% of disabled people have no qualifications</li> <li>◆ almost one quarter of the adult population is at the lowest level of literacy</li> </ul> <p>In response to this problem, the Council recommends that the UK should intensify efforts to implement initiatives on lifelong learning, particularly those aimed at increasing the general levels of basic skills, demonstrating how access will be ensured for those groups traditionally reluctant to take up the</p>	<p>of whom want to be able to work (21% of the 70% of disabled who are inactive say they would like a job).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ certain geographical areas – Districts in the West of NI in general show higher concentrations of long-term unemployment of inactivity. Claimants of incapacity benefits reach as high as 20% (NI average 14.5) of the economically active population in Strabane and Cookstown District Council areas.</li> <li>◆ Women who face particular difficulty being (re)integrated, especially lone parents, of whom 95% are women, 52% are economically inactive, who are highly vulnerable and who face significant barriers to (re)integration; and women without qualifications, among whom the participation rate is just 38% compared with 90% among women with degrees.</li> </ul> <p>The unemployed and inactive face barriers on the supply and demand sides of the labour market, both skills and non-skills related, attitudinal and tangible. Their perception of a potential local labour market is often narrow, and in NI, the problem of restricted mobility</p>	<p><b>most disadvantaged.</b></p> <p>Activities will include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ developing and testing new packages of outreach, guidance and support with a focus on uniting the work of labour market oriented organisations with those not concerned traditionally with the labour market who work with disadvantaged groups;</li> <li>◆ understanding and testing new means to evaluate progression among the severely labour market disadvantaged;</li> <li>◆ piloting new approaches to attract disadvantaged groups to enhance their basic skills and to make basic skills provision attractive among the whole population;</li> <li>◆ piloting means to introduce supported work placements for those that face disadvantage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Objective: to influence policy makers and practitioners to use the learning produced through this work.</b></p>

Pillar, thematic fields & EC feedback on NAP	LMA, Policy focus & analysis	Objectives and Activities for EQUAL in Northern Ireland
<p>opportunity, or unable to find suitable provision.</p> <p>Pillar 4: Equal Opportunities for women and men</p> <p>Theme H:</p> <p>Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation</p> <p>Although progress has been made on narrowing the gender pay gap in the UK, the JER 2000 points out that it remains high compared with the EU average and the gap in employment</p>	<p>among the unemployed is exacerbated by community differentials.</p> <p>Funding under this pillar and theme will target these groups and communities in particular, as well as others that are disproportionately affected by unemployment and inactivity.</p> <p>EQUAL activity will complement and add value to that being carried out by the Equality Commission and action through the provisions of new TSN, and will inform policy. New TSN supports targeting resources and efforts on those that are most socially disadvantaged includes a special focus on unemployed people and increasing their chances of finding a job.</p>	<p><b>Objective: to increase understanding and identify means to combat (discriminatory, stereotypical and traditional) attitudes that inhibit women's entry to and progression</b></p>

<b>Pillar, thematic fields &amp; EC feedback on NAP</b>	<b>LMA, Policy focus &amp; analysis</b>	<b>Objectives and Activities for EQUAL in Northern Ireland</b>
<p>attributable to the impact of parenthood is also the highest in the EU, suggesting a need for sufficient and affordable childcare. Addressing job segregation will help to reduce the pay gap further.</p> <p>The JER 2000 also says that the current levels of occupational and sectoral segregation between men and women are higher than the EU average, and suggests the need to tackle gender stereo-typing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ In NI, the labour market is still characterised by a significant gender gap in full-time and self-employment especially, economic activity, progression and pay, and some women – especially lone parents and those with low qualifications, remain significantly disadvantaged in the labour market;</li> <li>◆ Women are under-represented in higher-level jobs: only 25% of managers/administrators are women compared with 33% in GB, and less than 8% of working women <i>are</i> managers or administrators in NI compared with 20% of men;</li> <li>◆ Women are significantly under-represented in IT and communications;</li> <li>◆ 20% of women work in personal and protective services, (and 20% of those people earning below the national minimum wage were in this occupational group), and tend to be concentrated in the sub-sectors that pay least (catering, hairdressing and nursery nursing);</li> <li>◆ 85% of part-time employees are women and of these, 19% would like to work</li> </ul>	<p><b>within the labour market.</b></p> <p>Activities will include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ new research and dissemination of information concerning the pay gap, production of guidance on achieving its reduction, and work to enable realistic and measurable targets to be set for its reduction, as well as piloting methods of measurement of pay gap reduction in selected professions;</li> <li>◆ piloting education and training programmes with employers and trade unions to understand the problems faced by women within the labour market, especially those with caring responsibilities;</li> <li>◆ experimenting with work in schools to help girls and young women, and boys and young men to consider their career options, and to guide them on work placements in non-traditional professions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Objective: To enhance the capacity and effective tools available to learning providers</b></p>



Pillar, thematic fields & EC feedback on NAP	LMA, Policy focus & analysis	Objectives and Activities for EQUAL in Northern Ireland
	<p>longer hours;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ whilst female part-time jobs experienced the highest increase between 1993 and 2000, female full-time jobs experienced the lowest increase;</li> <li>◆ activity for women decreases with the number of children, and the availability of accessible childcare continues to fall far short of EU standards</li> </ul> <p>EQUAL will complement and add value to UK and NI policy and initiatives in respect of action to tackle segregation in the labour market. It will work to increase dramatically understanding and information dissemination concerning women's position within the labour market, and provide new evidence that will challenge traditional attitudes and sexual stereotyping. Action will be taken to influence provision at every stage, from the choices girls and women make about careers to the paths their careers take up to retirement.</p> <p>It will take cognisance of the evidence that lack of accessible, affordable childcare contributes to and exacerbates the gap between men and women in the labour market, and build on and</p>	<p><b>and advisors to encourage women and men to enter professions in which they are traditionally under-represented, with a focus on specific vocational areas that offer scope for higher pay and status jobs</b></p> <p>Activities will include for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ developing tools and methods for schools, careers advisers and learning providers to use to encourage women and men to train in non-traditional professions, and in professions in which there are skills shortages;</li> <li>◆ Piloting positive action approaches for women in sectors and at levels in which they are under-represented, in particular ICT;</li> <li>◆ Identifying, developing and testing methods to help unskilled and low-skilled women enter and progress within the labour market.</li> </ul> <p><b>Objective: to identify and support employers to adopt working practices that enable</b></p>

<b>Pillar, thematic fields &amp; EC feedback on NAP</b>	<b>LMA, Policy focus &amp; analysis</b>	<b>Objectives and Activities for EQUAL in Northern Ireland</b>
	<p>add value to the work of the NI childcare strategy to find innovative means to tackle the childcare problem.</p>	<p><b>women to progress within employment.</b></p> <p>Activities will include for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ testing approaches to enable firms, especially small firms, to implement paternity leave schemes and piloting advice schemes for firms, especially small firms, on dealing with maternity leave and the return to work for women who have had children;</li> <li>◆ piloting innovative childcare schemes and testing the scope for transferring schemes that have worked in different settings.</li> </ul>

## **CHAPTER 2: The policy context and rationale for action under EQUAL**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section of the Northern Ireland EQUAL Programme begins by setting out the EU policy context, explaining the pillars of the European Employment Strategy and their links to UK and Northern Ireland policy. It proceeds to provide the context in Northern Ireland under each of the two selected pillars – Employability and Equal Opportunities, setting out a rationale for each of the two themes selected, summarising key labour market and policy developments, and links to the NAP, and describing the scope for work under EQUAL.

The third theme of asylum seekers will be taken forward jointly as part of an overall UK approach.

### **2.2 THE EUROPEAN POLICY CONTEXT**

EQUAL is concerned with overcoming disadvantage in the labour market. It should be seen in the context of EU, UK and Northern Ireland employment and labour market policy and instruments.

Employment has gained increasing significance at EU policy level throughout the 1990s, with successive European Councils attaching consistently greater importance to it. The European Council of Essen, in 1992, laid the foundations for a new European Employment Strategy. In 1997, the European Councils of Luxembourg and Amsterdam called for an intensification of co-operation between Member States to fight unemployment and promote employability.

The Extraordinary Jobs Summit in Luxembourg in November 1997 led to the agreement of a first set of Employment Guidelines, based on four pillars that should be closely reflected in Member States' employment policies. The European Employment Strategy is underpinned by the inclusion, for the first time, of an employment chapter in the Treaty of Amsterdam.

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the main instrument of the European Union for promoting employment and combating unemployment. Strands of other Structural Funds also contribute towards these aims.

On 21<sup>st</sup> June 1999, new Regulations for the Structural Funds, including a new ESF Regulation, were adopted by the Council of the European Union and will determine the nature of spending through the funds from 2000-2006.

The revised ESF must be seen in the context of the European Employment Strategy, and dovetails with the approach of the strategy. Effectively, it becomes a key

instrument of policy and financial support for the European Employment Strategy, representing a significant development since the last major reform of the Structural Funds in 1988.

### **2.2.1 European Employment Strategy and the National Action Plan for Employment**

The European Employment Strategy is underpinned by the special chapter on employment introduced to the Treaty of Amsterdam. A framework for national action is provided in the employment guidelines, agreed annually and based around four pillars:

1. improving employability
2. developing entrepreneurship
3. encouraging adaptability of businesses and their employees
4. strengthening equal opportunities policies for women and men

Action and progress in respect of the guidelines is reported in the National Action Plans for Employment. These inform the European Commission's Joint Employment Report.

The main goals of the European Employment Strategy have been defined as to:

1. achieve a high level of employment in the economy and for all groups in the labour market
2. move away from a passive fight against unemployment towards promoting sustained employability and job creation
3. favour a new approach to work organisation in such a way that EU firms are able to cope with economic change while reconciling both security and adaptability, and allowing individuals to participate in life-long training
4. provide equal opportunities for everyone in the labour market to participate and have access to work

The main policy principles are:

1. a shift towards prevention and early activation in employment policies. This means helping people before or as soon as they become unemployed, rather than addressing their needs only once they have been out of a job for some time;
2. a new management-by-objectives approach. Member States will set concrete targets and objectives, in some cases at EU level, as benchmarks for evaluation of the success or failure of their employment policies;
3. annual multilateral mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the strategy
4. Member States, together with the Commission, will set up institutional mechanisms and common employment indicators to allow for systematic assessment of action taken;

5. integrating employment policy with other policy areas. Other policies, at both national and Community level, must take account of the employment impact;
6. progress towards an employment pact; and
7. employment policy is not the responsibility of governments alone. Social partners, regional and local partners, and NGOs all have a role to play by committing themselves to meeting the employment objectives.

The 1999 Joint Employment Report (JER) endorsed the UK's labour market policies, but made particular recommendations where further action was felt to be important. These were:

*Focus on the issue of gender pay gap and develop appropriate policies to address this, building inter alia on the positive effects to be expected from the introduction of the minimum wage in 1998.*

The Northern Ireland EQUAL Programme will contribute to this through innovative and transnational activity to address the pay gap and labour market segregation in NI. (see 2.3.2, below).

*Encourage a partnership approach in order to enable social partners at all appropriate levels to reach agreement on the modernisation of work organisation, with the aim of making undertakings more productive and competitive while achieving the required balance between flexibility and security.*

This is clearly intended to be a key aspect of the EQUAL Programme. In Northern Ireland, the involvement of social partners is expected in all Development Partnerships and the actions of DPs should introduce innovative ways to involve them in specific actions.

*Upgrade the statistical monitoring system, so that policy indicators on prevention and activation will be provided by 2000 in accordance with agreed definitions and methods.*

*Pursue efforts to expand and improve the quality of child care provision, in order to enable particularly women to participate more in part-time as well as full-time work, according to their preferences.*

This chapter of the Northern Ireland Programme summarises a number of issues relating to childcare provision in Northern Ireland. Government commitments to increased provision are set out in Children First, the NI Childcare Strategy. EQUAL will add value to these by exploring innovative models of provision involving employers, and means of providing accessible care to improve access to the labour market for vulnerable and disadvantaged women.

### **2.2.2 The Policy Frame of Reference**

The Policy Frame of Reference (PFR) is a document prepared by the Member State, and intended to provide a framework that unites the employment guidelines, the NAP and the ESF policy fields. Although it is significantly concerned with ESF, the PFR relates to all human resource activity, including that funded through the other three Structural Funds.

### **2.2.3 Action under Article 13 of the EC Treaty**

EQUAL is expected to complement action under Articles 13 and 137 of the EC Treaty. Action under Article 13 forms an important context for the EQUAL programme. To date the Commission has brought forward three proposals in the area of anti-discrimination under Article 13. These are for:

1. a Directive covering discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin in a range of areas including employment and training, goods and services. This has been adopted
2. a Directive covering discrimination on grounds of age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief but limited to the areas of employment and training. This is under negotiation
3. an action programme covering discrimination on all of the above mentioned grounds. This is highly relevant to the EQUAL Programme

This proposed Article 13 Action Programme is intended to encourage new policy responses to discrimination, and has three proposed objectives:

- knowledge and measurement and evaluation of policies and practice
- to develop the capacity of Member States, regional and local authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the social partners and other “target actors” to address discrimination in particular through support for the exchange of to improve understanding of issues related to discrimination through improved information and good practice at European level
- to promote and disseminate “values and practices underlying the fight against discrimination”

It will combine support for legislative proposals to combat discrimination with broader activities promoting anti-discriminatory practices. It will address discrimination across the board rather than to provide separately for action on the different grounds (listed in Article 13) and will incorporate a gender dimension where appropriate (although gender is not a main focus of the programme, since it is being covered more fully in the forthcoming 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme). Projects will focus on dissemination of good practice. The programme will not fund projects aimed at actual delivery of policy. Projects are not limited to the area of employment.

If agreed, the programme would run in Northern Ireland for six years, from 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2006 with a total proposed budget of 11.69 meuro. It would be open to the EU Member States, EFTA/EEA<sup>8</sup> countries, the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey.

## **2.3 UK and Northern Ireland policy overview**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

The UK as a whole has experienced a period of sustained economic growth, in which the total employment rate has increased, and the number claiming unemployment related benefits has fallen. At the same time, the employment rate among prime-aged men, for instance, has been consistently falling over a number of decades; the number of people on non-unemployment related benefits (eg incapacity benefits) has increased; the youth and long-term unemployment rates remain unacceptably high; and total activity and inactivity rates show little differences with the rates experienced in the 1980s. Certain groups and communities are disproportionately affected by unemployment and face barriers to their entry into and progression within the labour market on both the supply and demand sides.

Since the commencement of the previous Structural Funds period in 1994, policies within the UK as a whole, and Northern Ireland itself, have altered and substantial new initiatives been introduced at Government level to promote employment and combat unemployment. Probably the most significant of these is the Welfare to Work Strategy, underpinned by a commitment to helping those that can to find work and reflected in the “New Deals”, and the accompanying Single Work Focused Gateway. This forms a key part of the Government’s approach to improving employability and promoting active labour market policies.

Research is under way to further identify and clarify the scope for ESF to add value to, and complement, the New Deals.

A number of other strategies and programmes shape and reflect policies relevant to the ESF and employment. They include, for example, the publication of National Learning Targets; the launch this year of the University for Industry and the establishment of individual learning accounts; the publication in December 1998 of the White Paper: Our Competitive Future: Building the Knowledge Driven Economy, and the Northern Ireland economic agenda; and the development of National Childcare Strategies, including Children First in Northern Ireland.

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<sup>8</sup> [EFTA/EAA European Free Trade association/ European Economic Area](#)

### 2.3.2 Social Cohesion and Equality in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, social cohesion, equality and equity are high up on the policy agenda.

**Targeting Social Need (TSN)** was introduced as a policy priority in 1991, with the aim of targeting public policy and spending more sharply on areas in greatest need and to achieve a reduction in community (Catholic/Protestant) differentials. As such, TSN has sought to address disadvantage through spatial targeting at local authority district, ward and enumeration district levels.

TSN has been complemented by Fair Employment legislation and government guidelines on **Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT)**. These go beyond the spatial aspects of unequal access to opportunity and embody a commitment to equality of opportunity and equity of treatment, for all regardless of where they live.

A review undertaken in 1997 provided evidence for a number of weaknesses in the implementation of these guidelines. Studies showed that systematic flows of monitoring information that is consistent across programmes and evaluation on effectiveness of targeting and impact need to be available to influence decision-making on policies, programmes, and resource allocation on an ongoing basis.

In March 1998, the White Paper "*Partnership for Equality*", set out a wide-ranging programme for change in favour of employment equality and reducing unemployment. The White Paper detailed proposals for a re-launch of TSN - the *New TSN initiative* and a linked *Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI)* initiative.

New TSN involves the targeting of resources and effort on people, groups and areas objectively shown to be most socially disadvantaged. This policy includes special focus on the problems of unemployed people and on improving their chances of finding employment.

The elements of New TSN are:

- a special focus on the problems of unemployed people and on increasing their chances of finding a job
- targeting other sorts of social need which may not be directly related to unemployment (e.g. health, housing, education)
- a special initiative Promoting Social Inclusion which will "seek new and creative ways of helping people who are disadvantaged in several ways, to the extent that they cannot enjoy the full range of life opportunities which most people take for granted"

The first of these elements is of particular relevance to EQUAL.



New TSN is not a spending programme in itself, but is about identifying priorities and requires Government departments and agencies to undertake audits, prepare Action Plans, and monitoring and review programmes and spending in relation to TSN. EQUAL must be seen within this context and should complement and build upon the efforts of new TSN.

The Agreement reached through multi-party talks on Northern Ireland includes a section: 'Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity', that sets out a commitment to introducing a statutory duty on equality. Subsequently new statutory duties on public authorities to mainstream equality and good relations were included in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 at Section 75.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity –

- (a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial groups, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- (b) between men and women generally;
- (c) between persons with a disability and persons without, and
- (d) between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, a public authority is also required, in carrying out its functions, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The new duties became applicable from 1 January 2000 for those public authorities included within the Section 75 legislation. Each public authority is required to produce an Equality Scheme stating how they propose to fulfil their statutory duties and submit it for approval to the Equality Commission.

Section 75 is a mainstreaming approach to equality in that it makes equality central to the whole range of public policy making in Northern Ireland. The statutory duties are complementary but additional to other UK and EU equality legislation or directives.

The equality of opportunity duty imposed by Section 75 extends to categories of persons not yet covered by other Northern Ireland or UK anti-discrimination statutes. These are:

- persons of different sexual orientation
- persons of different ages – both the young and old, and
- persons with and without dependants.

Under the Northern Ireland Act, the separate equality bodies for Northern Ireland: the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE NI); the Fair Employment Commission; the Equal Opportunities Commission (NI); and the Disability Council were merged to form a new Equality Commission. This new body started work on 1 October 1999 and will work alongside the Human Rights Commission for Northern Ireland.

Together, these developments represent an important step forward for Northern Ireland in respect of equality, equity and social justice. They provide a firm basis for **mainstreaming equality of opportunity across Northern Ireland** and are highly significant in the context of the EQUAL Programme. It is expected that the Equality Commission will play a key role in the programme.

### **2.3.3 Lifelong Learning**

In the UK, Lifelong Learning is seen as key to prosperity for individuals and businesses. The UK Government aims to widen participation in Lifelong Learning in general, which has particular relevance for disadvantaged groups who have been under-represented in traditional education. The Government is active in seeking to convince people of the benefits of learning, removing financial barriers and other barriers, such as childcare responsibilities and physical access to learning opportunities, as well as the psychological barriers that deter many people from taking up learning opportunities. The major priorities for the UK are basic skills (where the whole of the UK faces particular challenges); and information technology (where the EU has a major challenge in reaching the Lisbon target of becoming the world leader).

The UK Government is building on the solid foundations of the existing lifelong learning framework to bring about a learning revolution for individuals, communities and employers.

In Northern Ireland, a region-wide network of University for Industry (Ufi) Centres, is being established from this year (2000); indicative lifelong learning targets have been established and a Skills Task Force as well as a Basic Skills Unit have been set up.

In addition, preparations are under way for the development of Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs). A feasibility study is being undertaken to examine the options for ILAs in NI, in particular for enhancing the UK core model of ILAs. The possibility exists that ILAs may provide credit elements for more expensive training. The establishment of a NI call centre as part of the Ufi telephone helpline is planned. This will have access to databases on all aspects of learning activity. The establishment of learning centres, strategically located for easy access should complement these actions. Further, a NI Ufi Advisory Group will advise on the development of Ufi. This is particularly significant, given that its membership comprises representatives of business, trade union, the voluntary sector and learning providers. These mechanisms offer the scope to ensure better co-ordination of actions at the local level by local partners whatever form local delivery mechanisms and partnerships may take.

EQUAL will need to identify new and innovative aims which provide everyone, in particular those most disadvantaged in the labour market, with an opportunity and an incentive to learn.

#### **2.4 Key aspects of relationship aspects between the NAP and the strategy for the implementation of EQUAL**

The UK Action Plan for Employment sets out how national policies implement the European Employment Guidelines. There are specific Guidelines which are relevant to EQUAL, namely: Guideline 4, which calls for Member States to develop policies on active ageing so that older workers can remain and participate actively in working life; Guideline 9, which promotes an open labour market and calls for coherent policies to combat discrimination; and Guidelines 18-21 under pillar IV on strengthening equal opportunities policies for women and men.

The NAP applies to the whole of the UK, with key policies common to Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. A number of initiatives are at an earlier stage of implementation in Northern Ireland, and there are also some clear differences. This is appropriate given the context of devolution and the distinctive labour market of Northern Ireland. The new Assembly and devolved institutions are expected to develop further policies and instruments that reflect the particular needs of NI. These are at an early stage at present, but partners are committed to ensuring that EQUAL informs policy and adds value to it, and that the programme should be seen within the context of evolving policy in NI.

The main policies reported on under these Guidelines in the NAP that are important in the Northern Ireland context are:

- the New Deals for Lone Parents and for Partners of Unemployed People, which help mainly women return to the labour market, for Disabled People and for 50 Plus as well as for participants in the New Deal for Young People
- measures to close the gender gap including an equal opportunities strategy
- a range of Lifelong Learning initiatives which extend access to work and opportunity for career development

In addition, Section 2.3.2 has already highlighted the existence and significance of the new Equality Commission that is referred to in the NAP and represents the merging of the key equality bodies in Northern Ireland.

## **2.5 Northern Ireland context, policies and framework for action under EQUAL by Pillar and Theme.**

### **2.5.1 EMPLOYABILITY PILLAR**

#### **Theme (a): Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those that face difficulty being (re)integrated**

This section will provide an initial outline of the overall rationale, aims, objectives and activities for Employability across all groups in Northern Ireland, followed by more detailed identification of problems and activities for specific groups.

##### **2.5.1.1 EMPLOYABILITY context and rationale**

As the Northern Ireland economy grows faster than the UK economy as a whole, employment has been expanding and a favourable performance is expected to continue, the general labour market picture appears positive.

At the same time, unemployment is above the UK average, long-term unemployment is a serious and persistent problem, a substantial proportion of young people are not in jobs, education or training and inactivity levels are alarmingly high. Further, there are some 102,000 households in Northern Ireland where no one is in employment. This represents 21.0% of all working age households compared with a UK average of 15.8% and presents a disturbing picture against a backdrop of overall economic growth and falling unemployment.

A number of groups in Northern Irish society are excluded from social and economic norms or at risk of such exclusion. The causes and effects of their difficult situation are multi-dimensional and hard to isolate, but there is no doubt that unemployment plays a major role. The EQUAL Programme in Northern Ireland will concentrate the largest portion of its budget, 60% on improving the employability of all those that have difficulty being (re)integrated into the labour market.

Action will complement and add value to Government action, by identifying innovative means to improve employability focusing on those that face greatest difficulty, and for whom “mainstream” efforts at integration have proved least effective.

The UK Government has concentrated much effort on promoting work as the best form of welfare, with the New Deals the cornerstone of its labour market programme and tailored advice and guidance available to those that are unemployed. Particular support is made available to vulnerable groups, including lone parents and the disabled. The New Deal for Lone Parents and ONE, for instance, demonstrate recognition of the difficulties faced by some of those groups in society most at risk of exclusion. ONE gives individual benefit and jobsearch advice from a single point of

contact, and forms part of the Modernising Government Agenda which seeks to achieve Joined Up Government, and focuses on service users and the provision of a framework that permit greater effectiveness and efficiency. ONE is currently being piloted in twelve areas in Great Britain, with a pilot planned for introduction in Dungannon in Northern Ireland by November 2001.

£165 million is being spent on the New Deals in Northern Ireland over the life of the current parliament with a key operational target to help 15,000 unemployed people move from welfare into work in 2000-2001.

A programme of tax and benefit reform is aimed at making work pay and helping to tackle poverty for low-income families. The Working Families Tax Credit combined with the National Minimum Wage and changes to income tax and National Insurance charges gives a minimum income guarantee for low-paid families of £200 per week, rising to £214 in Spring 2001.

Attention is also focused upon encouraging a culture of lifelong learning among employers and individuals as well as by the UK Government, as a means to improve employability and particularly to address the problem of low basic skills throughout the UK.

Nonetheless, too higher number of individuals remain disadvantaged in the labour market and for them, existing interventions have still not proved effective.

Furthermore, in Northern Ireland:

- the proportions of people on attendance allowance, Disability Living Allowance and incapacity benefits are more than twice as high as in Great Britain;
- the total number of claimants of incapacity benefits represent 14.5% of the economically active population, and this percentage reaches as high as 20% in Strabane and Cookstown.

Disabled people can be assisted targeted by the New Deal and indeed many of them want to, and could, work. (Of the 70% of disabled people that are inactive, for instance, 21% want to work).

The problems of those facing difficulty being (re)integrated are extensive. Many are skills related:

- around 48% of the long-term unemployed in Northern Ireland have no qualifications;
- around 50% of disabled people have no qualifications;
- almost one-quarter of the region's adult population (16-65) is at the lowest level of literacy.

Many more are about confidence, self-esteem, (perceived and real) prejudice and the attitudes of others, labour market mobility linked with in part to attitudes of unemployed people, their peers and employers, and a variety of barriers in an individual's personal situation linked to their accommodation, mental and physical health, emotional and practical support and drug and alcohol use.

Over a number of years, policy makers and practitioners have recognised the limits of mainstream programmes in engaging, retaining and assisting many of the more disadvantaged people. Reasons for failure are several fold, but commonly linked to an inability to reach the most disadvantaged in the first place; the nature of support provided (that is insufficient and fails to address the diverse non-skills barriers faced); the length of stay on programmes (often too short); the emphasis on a level of outcome inappropriate to this group within such a short period; and insufficient links to opportunities into which an individual can progress at the end of a programme.

There is also evidence that even some of the less mainstream local initiatives that exhibit comparatively good outcomes for the unemployed fail to reach out to and retain the more vulnerable groups.

Further, whilst skills shortages are widely reported, insufficient information is held concerning the links between the skills needs of firms and the skills of the unemployed. Reported skills shortages in Northern Ireland are not always readily distinguished from recruitment difficulties.

At the same time, many people find themselves unable to enter or progress within the labour market because they face a number of non-skills related barriers, for instance linked to childcare, transport, or (perceived and actual) attitudinal barriers among employers and colleagues.

Northern Ireland faces added difficulties in respect of the barriers to labour market mobility, entry and progression. Its small size and the extent of commuting to work across the whole of NI provides a strong argument for proceeding on the basis that it is one labour market.

#### **2.5.1.2 Scope for action on the EMPLOYABILITY pillar under EQUAL**

In this respect, EQUAL provides a real opportunity to do something different: *to learn about the causes and effects of unemployment and inactivity for those that face the greatest difficulty and to pilot truly innovative means to address their problems and measure success. Significantly, it provides a chance to gain a wealth of experience from other Member States and to influence future policy.*

Whilst Structural Funds channelled through the Transitional Objective 1 and Peace Programmes will directly fund assistance to disadvantaged individuals on the ground on a comparatively large scale, EQUAL will set out about really identifying the

barriers faced by those that are disadvantaged in the labour market, and to influence Structural Funds and domestic programmes in accordance with its findings.

Researchers and practitioners will work jointly to examine cause and effect, to get behind what happens to a person on their pathway towards the labour market, and how they fare if and when they get a job.

This theme will principally be focused on actions that will ultimately lead to increased employability among long-term unemployed, inactive and disadvantaged people with multi-dimensional problems. However EQUAL should, perhaps more than other EU initiatives, be focused on overcoming discrimination and the barriers that prevent (re)integration on the demand side of the labour market, and the institutional barriers that inhibit progress, as well as the multiplicity of problems faced on the supply side of the labour market.

***Action under this theme in Northern Ireland, therefore, will focus on identifying and overcoming demand and supply side barriers, including institutional barriers to access and progression, for those that are most disadvantaged in the Northern Ireland labour market.***

***Action will be aimed at identifying the real gaps in mainstream provision, and the reasons why it is failing certain individuals. It will also be necessary to try and identify what sorts of initiatives do work, for whom and why. Although it will be for Development Partnerships to identify need, there is likely to be a need to examine such issues as:***

- Outreach and referral? Do individuals not tend to get referred to “mainstream” programmes, and why?
- Getting in? Are there criteria that these individuals do not meet?
- How significant are the attitude and skills of staff?
- How important is the availability of accompanying support: social, emotional, behavioural, practical and financial (with childcare, transport etc.) etc. and what sort of support is needed?
- Location and timing of programmes?
- Overall Length of programmes and projects?
- Actual activities on offer?
- Way in which activities are provided
- Relationships with benefits.
- What are the opportunities for progress and can individuals access them?

Breaking down the barriers and providing the multi-dimensional and ongoing support that some of these people require is a long-term process. A positive outcome in the first instance may be a step on the first run of the ladder – regular attendance in a support programme or some form of social interaction. For many whose confidence has been persistently eroded by social problems, whose mental and physical health may be poor and/or whose addiction has dictated the pattern of their daily lives,

making the effort to come to a project each day can represent a significant achievement.

For this reason, there is a strong rationale for EQUAL Development Partnerships to pilot action that lasts for a significant amount of time, and can measure progress of individuals over that time, and to examine different ways of evaluating progress.

Evaluations in Northern Ireland and elsewhere have shown in the past that there are insufficient links in interventions, including through the Structural Funds, *between* the demand and supply sides of the labour market. There is still not enough known about what employers need in Northern Ireland to help them to take on an individual who faces particular difficulties, and to be able to retain them.

More needs to be understood also about recruitment and labour market mobility patterns that restrict some individuals' access to certain types of work or to jobs in certain areas. ***Many individuals may find themselves in a cycle of disadvantage in the first place because they are, or they become, unemployed. There are few or no opportunities in their locality that they can access, or are willing to try to access. The main problem for them at least initially may be a perceived or real lack of opportunity to work or to progress in work. EQUAL must find out more about the barriers for these individuals, and the means to overcome them.***

The relationship between employment growth and unemployment is a complex one. The long-term unemployed people in particular do not necessarily get the jobs that are on offer, or help to alleviate the skills shortages experienced by many employers.

There is evidence that TSN targets in respect of attracting inward investment to TSN areas have generated benefits for the residents of these areas, in that many have found work in the incoming firms. There is also some evidence that they tend to get the lower paid and lower status jobs, whilst the higher quality ones filter out to non-TSN areas.<sup>9</sup>

***EQUAL in Northern Ireland will place a very strong emphasis on the role of employers in Development Partnerships.*** Whilst every effort should be made to engage employers from the early stages, action should also focus on identifying what encourages an employer to get involved, and to test innovative methods to secure their participation in activities to assist the most disadvantaged.

***Action should seek to examine models of best practice in overcoming discrimination in the workplace and barriers to entry and advancement of people with real and perceived disadvantages.***

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<sup>9</sup> See for example the Twelfth Labour Market Bulletin that reports on the findings of the large scale Labour Recruitment Study



## 2.5.2 Issues for groups that face particular difficulties being integrated

### 2.5.2.1 Introduction

This theme covers groups that face discrimination and disadvantage in the labour market, and that have difficulty being reintegrated.

Development Partnerships *will be tested to see whether they can provide strategically for a number of such groups*. In this way, EQUAL differs from a number of other approaches that emphasise the importance of targeting on particular individual groups. Further, activities proposed by DPs are expected to cover these groups, in as inclusive a manner as possible.

There are many problems shared by those who are disadvantaged in the labour market, and individual “target groups” are far from homogenous *as* groups. There is much to be gained from a holistic approach.

In order to inform thinking and enhance understanding of the policy context and rationale, however, it is considered important to set out briefly here the issues faced by those that are disadvantaged and discriminated against in the labour market, and to consider some of the sorts of actions that are thought to be valuable.

The groups who face particular disadvantage in the NI labour market include:

1. long-term unemployed men and those who are economically inactive
2. women who face difficulties in being (re) integrated, especially those with caring responsibilities and those with low levels of qualifications
3. disabled people, those experiencing mental health problems and those with learning difficulties
4. “Status 0” young people.

It is on these people that the NI EQUAL programme intends to focus particular support. Within these broader groups, a number of other individuals face particular difficulties, including:

- minority ethnic groups, in particular for Northern Ireland, Irish Travellers
- older workers
- ex-prisoners and ex-offenders
- those who suffer from drug and alcohol abuse
- the homeless.

Among all of these groups, particular problems are faced by those concentrated in the areas with high unemployment and inactivity rates and those with low levels of basic skills and qualifications.

The sub-section above has set out key characteristics of the proposed response to these issues in Northern Ireland. This sub-section will proceed to summarise a number of key issues facing these groups in turn and to set out where possible the potential for work funded through EQUAL.

#### **2.5.2.2 Long-term unemployed and economically inactive men, especially in the most disadvantaged areas**

Chapter 1 has identified a problem of male long-term unemployment and rising economic inactivity in NI, with particular concentrations of these problems in certain geographical areas.

- Long-term unemployment overall is worse in NI than it is in GB
- 46% of unemployed men have been out of work for more than one year
- in the parliamentary constituency of West Belfast, male Claimant Count unemployment was 22% in September 2000, in Foyle it was 12.9% , in West Tyrone 10.1% and in North Down 9.2%. The NI average unemployment for men was 7.2% of the workforce.
- in the Travel to Work areas of Strabane and Londonderry, male Claimant Count unemployment was 12.7% and 12.2% respectively, compared with 7.4% for men in NI as a whole. These two areas also recorded the lowest percentage changes over the year, of -12.4% and -11.2% respectively.

There are many reasons for male unemployment and inactivity. A lot of the men who are out of work are likely to face confidence and self-esteem related barriers, and frequently to experience many of the other disadvantages described earlier in this section.

Low skills levels increase the likelihood of being out of work, opportunities to undertake meaningful work that appears financially worthwhile may be, or be perceived to be few, and mobility is restricted by a number of barriers, attitudinal and tangible.

#### **2.5.2.3 Scope for action for long-term unemployed and economically inactive men under EQUAL**

Action under this theme should place a particular emphasis on increasing understanding of the reasons for these problems, and seeking to involve all players in overcoming them.

Efforts should be made to draw on all available data and research to contribute to a better understanding of the reasons for male long-term unemployment and inactivity, and in particular for community differentials, and to seek to work out how best to influence change. There are a number of measures in place in NI to ensure equal and fair practice in respect of recruitment, but this is a complex problem linked in particular to the attitudes and mobility of individuals, and EQUAL offers scope to add value in respect of understanding the problem and identifying the solutions.

Faced with the complexity of the relationship between unemployment and employment growth; and between employment growth, activation measures and

economic inactivity, there is a real scope for EQUAL to contribute new knowledge. The involvement of employers will be absolutely essential.

#### **2.5.2.4 Women who face difficulty being (re)integrated**

Chapter 1 has summarised the issues facing women in Northern Ireland's labour market. Women remain considerably less likely to be economically active than men (61.5% of women of working age are economically active compared with 78.2% of men) and research has identified substantial barriers faced by women in entering and progressing within the labour market.

Under this theme, action should be inclusive of women who face particular difficulties being (re)integrated into the labour market.

Survey evidence shows that these women frequently lack confidence and awareness of education and training opportunities, and that childcare remains a significant barrier to their participation, which increases the more children they have.

**Lone mothers** are especially vulnerable and a significant group in Northern Ireland society.

- Lone parents head 23 per cent of all families with dependent children in Northern Ireland, and 95% are women
- 52% of lone parents are economically inactive.

A report commissioned on behalf of the (former) Department of Health and Social Services shows that:

- lone mothers on benefits in Northern Ireland have more difficulty than lone mothers generally in Britain in finding and keeping employment, although the majority want to work
- they are more likely to have three or more children
- they are more likely to report that they or one of their children have a disability and
- they are more likely to possess no qualifications, or qualifications below 'A' level standard
- a smaller proportion of lone mothers in Northern Ireland than in Britain receive regular Child Support or maintenance payments, a factor that has been found to be influential in terms of employment status
- of those in employment, only a minority make use of formal childcare - most prefer to leave their children in the care of relatives

This points to a picture of a group of women exposed to a considerable risk of exclusion and poverty who face particular difficulties getting into work.

Childcare clearly remains a major issue. Whilst recent initiatives in Northern Ireland have increased substantially the number of places available in areas of greatest need, NI started from an extremely low base and still the Northern Ireland Childcare Strategy accepts that:

*“Childcare in Northern Ireland falls far short of the Government’s vision. Access to day nursery and out-of-school...places compares unfavourably with Great Britain and other regions of Europe....Provision is uneven and not properly co-ordinated to meet the needs of individual children and their parents.*

#### **2.5.2.5 Scope for action under EQUAL for women who face difficulty being (re)integrated.**

*Actions should include identification of innovative means to reach and advise vulnerable and disadvantaged women, in particular lone parents, on the types of opportunities that are likely to be appropriate for them and new ways to provide support that is accessible to these women.*

In respect of childcare, action should take cognizance of the complexity of the picture, in particular the finding that many lone parents prefer not to use formal care. Informal childminders may expose themselves to risk, and are often on low incomes. Considerable advantages could be derived from work to identify which forms of care are comfortable and accessible to vulnerable and disadvantaged women.

Through the strategy (Children First) the Government has pledged to make funding available to increase the number of places, and new models are to be piloted. Support should also be forthcoming through the Transitional Objective 1 and Peace Programmes. EQUAL should not duplicate this, nor should it take over domestic responsibilities. Rather, action under EQUAL within this theme should identify and test the best models for those most vulnerable women making the most of the opportunity to share experience with Member States more advanced in this field.

Efforts should be made to test innovative packages of assistance for those most vulnerable and disadvantaged, who lack confidence and experience and face a multiplicity of barriers to the labour market.

### **2.5.2.6 Disabled People, those with mental health problems and those with learning difficulties**

Chapter 1 describes the position of disabled people within the labour market. Key facts are:

- Within Northern Ireland there are approximately 149,000 disabled people, accounting for 15% of the working age population and the highest percentage of the adult population in the UK
- Of these, among the working age population, 30% are economically active (25% in employment and 5% unemployed)
- Of the 70% who are inactive, 21% would like to work
- 50% of disabled people have no qualifications

Disabled people face a number of substantial barriers to their entry and progression within the labour market. These can be summarised as:

- limited personal ambition, the result of cultural assumptions, perceptions within the family, peer group attitudes, and those of professional contacts within the health, social service and education sectors, all lead to low expectations
- information on mainstream and specialist opportunities is both poor and generally inaccessible
- education and training facilities are limited, especially in secondary, tertiary and vocational training sector
- restricted access to general and vocational qualifications, to information about opportunity, and to support services both personal and business
- limited infrastructural adjustments mean inaccessible transport, workplaces, housing and community facilities

There is also some evidence to show that disabled people perceive or experience among potential employers:

- fear and ignorance, the result of a lack of understanding, the misrepresentation, and a limited knowledge of the nature of disability and mental ill health and the needs associated with it
- a paucity of information, education and training helping business to deal with disability and mental ill health in the workplace
- some unwillingness to adapt the working environment to suit needs assisted people, and to integrate different working practices incorporating support mechanisms for disabled people

- limited knowledge of the aid and assistance packages available as incentives to support business attracting disabled workers

This combination of factors results in low levels of economic activity, poverty and exclusion among the disabled. They also lead to a perception among disabled people, according to the NI Omnibus Survey (November 1998), that they lack the opportunity to undertake work, that the type of work generally available to them is not only unsuitable, but also low paid, and that employers are just not interested in disabled people and their needs.

#### **2.5.2.7 Scope for action under EQUAL for people with disabilities**

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) gives disabled people rights in the areas of employment and access to goods and services. Codes of Practice and Good Practice Guides have been produced to help employers and service providers to understand their duties under the Act and to highlight the benefits of employing disabled people. The Equality Commission provides advice and information on the Act. The EQUAL programme should complement the Act and Government policies in respect of the prevention of discrimination against disabled people.

Action under this theme should include testing innovative packages of support that take account of the particular needs of disabled people who are some way removed from the labour market, and especially of the needs of economically inactive disabled people. This should include identifying routes out of inactivity for those who currently express a wish to work, and sensitive work with those that do not want to work, to identify perhaps alternative routes along a longer term pathway to integration.

Work geared towards individuals should be combined with work with employers, to assist in improving understanding of their needs and increasing motivation to participate in projects among disabled individuals.

However, there is also a strong rationale for exploring opportunities for volunteering and supported work placements as a means to integration for particularly disadvantaged disabled people.

Some distinction should be drawn between different types of disability, and the very different needs that disabled individuals have.

#### **2.5.2.8 “Status 0” young people**

Chapter 1, highlighted the issue of the group of young people that is not in education, training or employment, and their propensity to unemployment from the age of 18 onwards if they have a number of other characteristics or disadvantages in their background.

The more of these problems a young person faces, the less likely they are to be able to escape from their cycle of disadvantage and the more likely they are to experience serious social and economic exclusion in later life.

In depth qualitative analysis that builds on the statistics about this group shows that their exclusion begins at an early age, with experiences of school often negative and a feeling among some that work does not pay enough to make it worthwhile.

#### **2.5.2.9 Scope for action under EQUAL for “Status 0” young people.**

This group merits work to identify innovative means to engage them in learning and the labour market. With bad experiences of education still fresh in their minds, new ways of attracting them to learn, and of delivering support to them are needed. Efforts will need to take into account their often chaotic lifestyles and inability at least at first to make a full-time and regular commitment to attend and engage. At the same time, it is likely that they need social and emotional support. EQUAL can contribute much to an understanding of how best to deliver this support. It can also shed light on the potential progression routes for young people, and the factors that increase their chances of finding and sustaining a job.

#### **2.5.2.10 Minority Ethnic Groups**

The labour market assessment has shown that the number of individuals from minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland is small and reliable statistics on their labour market situation cannot readily be identified.

Research has been carried out, however, by the University of Ulster, that examines the experience of education, training and employment of the four largest minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland: Chinese, Travellers, South Asians and Black Africans.

The main findings to emerge from the report are:

- a significant majority of Chinese people appear to work within the catering industry, but the data suggest that this is not always their preferred career option. Rather, choices are perceived to be limited by one or more of the following: lack of educational qualifications; lack of proficiency in English; and/or a belief that the majority white settled population would not allow or accept them in other occupations;
- Irish Travellers are experiencing high levels of long-term unemployment caused by a number of factors, not least the severe decline of what has become known as the ‘Traveller Economy’. For those attempting to find work within the mainstream labour market, their efforts appear to be severely hampered by three key factors: the high rates of illiteracy and the general lack of educational qualifications among Travellers; the strong perception among many Travellers that the majority settled population do not trust them and are generally hostile

towards them; and, partly because of these two factors, a general lack of confidence among Travellers.

It was found that the high levels of illiteracy and lack of formal qualifications gained by Travellers do not reflect a general lack of concern for education among this group. The majority of those interviewed expressed regret at either not having the opportunities to learn and/or not making the most of the opportunities that existed and also stressed a desire to further their education. Many of the young adults interviewed had joined various literacy and other educational programmes. One of the key motivating factors underlying this desire to learn appeared to be a recognition of the importance of a basic level of education and of qualifications in order to find work.

It has been found previously that the majority of Traveller children do not continue to attend school after primary education. Some of the reasons for this identified by this research included: disillusionment arising from what some Travellers perceived to be the low expectations that teachers had about them and thus the poor level of education they received; and fear of secondary schools, especially the possibility that teachers and fellow pupils from the majority 'settled' community may pick on them.

Research undertaken within the context of the International Fund for Ireland Communities in Action Programme shows that Travellers experience multiple deprivation and suggests that some 80 per cent of teenage Travellers are not in full-time education. Of particular significance is the finding from the Republic of Ireland that whilst Travellers are targeted by social inclusion programmes, research indicates that there is virtually no Traveller involvement on local partnerships in Ireland – at director, chairperson, or manager levels.

- Among South Asian people living in Northern Ireland, many are self-employed. (Many also work in professional occupations, especially in medicine). This high level of self-employment seemed to be consolidated by two factors: a general mistrust and fear that they would be discriminated against by members of the majority white settled population if they were to enter other forms of employment; and, to a lesser extent, the fact that qualifications they had gained in their previous country were not always recognised in Northern Ireland.
- Little data is available on Black African people living in Northern Ireland. The research described found that some had come to Northern Ireland to study, train and/or gain work experience. Black Africans appear to be employed in a variety of jobs and occupations. The problems faced by some within this category include: a general lack of understanding of the employment system in Northern Ireland and how to find work and/or secure training; and an experience of isolation and of ignorance and/or prejudice from their white colleagues.



Racial prejudice and negative attitudes towards minority ethnic groups have also been identified in the Racial Attitudes and Prejudice in Northern Ireland Report published in April 2000.

Whilst some positive findings suggest liberal attitudes on general issues among a majority of the population, a much bleaker set of statistics on specific issues points to a likelihood of minority ethnic groups facing discrimination in the work place. The report states that ethnicity and race are far from unimportant issues in Northern Ireland, shows that negative attitudes have actually increased in recent years and that racial prejudice appears to be around twice as significant as sectarian prejudice in the initial attitudes of the population.

The most negative attitudes appear to be reserved for Irish Travellers, with 40% of those surveyed expressing the view that the nomadic lifestyle of Travellers was an invalid one that should not be supported or resourced by the Government. More generally, 57% would not be willing to accept Travellers as residents in their local area while two thirds (66%) would not willingly accept a colleague at work who is a Traveller.

Racist harassment in the workplace appeared to be a common experience for a significant proportion of minority ethnic people interviewed.

Overall, the picture for minority ethnic groups suggests a combination of difficulties that include low rates of qualifications and skills, lack of understanding about education, employment and training opportunities, and actual and perceived discrimination that inhibits their likelihood of entering the mainstream labour market.

Although the numbers are small, the seriousness of this picture highlights the need for EQUAL to act in an area of activity that has traditionally not received a high profile in EU and domestic funding programmes in Northern Ireland.

#### **2.5.2.11 Scope for action under EQUAL for ethnic minorities**

With comparatively limited experience of working to address the issues faced by these groups, Northern Ireland would benefit considerably from transnational activity in this sphere, probably with Member States that have carried out interesting work in geographical areas with small concentrations of minority ethnic groups and certainly those with Traveller populations. This includes in particular the Republic of Ireland.

Since the budget for the EQUAL programme in Northern Ireland is small, and the problems faced by minority ethnic groups are multi-dimensional, we wish to ensure that the issues faced by these groups are addressed through all themes in the programme, and in particular through inclusive action for disadvantaged target groups in theme (a). We have chosen not to opt for theme (b) on this occasion, for the reasons cited and because we feel this exposes the Programme to the risk that those activities concerned with increasing qualifications and skills levels and augmenting

the representation of those currently underrepresented in entrepreneurship would not reach out to minority ethnic groups because action aimed at them may be seen to be confined to a single theme.

Action taken under this theme should explore in depth the barriers faced by those minority ethnic groups that face particular problems entering and progressing within the labour market.

It should ensure that more is known and understood about the minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland, and in particular their participation in and outcomes from mainstream training provision.

*Actions for disadvantaged groups under this theme could include exploring and pilot innovative ways to increase the skills and qualifications of minority ethnic groups, and test schemes in which minority ethnic groups learn and work alongside white colleagues to combat the sense of isolation and prejudice many report, and to educate white people to overcome racist attitudes and deliberate or inadvertently undermining behaviour towards those from minority ethnic groups.*

A comparatively small amount of work undertaken through the activities of Development Partnership(s) concerned with overcoming labour market disadvantage through this theme could reap significant rewards for a hitherto relatively less visible section of Northern Ireland's population.

Irish Travellers are a particular priority for policy makers in Northern Ireland. Within New Targeting Social Need, the Secretary of State identified the needs of Travellers as one of the priorities for the Promoting Social Inclusion initiative. The case for special interventions is strong. Determining the nature of such interventions and how they can be delivered requires further work.

DHFETE is currently co-funding with NISRA and others research which indicates strong and very widespread anti-Traveller attitudes among settled people. These exacerbate problems of social exclusion, not least by making Travellers very reluctant to use mainstream public service provision, for instance in education and training. The Department has identified that EQUAL would be a highly appropriate vehicle for supporting initiatives to further explore and address this issue.

#### **2.5.2.12 Older workers**

Whilst the unemployment rate among older workers aged 50 plus in Northern Ireland is relatively low at 5.2%, the economic inactivity rate is alarmingly high. This represents a waste of skills and experience that impacts negatively on individuals and firms

The UK Government has introduced a range of measures to tackle these difficulties and to help older people, who want to work, back into a job. The Code of Practice on

Age Diversity in Employment, and its supporting guidance for employers, has set the standard for non-ageist employment practices, not least in recruitment and training and development. New Deal 50 Plus, New Deal for Disabled People, New Deal 25+, UK On-Line Computer Skills, Work Based Learning for Adults, and other employment services, are all helping older people back into work - full-time, part-time and self-employment, and many of these measures support training either to help older people compete for jobs, or to remain in sustained employment

#### **2.5.2.13 Scope for action for older workers under EQUAL**

EQUAL should contribute to understanding better the profile of older workers in Northern Ireland and identifying innovative means to bring back into the workforce those who can and want to work. Some action here will need to involve the development of flexible packages to enable older workers to find patterns of working that suit them and potential employers. It will also need therefore to encourage inclusive work practices among employers.

Innovative work under this theme should cover:

- ❑ testing packages of advice and guidance for older people, that reach those who are inactive, and increase understanding of their needs;
- ❑ mentoring support or support networks for long-term unemployed or inactive older people on re-entering the labour market;
- ❑ testing of approaches for providing financial support and advice for older people to help them make the transition back into employment.

#### **2.5.2.14 Ex-prisoners and ex-offenders**

The labour market assessment has highlighted the severity of problems faced by the ex-offender and ex-prisoner population in Northern Ireland. This includes those politically motivated ex-prisoners that have been released as part of the ongoing Peace process.

Statistics are relatively few, and the position of those recently released is hard to identify at this stage. However, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland has reported that at end March 2000, some 3,000 of its clients were experiencing severe difficulty in entering/re-entering the labour market.

At a conference organised by the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders in November 1999 the Northern Ireland and Irish Ministers responsible for the Criminal Justice systems in their respective jurisdictions emphasised the importance of employment opportunities as key to the re-insertion of ex-offenders into social life and the community. The role of Republican and Loyalist ex-prisoners in achieving this was recognised.

It was also identified that there was a strong relationship between and unemployment amongst young males under 30 and crime. There was clear evidence that once you are an offender, gaining employment will make you less likely to carry on offending.

The employment prospects of ex-offenders and prisoners are significantly reduced for a number of reasons. These include their a lack of confidence and self-esteem; lack of work experience; and perceived and real attitudinal barriers on the part of employers.

Some but by no means all ex-prisoners and offenders have low skills levels or outdated skills and a lack of work experience. Many also experience associated problems of mental ill-health, and drug and alcohol abuse and have chaotic lifestyles that limit their propensity to enter full-time employment or training without integrated packages of support to assist them along a long-term pathway to the labour market.

#### **2.5.2.15 Scope for action under EQUAL for ex-prisoners and ex-offenders**

Action under EQUAL must be inclusive and approaches to assist a range of groups will be supported under this theme. These should involve solutions oriented towards influencing politically motivated ex-prisoners and for non-politically motivated ex-prisoners and offenders. In NI these are a significant target group. Under this theme, actions should particularly be inclusive of those prisoners that face multi-dimensional problems that expose them to the risk of social exclusion, and on understanding more about the diverse needs of the prison population.

Whilst much has been done internationally to assess the link between employment and recidivism, policy would benefit considerably from innovative research to increase understanding about these links and to encourage more joined up work between the different agencies with whom ex-prisoners and offenders come into contact.

#### **2.5.2.16 Those experiencing drug and alcohol dependency**

Statistics show that 1808 individuals of working age have been treated in a Northern Ireland mental illness hospitals for a primary diagnosis of alcohol dependence syndrome in the year 1998/99 and that this figure has increased with each successive year since 1995/96. Of these, 30% are women and 70% are men. The percentage of women tends to be higher in the 35-44 age bracket, suggesting that the onset or at least treatment of alcohol dependency among women comes later.

Drug and alcohol misuse has been shown to act as a significant barrier to employment and training and may be associated with a series of other problems, such as criminal and anti-social behaviour. Drug use, in particular, is often linked with a chaotic lifestyle that makes it difficult to hold down a job or to attend to a course or project on a regular basis. Research carried out in Scotland on unemployment among drug users suggests that between 75% (in Aberdeen – an area of very low unemployment generally); and 90% (in Glasgow) were unemployed.

### **2.5.2.17 Homeless people**

There is limited information on the relationship between employment and training, and homelessness, although research published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and CEDEFOP, highlights the following key barriers:

- accommodation problems
- inadequate job information
- lack of jobsearch and work skills
- employer discrimination
- mental health problems
- low skills and qualifications
- difficulties in sustaining employment
- financial disincentives to come off benefits
- negative experience of employment and training schemes
- less of identify and self-esteem
- lack of emotional support from family and friends.

These barriers are shared by many among the most excluded groups in Northern Ireland.

### **2.5.2.18 Scope for action under EQUAL those experiencing drug and alcohol dependency and homelessness**

To be inclusive of those most disadvantaged people, who have experienced drug and alcohol abuse and homelessness, EQUAL should explore transnational solutions to overcoming their most debilitating problems in an integrated manner. Responses must acknowledge the long-term nature of support required, and examine the relationship between the types of support that may be available to these groups, and their long-term pathway towards the labour market.

The study carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on employment and training schemes for homeless people discussed the issue of evaluating outcomes and found that limited measurement had been undertaken, rendering comparison difficult. However, projects welcomed suggestions concerning the introduction of indices that would measure distance travelled.

A key aspect of work supported through EQUAL for these most disadvantaged target groups should focus on understanding the progression route towards the labour market, in order to influence policy makers to initiate responses that recognise that results can be achieved, but over a long period, with small steps acknowledged for the progress that they represent.

### **2.5.3 Objectives under EMPLOYABILITY theme (a) Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those that face difficulty being (re)integrated**

1. To increase through transnational activity and work in Northern Ireland, understanding among policy makers and practitioners of the supply and demand side barriers faced by those who are disadvantaged in the labour market and who are socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion.
2. To identify through transnational activity and work in Northern Ireland, new methods and produce new guidance for packages of support for the labour market integration of those most disadvantaged, or for moving individuals closer towards the labour market.
3. To influence policy makers and practitioners in Northern Ireland to use the learning produced through this work either to introduce new aspects to mainstream programmes, or to introduce new packages of support to facilitate the labour market integration of those who have difficulty being (re)integrated.

Action under this theme will target the range of identified groups at a disadvantage in the labour market. There will be a particular focus on those that are long-term unemployed, economically inactive and/or are not reached or catered for effectively by mainstream provision.

The main groups on which action will focus are the following:

- Long-term unemployed and economically inactive men
- Women who face difficulties in being (re) integrated, especially those with caring responsibilities
- Disabled people including those with learning difficulties and mental ill health.
- “Status 0” young people

Chapter 1 highlighted evidence of low skills levels and lack of basic skills, especially among these groups, and also the correlation between low skills levels, unemployment and exclusion. *Therefore action will also focus within these groups on those that lack basic skills.*

*Action will also focus within these groups on those in the communities where there are concentrations of disadvantage, long-term unemployment and economic inactivity, including the more hidden pockets of disadvantage. There will be a particular emphasis on those outside the major urban centres, where there is nonetheless serious deprivation, unemployment and economic inactivity, but where the capacity to respond may traditionally have been less.*

Under this pillar and theme Development Partnerships may wish to include consideration of the needs of the following groups that are usually disproportionately represented among the unemployed and the economically inactive, and frequently concentrated within the most disadvantaged communities:

- minority ethnic groups, including especially Irish Travellers
- those who suffer from drug and alcohol abuse
- ex-prisoners and ex-offenders
- older workers
- the homeless.

Action must add value to existing provision, and therefore be targeted at providing support for those who are currently not serviced at all, or effectively, by the New Deal. It will propose long-term and innovative solutions that influence mainstream policy and action under the mainstream Structural Funds.

### **2.5.3.1 Types of action under EMPLOYABILITY Theme (a)**

The selection criteria will require Development Partnerships to show evidence of their intention to include all or a majority of the following project actions.

- Testing mechanisms to provide financial support and advice, including exploration of benefits issues, the informal economy and issues concerning volunteering to facilitate labour market (re)integration.
- Understanding and identifying means to alter traditional patterns of labour market mobility among those from the most disadvantaged communities, adding value to policies that promote fair treatment and equality.
- Exploring and developing the potential of the social economy to contribute to maximising the opportunities for the long-term unemployed and economically inactive.
- Understanding, testing and promoting alternative means to evaluate progression among the severely labour market disadvantaged (eg those who have experienced drug and alcohol abuse, the homeless and those with enduring mental health problems).
- Developing and testing new means to provide integrated packages of outreach, guidance and support to those that are disadvantaged, with a particular focus on uniting the work of those organisations not traditionally concerned with labour market who work with disadvantaged groups, and those that *are* concerned with the labour market.
- Piloting new approaches to attract disadvantaged groups to enhance their basic skills and to make basic skills provision effective among the whole population.
- Piloting new approaches to individual goal planning and measurement with labour market disadvantaged individuals.
- Piloting new methods to introduce supported work placements for those that face disadvantage and find particular difficulties working, in particular those with mental health problems and learning difficulties.
- New work to understand more about who the people are who face discrimination and disadvantage in the labour market. This could include identifying the need for

further disaggregation of statistics on those who could face discrimination and difficulty, including disabled people, minority ethnic groups, and ex-prisoners and offenders.

- Pilot projects that explore the real barriers facing different disadvantaged individuals on both the supply and demand sides of the labour market, and that test innovative means to overcome these.
- Cost-benefit analysis of employing and retaining those who face particular difficulty, including the wider picture of reduced cost to the exchequer of prevention of problems associated with labour market disadvantage.
- Piloting methods of advice and guidance to help employers and especially small firms to understand and manage sickness and issues faced by those with disabilities and mental health problems in the workplace.
- Exploring appropriate qualifications for labour market disadvantaged individuals and the means to promote these among learning and skills development providers.
- Identifying new means to promote lasting and effective links between outreach, further and higher education, training, advice and guidance.
- Helping employers and peers in the workplace to understand the particular needs of those who have difficulty being integrated, with a focus on identified groups whose needs are less well understood and who (appear to) face discrimination.
- Identifying and testing means to support employers and peers in the workplace in employing those that have particular difficulties, including job brokerage, appropriate models of aftercare, and mentoring.

### **2.5.3.2 Development Partnerships under EMPLOYABILITY Theme (a)**

Development Partnerships are expected to be made up from:

- 1 voluntary and community organisations, especially and of necessity those concerned with the identified disadvantaged groups.
- 2 employers
- 3 trade unions
- 4 training providers, including those delivering mainstream government programmes such as New Deal and Jobskills
- 5 (directly or indirectly – in an advisory capacity), relevant divisions of DHFETE, especially the Equality Unit, and of the Department for Social Development and the Department for Education
- 6 (directly or indirectly – in an advisory capacity), the Equality Commission and relevant directorates therein
- 7 health and social services organisations in the statutory and non-statutory sector
- 8 probation services
- 9 tertiary education colleges
- 10 District Councils
- 11 other organisations and representatives of existing partnerships as appropriate.



Development partnerships should operate **at a geographical level appropriate to the identified needs**. This may be at Northern Ireland level, sub-regional, or at the District Council level if there is a clear concentration of disadvantage and a clearly identified need.

Provision must be made for the active involvement of employers at the earliest possible stage in the development of a programme of activities under this theme.

## **2.5.4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Theme (h): Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation**

This section will provide an initial outline of the overall rationale, aims, objectives and activities for Equal Opportunities across all groups in Northern Ireland, followed by more detailed identification of problems and activities for specific groups.

#### **2.5.4.1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES context and rationale**

The Northern Ireland labour market is characterised by a significant gender gap in employment, especially full-time and self-employment, economic activity, progression and pay. In short, the labour market in NI is highly segregated along gender lines:

- 48% of employees and 85% of part-time workers are women;
- the activity rate for women is 61% compared with 78% for men of working age;
- average weekly wages of women are 82.8% of men's, and average hourly earnings are 86.9%;
- 87% of female employees work in the service sector compared with 54% of male employees
- only 8% of working women are administrators compared with 20% of men
- women tend to be concentrated in lower paid professions.

At the higher end of the spectrum, research undertaken by the Equal Opportunities Unit has shown that there is strong under-representation of women at management and senior administration level and very strong under-representation at business director level.

At the lower end, a recent report of the Equality Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland showed that 72% of workers earning less than a TUC definition of low pay (£3.96 per hour) are women (i.e. some 86,000 women).

Northern Ireland is already a low wage economy compared with the UK average. Women, therefore, are concentrated in low wage jobs in an already low wage economy. They are *significantly under-represented* in the IT and communications, where their labour will undoubtedly be needed in the future.

A press release from the Equal Opportunities Commission NI (now part of the Equality Commission) called Gender and the Earnings Gap published in March 1997 stated that for the first time they had been able to use standard official statistics published by the Labour Force Survey who had gathered information on employment and earnings on how education, training and work experience relate to one another and to pay. They discovered that women were earning less than men with roughly the same working characteristics.

The introduction of the National Minimum Wage should significantly contribute to addressing this imbalance, but there is at least anecdotal evidence that discriminatory and stereotypical attitudes continue to hamper women's progress within the labour market and ensure that their pay remains lower than men's.

While the situation has improved, women are still strongly under-represented in public office –31% of public appointments are held by women compared with 15% in 1985. However, only 15% of local councillors are women. The Peace Programme is considered to have had a significant positive effect in bringing women into local decision-making structures, specifically in the District Partnerships. The relatively recent success of women candidates in the elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly is also an important development.

The Labour Market Assessment in Chapter 1 has also highlighted a particular problem among women in rural areas. The survey carried out by the Arkelton Centre for Rural Development Research at King's College, University of Aberdeen, which looked specifically at rural women in Northern Ireland indicated that the level of educational attainment, specifically higher education, of farm-based females was significantly higher than that of their male counterparts, but this is not reflected in their entry to professional employment. It found that a particular obstacle is the relative inadequacy in rural areas of adequate childcare provision and transport services.

The response to the issue of the pay gap and labour market segregation must be a long-term strategy that sets about fundamentally altering attitudes among women and men, policy makers, managers (at all levels) and employees within the workplace, that opens up the options for girls and women, as well as for men and boys. It should help to overcome traditional attitudes about men's and women's work, encouraging both sexes to take up educational and training opportunities in avenues that they may have by-passed in the past.

#### **2.5.4.2 Scope for action under EQUAL for EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

All EU Member States experience labour market segregation and a pay gap, but some have made significant advances in working to overcome gender imbalance and NI will benefit substantially from in-depth transnational work in this field.

*Action under this theme should make a substantial new contribution to improving understanding about the reasons for gender imbalance and the pay gap. It should enable a clearer picture about the extent to which discriminatory attitudes and practices are to blame, and the role played by qualifications, learning and career choices.*

*Action should identify and test innovative means to contribute to desegregation in the labour market, by working at every level within education and employment to alter traditional and stereotypical attitudes to what is women and men's work. It should therefore involve schools and colleges, as well as careers services and training providers in finding ways to encourage young and older people (including boys and men), to consider alternative career options.*

*A particular focus must be on developing skills and access to the vocational areas in which women are under-represented, that offer scope for meaningful employment with higher pay levels. In particular, there should be an emphasis on ICT and technical skills, as well as other identified professions in which their numbers are low, and therefore on identifying really new ways to attract them to effective training provision both outwith and inside the workplace in these sub-sectors. There should be an emphasis on addressing the under-representation of women at higher levels.*

EQUAL should adopt new approaches to examining the whole issue of workplace training for women at all levels and to piloting new methods to enable women to access the training they need to the benefit of their employers.

Peer programmes should be developed that enable women who have progressed to higher levels in non-traditional female occupations to work with others to assist them in their progression route.

Because segregation within the labour market is also inextricably linked to the caring responsibilities of women, new approaches must be piloted to explore, for instance paternity leave and to help especially small employers deal with maternity leave and assist women to progress when they return from maternity leave. This is especially important given that women tend to return to work after having children at a lower level than that at which they left, and the significance of this drop increases the longer they are away.

There may be significant merit on focusing some action on farm women and women in rural areas, to enable them to participate in learning especially in ICT. Such action should add value to any work undertaken through mainstream provision, and Community Initiatives such as LEADER +, by working at a strategic level.

This theme should be targeted principally at work for and with women, but also men to increase their likelihood of entering and progressing with non-traditional areas of activity.

### **2.5.5 Objectives under EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES Theme (h): Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation**

1. To increase understanding and identify means to combat (discriminatory, stereotypical and traditional) attitudes that inhibit women's entry to and progression within the labour market;
2. To enhance the capacity and effective tools available to learning providers and advisors to encourage women and men to enter professions in which they are traditionally under-represented, with a focus on specific vocational areas that offer scope for higher pay and status jobs; and
3. To identify and support employers to adopt working practices that enable women to progress within employment.

#### **2.5.5.1 Types of action under EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES Theme (h)**

The selection criteria will require Development Partnerships to show evidence of their intention to include all or a majority of the following project actions.

- Piloting education and training programmes with employers and trade unions to understand the problems faced by women within the labour market, especially those with caring responsibilities.
- Developing tools and methods for schools, careers advisers and learning providers to use to encourage women and men to train in non-traditional professions, and in professions in which there are skills shortages.
- Experimenting with work in schools to help girls and young women, and boys and young men to consider their career options, and to guide them on work placements in non-traditional professions.
- Piloting positive action approaches for women in sectors and at levels in which they are under-represented, in particular ICT.
- Introducing mentoring support programmes involving women who have progressed and careers in which they are particularly under-represented.
- Testing approaches to enable firms, especially small firms, to implement paternity leave schemes and piloting advice schemes for firms, especially small firms, on dealing with maternity leave and the return to work for women who have had children.
- New research and dissemination of information concerning the pay gap, production of guidance on achieving its reduction, and work to enable realistic and measurable targets to be set for its reduction, as well as piloting methods of measurement of pay gap reduction in selected professions
- Working with women to understand their experience of career progression and using the learning from this to inform advice and guidance to both women, employers and trade unions
- Identifying, developing and testing methods to help unskilled and low-skilled women enter and progress within the labour market
- Piloting innovative childcare schemes and testing the scope for transferring schemes that have worked in different settings

- Developing and piloting means to enable women to train in higher level ICT skills.
- Developing methods to enable women in rural areas and farm women to diversify and progress within the labour market.

#### **2.5.5.2 Development Partnerships for the EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES Theme (h)**

Development partnerships are expected to be made up from:

- 1 Employers
- 2 Trade Unions
- 3 Voluntary and community organisations working with women
- 4 IDB and LEDU
- 5 Careers advisers, schools, learning providers and the Belfast and Londonderry Regeneration offices
- 6 (directly or indirectly – in an advisory capacity), relevant Government departments, including relevant divisions of DHFETE, especially the Equality Unit, as well as the Department of Education and others as appropriate
- 7 (directly or indirectly – in an advisory capacity), the Equality Commission and relevant directorates therein
- 8 District Councils
- 9 other organisations and representatives of existing partnerships as appropriate.

Operationally, equality is being mainstreamed at CIP level by including equal opportunities as part of Development Partnership and project selection criteria and it will feature as a requirement for all evaluations to be undertaken in connection with the CIP. Additionally, it is proposed to engage the Equality Commission in supporting the EQUAL national mainstreaming strategy. This mainstreaming strategy, which proposes to incorporate an all Ireland mainstreaming element as part of a North/South co-operation measure. That is the Equality commission in NI and The Equality Authority in the ROI would play a key role in implementing a mainstreaming strategy under the SEUPB.

It is intended that all substantive priority actions under the EQUAL CIP will contain specific gender dimensions and that suitable indicators will be developed to measure progress.

Provision must be made for the active involvement of employers and trade unions at the earliest possible stage in the development of a programme of activities under this theme.

## **2.5.6 ASYLUM SEEKERS**

### **2.5.6.1 ASYLUM SEEKERS context and rationale**

The devolved administration in Northern Ireland has no separate competence in the area of asylum seekers, and therefore action in this field is expected to be undertaken in conjunction with partners in the UK and reflecting UK policy and legislation in respect of asylum seekers. Refer also to section

At the Tampere Special European Council in October 1999, the UK and other Member States renewed their commitment to the principles of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the need to provide protection for those at risk of persecution. Member States are also committed to combating abuse of the asylum process in order to ensure that those genuinely in need of protection can be granted that protection as speedily as possible.

The latest published figures for asylum seekers are from June 2000. In that month, there were 5,900 applications for asylum: 1700 at port of arrival and 4200 after having entered the UK.

The Home Office provide programmes to help people return to their country of origin. However, they are concerned that people should not be drawn to the UK because they think they will get a “better deal”, nor should action taken to help them mislead them into thinking that they may be able to stay.

The UK focus, which is common across Member States, is on preparing people to be able to work, (basic skills, language skills), rather than preparing them for specific kinds of work.

The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) already provides a broad range of activities.

The Asylum Seekers priority will be directly implemented in Northern Ireland through a UK wide DP. It is intended that the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities or similar NI body will be represented on the UK DP.

## CHAPTER 3: The Consultation Process and Lessons from EMPLOYMENT AND ADAPT

### 3.1 The Consultation Process

The consultation process took the form of a written questionnaire in which almost 150 organisations, individuals and policy makers were asked to give their views on the themes to be addressed by EQUAL with special relevance to Northern Ireland. Some 25% of the questionnaires were returned and the preferences for the themes and measures were taken into account when drafting the programme.

Almost all of the respondents had previous experience of EMPLOYMENT and/or ADAPT. The key themes within the four pillars identified were in order of preference;

- A – facilitating access and return to the labour market;
- E – promoting lifelong learning;
- C – opening up the business creation process to all; and
- H – reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation

The questionnaire also provided specific information on the Member States where we might find good opportunities for transnational co-operation. Denmark, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Spain and France were identified as strong transnational partners. We will return to the information gathered throughout the consultation as the programme is developed.

In addition to the written consultation three seminars were held for special interest groups such as representatives of disabled groups, ex-prisoners, government departments and district partnerships; for policy makers in government departments with a remit for employment issues; and finally for bodies which have acted in the past as funding intermediaries for EU programmes and initiatives. These groups tended to favour larger projects rather than a greater number of small projects. Given the size of the NI allocation this is considered to be a more practical way to implement the Initiative. Meetings were also held with colleagues in the Department of Enterprise, Training and Employment, ROI, in order to explore and develop common areas for North/South co-operation under the Programme. The Special EU Programmes Body has also been consulted particularly in relation to the North/South dimension of EQUAL. The CIP has been developed to encapsulate as many views as possible within the very tight timeframe for submission of the CIP to the Commission and in accordance with Commission guidelines for the Programme.

Representatives of the Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment, also attended the UK EQUAL consultation seminars.

The whole process enabled a wide range of policy makers and those wishing to influence policy to have an input into the design of the programme.

Following the workshops and taking into account the written consultation process the overall order of preference for the key themes is:

- A – facilitating access and return to the labour market;
- H – reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation;
- E – promoting lifelong learning; and
- C – opening up the business creation process to all

After our own consultation process and discussions with the Commission when the NI total budget was taken into account, it was considered that in order to adequately deliver the EQUAL CIP 11.69 Meuro could realistically only cover two themes.

The two themes are;

- A – facilitating access and return to the labour market; and
- H – reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation.

### **3.1.1 The *Ex Ante* Evaluation**

In accordance with the requirements of R. 1260/99, an *ex ante* evaluation of the programme was carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). This evaluation is attached to the programme as Annex 3.

## **3.2 Background to ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT**

ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT were two Human Resource Community Initiatives delivered under specific aims and strands with the underlying themes of innovation, transnationality and mainstreaming. Both programmes were funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).

The ADAPT Community Initiative was directed at preventing unemployment and had four main aims:

- accelerating the adaptation of the workforce to industrial change;
- increasing the competitiveness of industry, services and commerce;
- preventing unemployment by developing the workforce through improving its level of qualifications, internal and external flexibility and ensuring greater occupational mobility; and
- anticipating and accelerating the development of new jobs and new activities.

In Northern Ireland there were two ‘calls’ for applications the first was in May 1995 and the second in May 1997 and a total of 13 projects were approved and became operational. ADAPT had a total ESF allocation of 3.606 Meuro.

The EMPLOYMENT Community Initiative was aimed at the unemployed, particularly those facing disadvantage in the labour market. There were four strands to the initiative:



- NOW:** aimed to contribute to the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women;
- HORIZON:** aimed to improve labour market entry opportunities for disabled people;
- YOUTHSTART:** aimed to integrate people aged under 20 into the labour market; and
- INTEGRA:** targeted vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

There were two rounds of ‘calls’ for applications for EMPLOYMENT in May 1995 and January 1997 and total of 71 projects were approved and became operational. EMPLOYMENT had a total ESF allocation of 12.048 Meuro

Although the Department of Higher and Further Education, Training & Employment (DHFETE) had overall management responsibility for ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT, a Support Structure was established to assist with the administration of some of the more specialist project support roles.

### **3.2.1 Lessons from ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT**

In Northern Ireland, a final evaluation of EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT has yet to be completed. A mid-term evaluation was carried out by LRDP in 1997. This sub-section therefore draws on findings of the mid-term evaluation and the lessons that have emerged from the final evaluation of EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT in Great Britain.

The Community Initiatives EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT are relatively small in Northern Ireland in terms of funding, size and number of projects compared with the experience of other Member States and regions of the EU. Nonetheless, EMPLOYMENT has been used in Northern Ireland to establish a good mix of actions and there was experimentation to find more effective methods for the reintegration and progression in the labour market of the target groups covered by the Initiative - generally, groups “hardest hit” by unemployment. The experiences of EMPLOYMENT showed potential to complement and reinforce important policy priorities in Northern Ireland - in particular, “Targeting Social Need” (which is being implemented through spatial targeting of designated disadvantaged areas while EMPLOYMENT involves targeting disadvantaged socio-economic groups wherever they live) and fair treatment and equality of opportunity for all.

ADAPT attracted much less interest amongst potential participants, and was much weaker than EMPLOYMENT in terms of potential to enhance know-how and influence policy on actions and methods to improve capacity of the workforce to adapt to industrial change. The reasons for the poor response to ADAPT could include the relatively short time frame for the preparation of proposals, the public match funding requirement (specifically identified as a difficulty), and perceptions of heavy bureaucracy associated with ESF-supported programmes which tends to be “off-putting” to potential applicants (particularly those unused to participation). Furthermore, this was a relatively new area of intervention for ESF (Objective 4-type

interventions) and work with companies is much less established than its focus on reintegration of the unemployed (Objective 3-type interventions).

In relation to EMPLOYMENT, a broad mix of sub-groups within the target groups of the Initiative and strands were targeted. This includes reaching most vulnerable groups/sub-groups which tended to be missed by main programme interventions. Generally, Community Initiatives which focus on addressing exclusion (e.g. EMPLOYMENT, the Peace Programme, URBAN) are a most important source of funding and provide a vehicle for involvement of such groups in regeneration and development programmes.

Implementation and take-up showed a strong concentration of projects in Belfast and the east of the province (although some have a Northern Ireland-wide scope) and an urban bias. Organisations/project promoters were generally characterised by organisations which had good experience and capacity and demonstrate closeness to the target groups supported by their projects. Participation in the Initiative provided an opportunity to further enhance this capacity (through funding, access to new know-how including exposure to wider international experience etc.) and also has contributed to the development of organisations building up the consortia-type model (especially in the case of HORIZON disabled).

At the level of administration and management of these Initiatives, in the case of EMPLOYMENT, T&EA selected a broad mix of actions to experiment within each strand with a diversity of approaches to responding to employment problems of the target groups. This was especially evident in NOW which included actions targeting disadvantaged women, and women in employment aspiring to management positions; experiments with initiatives to bring women who may be inactive into the labour market; establish quality training and certification for unqualified women on low incomes; promote change within the culture of organisations and in workplaces to establish an equal opportunities culture etc. This seemed to be the appropriate way to use such Initiatives - i.e. to support a diversity of projects rather than the same types (even if many of the same are of high quality). This approach was built into the selection criteria applied by management.

The main lines of distinction between projects seemed to relate to organisational and institutional aspects - in particular, between projects promoted by strong consortia, usually operating on a region-wide basis, which had built up an infrastructure of support and had strong links into the "system" (the policy framework) which was especially the case with HORIZON disabled; and those projects which were working at micro-level to support integration of the target groups but operated in relative isolation from the "system" which was reflected in the HORIZON disadvantaged strand, in particular. The latter category, however, while they may not have had strong links into the policy framework, also had much to contribute in terms of new know-how.

Similarly, with ADAPT, a distinction could be drawn between projects which had developed strong links into the "system" and those that operated in relative isolation.

### 3.3 Recommendations from ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT

The recommendations from the findings and conclusions of the mid-term evaluation of the projects supported under EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT support and highlight the validity of those recommendations presented in the evaluation of the National Support Structure (NSS). The thrust of these recommendations similarly is to reinforce efforts being made and build on successful performance to date.

In terms of types of project promoters and scale, while the consortium approach was successful in terms of bringing together different types of expertise, closeness to the target group, and was better placed to promote mainstreaming through the direct link into policy, smaller-scale experiments can also produce innovation. In particular, they demonstrated how to promote labour market integration and progression of the target groups in ways which are different to the NISP and main programmes. However, the smaller-scale projects were likely to require more support by the NSS post-approval and over implementation to assist them to develop approaches to and facilitate mainstreaming.

Generally, a more proactive approach could have been adopted with approved projects to work with them over implementation and in the promotion and pre-selection phase for the next round. In particular, more effort could have been directed to promoting the “bottom-up” approach - encouraging projects to involve the target groups more, develop partnerships with others “on the ground” in order to extend the potential for mainstreaming into the work of other organisations and firms and to build up collective and collaborative approaches amongst different types of bodies (voluntary, community, statutory, in order to develop proposals for the next round). This could assist the involvement of smaller organisations (e.g. in rural areas) as well as specialist organisations not typically involved in this type of initiative (e.g. health care) with both types having much to offer to add value to such initiatives. This approach could help to build up a critical mass in order to have visible impact and also have better prospects of, and access to, mainstreaming.

With ADAPT, a more proactive and targeted approach needed to be made to create a “better pool” of projects. This perhaps required selecting organisations which were innovative and interested in pursuing innovation in this field and actively encouraging them to participate in the Initiative. Because ADAPT and other industrial change Community Initiatives (including SME, RETEX) are so small in Northern Ireland, ADAPT has proved weak on its own, it would seem to be appropriate to combine the implementation of these if possible.

The findings of this evaluation further highlighted some need to clarify roles and relationships between DHFETE and the NSS, with an emphasis on establishing the independence of the NSS. However, it is clear that this clarity of roles should not be interpreted as DHFETE being considered “unhelpful” by projects. Generally, both the NSS and DHFETE were considered approachable and supportive. It also seemed appropriate to seek to explore why and, as far as possible, seek to address difficulties related to perceptions of overly-bureaucratic operation and some inefficiencies - in particular, to improve on the need to respond to short deadlines and help with meeting requirements in relation to completion of monitoring returns.

On specific aspects, there could also be more involvement of projects in setting the agenda and the work and output of the working groups. This would also help build up and sustain a wider range of contacts which could continue post EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT and also in the context of the Initiatives, create a sense of ownership and identity as a group as part of a programme where they are in the forefront trying to “do new things”, and learning from each other as a group.

Over implementation, the facilitating/supportive role of the NSS needed to be further developed and established with projects so that they could assist projects and maximise results including, where appropriate, making adjustments to meet objectives, especially objectives related to innovation and promoting mainstreaming. Support/assistance is particularly required in relation to:

- **innovation** - ensuring innovative objectives were pursued, mapping results, measuring and assessing value added of innovation (such that, for instance, the higher unit costs where they applied could be clearly justified in terms of effectiveness and value for money established);
- **sustaining and helping transnational partnerships to be effective**, to establish transnationality as an integral part of the project linked to innovation, and to provide guidance on good management of organisational aspects of transnationality, and help deepen relationships;
- **promoting mainstreaming** of successful experiences of projects - in terms of: working with projects, through linkages to policy level including statutory agencies but also other organisations; providing assistance with and co-operative and complementary approaches to dissemination between the NSS and the projects. The extent to which projects needed support with this aspect varied. For instance, some projects appeared to be undertaking little dissemination and were not sure how to approach this even though they had considerable experience on the ground and had much to offer; while others are most experienced in lobbying and dissemination vis-à-vis the target group (more so than in delivery of labour market support actions);
- **advice on how to promote sustainability of operations post EMPLOYMENT** (other funding, income generation etc.).

Sustainability also needed to be linked with the approach and openness to mainstreaming from the “top-down” perspective. An active (as opposed to passive) approach to mainstreaming needed to be adopted at this level - in terms of establishing where/in which areas of policy EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT can best contribute their experience. This type of focusing reflected the approach taken with HORIZON disabled and clearly has contributed to the strength of this strand - in terms of likely impact, and potential for mainstreaming.

Generally, the NSS needed to work closely with and support DHFETE on mainstreaming and dissemination. This included, for instance, technical support on the scope for application of innovation in main programmes based, for instance, on on-going critical analysis of relative costs and benefits of the types actions tested under EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT (taking in savings in welfare payments etc.) as well as critical appraisal of the types of new products and methods being developed and scope for wider application. The dissemination strategy of the NSS working to and with DHFETE - to identify good practice, learning, promote wider use of new

products, and methods - could also be given further attention and developed as part of the mainstreaming plan, and to realise multiplier effects.

It also should be ensured that the support structure at EU level is used effectively and efficiently linked with adding value to the NI programmes, as well as dissemination of good practice from NI to other EU regions. This includes full use of the resource material prepared at EU level and the development of relationships with other NSSs, to learn from their experience and apply successful approaches.

Experiences from the ADAPT, EMPLOYMENT and other Community Initiatives have informed the overall development of the EQUAL programme, for example in emphasising the need for support in mainstreaming and recognising the benefits of more strategic approaches based on partnership rather than individual promoters.

The Final Evaluation of the GB ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT programme is being carried out by GHK Economics and Management. An initial report was published in April 2000 and an update to this report will be available by December 2000. The update will focus on the ADAPT Round 3 projects and the longer term impact of mainstreaming. This section draws on the former evaluation - however, the design of EQUAL has already taken on board many of the key lessons from the GB evaluation. In particular that the effectiveness of mainstreaming which will be improved as a result of the stronger policy focus and the potential to maintain this strategic focus through the thematic groups.

### 3.4 Contributions to the distinctive characteristics of the Community Initiatives

Generally, the implementation of the Initiatives as a whole were in keeping with and contributed to all the distinctive characteristics of the Initiatives - in particular, innovation, transnationality, bottom-up approach, complementarity, multiplier effects, and mainstreaming - with ADAPT being much weaker especially on innovation in this field and mainstreaming.

The **“bottom-up” approach** generally could have been strengthened – to build on “closeness to” and working to assist target groups, to developing empowerment models to enable those groups to participate more in decision-making. However, within EMPLOYMENT, there were good examples of broadening participation at different levels (bringing in different sectors, organisations such as specialist professional bodies representing and/providing services to disabled groups which are not typically included in EU-supported programmes, disadvantaged groups themselves such as the parents of mentally ill young people) to create a broader support infrastructure and services to respond to the range of needs of groups who are disadvantaged in the labour market and support their reintegration. **Multiplier effects** were difficult to establish - most expected that the training products, resource materials, models etc. they were developing could be transferred and applied more widely.

### **3.4.1 Innovation**

In terms of innovation, this was being pursued in various ways by projects. Collectively, all strands of EMPLOYMENT were likely to contribute to developing know-how on new or more effective solutions to employment problems of the groups targeted. This was true of projects working at the micro-level as well as the larger systems/macro-level projects led by consortia. Much of the innovation was related to improving adaptation of main programmes to make them more responsive to the needs of target groups, through flexible packages and more holistic approaches, to create “pathways” to integration into, and progression in, the labour market. The “pathways” approach was in keeping with the human resources strategy of the NISP. While many of the ideas and mechanisms being tested by projects focused on adaptation were generally not new, in practice, they were different to the main thrust of actions supported under main programmes and in the NISP. The results of the mid-term evaluation of the latter indicated that project promoters found main programmes inflexible, and because of the way they were structured and requirements in terms of unit costs, results expected, etc., there could be difficulties of access by groups and people most disadvantaged in the labour market.

Other interesting forms of innovation which were present in EMPLOYMENT and could be developed further include: innovation to promote changes in the culture within organisations in favour of equal opportunities, and attitudes of employers toward employment of particularly disadvantaged groups (e.g. mentally ill people, long-term unemployed etc.) and organisational innovation.

#### **3.4.1.1 Innovation: - Findings from the evaluation of EMPLOYMENT/ADAPT**

Projects funded under ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT must be innovative to provide lessons which are of value to policy development. Projects must show innovative approaches which may be completely new or applied in a new context or with a new target group.

The evaluation found that projects most commonly featured ‘process oriented’ innovative components, relating to the development of new methods such as new training materials and approaches. This was particularly the case for the EMPLOYMENT programme.

In terms of what projects were intending to implement, ADAPT projects most commonly planned to develop wholly new approaches, while EMPLOYMENT projects more commonly intended to implement new combinations of existing approaches. This may result from ADAPT’s focus on industrial change, a newer policy area than the more traditional areas of labour market intervention under EMPLOYMENT, and so offered a greater opportunity for wholly new approaches.

Although the foci of innovations was in most cases local, i.e. responding to local issues with new local solutions, many examples were identified where projects’ specific intents were to operate at the national level and beyond. Even when locally focused, the results of the assessment of potential influence and application showed that the implications of their findings for policy and practice extend far wider.

When the innovative components of projects were assessed, considerable potential for influence and application at the policy or operational levels was identified. Over 80% of all projects were assessed as having relevance in their sector or beyond, with the EMPLOYMENT programme having the greatest share of projects rated highly (44%). However, low levels of potential influence and application may not necessarily have been because the project idea was unsound, but that some management or partnership failure prevented its full development and implementation.

#### **3.4.1.2 Innovation recommendations for EQUAL**

1. Include clear guidance on innovation in guidance materials, including examples of potential projects, but not so prescriptive as to constrain creativity;
2. Ensure promoters and partners are clear on the demonstration objectives of innovative programmes, to ensure lessons are not lost or become secondary to the achievement of hard outputs. Developing clear understandings about the demonstration role of projects will be important in ensuring that the aims and objectives of EQUAL will be achieved. The monitoring requirements of innovative programmes can also contribute to ensuring the focus on innovation;
3. Make it possible for projects to fail. As much can be learnt from innovative approaches which are not successful as those which are;
4. Seek ways to facilitate transnational partner involvement in the innovation development process from the outset - the development phase planned for EQUAL may assist this; and
5. Demonstration projects will rarely run exactly to plan, and the need for flexible management at the programme level is to be encouraged. Management approaches which emphasise the identification of qualitative outcomes and key lessons are to be encouraged in EQUAL.

#### **3.4.2 Transnationality**

While there were many difficulties with the transnational element in both EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT, the organisations have demonstrated capacity to engage in and manage this, even those starting “from scratch” after project approval. All consider it of value. Transnationality was generally in the early stages - based on building up contacts and exchanges (of materials, people etc.) - but there were flows of ideas and know-how to and from Northern Ireland projects. There were also some good examples of organisation of transnational working with a view to maximising value of the experience and creating a basis on which to maintain the links. This included building up the identity of the transnational project and partnership as an European initiative, and creating structures and processes for managing and developing the relationship (e.g. lead partner, working groups for planning etc.). It seemed to be important, over the remaining period of implementation, to work on deepening the relationships so that they could contribute to generating and spreading innovation and be sustained beyond this round of Structural Funding.

Links between innovation and transnationality were not that well established - much of which stemmed from difficulties with establishing the transnational partnerships, changes from intended partners and the need for most projects to form the

relationships after approval and not as part of the planning of projects. Clearly there was potential to transfer know-how and learn from each other and, in some cases, this was likely to develop significantly in the remaining period of implementation.

#### **3.4.2.1 Transnationality:- Findings from the evaluation of EMPLOYMENT/ADAPT**

The transnational aspect of the Community Initiatives enabled innovations to be shared at the European level.

Project promoters frequently had limited expectations of the benefits their transnational activities could offer at the outset, and over half would not have included a transnational component in their projects without it being a funding requirement. Consequently projects' initial plans and ambitions for transnational activities were often set low, concentrating on exchanging information and ideas rather than on joint project development. This was less the case with more experienced projects, or where transnationality was a central element of individual projects.

However, project managers commonly described how the actual benefits of transnational activities exceeded their expectations, especially when working with partners in Europe for the first time. A range of benefits were identified, from those of direct benefit to the project in question to less tangible benefits including the development of new contacts and providing first experiences of transnational partnership working. In many cases, especially projects new to transnational working, the benefits of their experiences were likely to be realised in the future.

Less positively, a series of barriers hindered the effectiveness of transnational collaboration. These began with the process of partner identification, the requirement for bids in individual Member States, and the lack of synchronisation between approval processes. During implementation, projects also identified barriers, most commonly referring to cultural differences such as different approaches to work and operating within new political and legal environments. The most influential barriers, however, were the lack of complementarity between partners and unequal partner contributions, which limited the benefits projects were able to realise from their transnational collaborations.

Within this framework it is understandable that transnational ambitions were commonly limited. While the introduction of the development phase in Round 2 made the loss of partners at the bidding stage less damaging, a number of projects still described entering partnerships of last resort. This contributed to many of the difficulties identified during project implementation, notably the lack of complementarity between partners. With transnational partners most commonly meeting six times a year or less there is a limit to what could be expected from their collaborative activities. This was recognised by many projects, and a number of techniques to ensure effective collaboration were described.



### **3.4.2.2 Transnational recommendations for EQUAL**

The design of EQUAL seeks to improve transnational partnership working through the following:

- 1) Co-ordinated applications between Member States;
- 2) Development partnerships to set out transnational agreement before full funding, refer also to sections 4.2.3.5 and 4.3.3.2;
- 3) Improved European project database; and
- 4) Guidance material will have to identify how the transnational element will be taken forward

### **3.4.3 Mainstreaming**

Some project promoters consider mainstreaming mainly in terms of continuity of and ability to attract follow-up funding; some were more focused on mainstreaming to work to change/adapt policies and programmes; some had focused on mainstreaming the activity into their own operations and were concerned with how they could sustain the action, for instance, striking a new balance between continuing to seek public funding for actions and introducing more commercial activities to add to their resources etc.; a small number were focusing mainstreaming efforts on organisations (non-government) to change the culture and attitudes in favour of equal opportunities. Generally, micro-level projects needed better channels to facilitate links into policy and also support so that they can learn how to promote mainstreaming - into other organisations working with the target groups, working with employers/potential employers, sustaining actions in the future through new mix of funding etc.

In the case of ADAPT, the approach to mainstreaming was similar but with such a small core of projects which seemed to lack linkage between them, the potential and impact of ADAPT in terms of mainstreaming could only be weak. In terms of approaches, one project had strong links into policy (T&EA and LEDU) and efforts were focused on working closely with government agencies to promote enhancement/adaptation one of government's main programmes, one was focused on mainstreaming/promoting change in favour of the application of a specific type of technology in SMEs while another was focused on promoting the introduction of a new mechanism (to register employees and training) and services into firms in one sector of industry (construction) possibly with demonstration effects for other sectors.

In terms of the links between innovation, complementarity and mainstreaming, in the case of EMPLOYMENT, some projects were well placed to establish such linkage especially those working within consortia which included participation of organisations responsible for policy (e.g. T&EA, LEDU etc.). This was especially the case with the HORIZON disabled strand. Some organisations, in particular, those with experience and developed capacity running a portfolio of projects were demonstrating an active approach to complementarity - making projects work well together, to great synergies and greater impact on the target group (i.e. affecting the whole infrastructure to support integration into the labour market and progression of the target group), and bringing in new and innovative actions and approaches under

the Community Initiatives (EMPLOYMENT and Peace, for instance) to enhance the package of actions in favour of the target group. It is important to learn from these experiences and allow them to be built in to mainstream provision, in particular, know-how on how to put packages of support together, for instance, linking into social and health provision, in order to make labour market actions more effective. There were examples of particularly strong projects which were bringing together all of the distinctive elements of the the Initiative - innovation, adding value and learning through transnational partnership, and working at different levels - at target group specific, sectoral and local community level to broaden and deepen participation by adopting a “bottom-up” approach; at policy level and with other executive agencies in implementation to promote mainstreaming and multiplier effects.

There was a view, that even if they demonstrated a high degree of innovation and success, mainstreaming of experiments into policy and programmes was difficult and unlikely due to higher costs of the types of action and rigidities of main government programmes.

#### **3.4.3.1 Mainstreaming: - Findings from the evaluation of EMPLOYMENT/ADAPT**

Mainstreaming is the process by which lessons learnt from individual projects or groups of projects are used to influence the policy process at the local, national or European level. Whilst projects had been effective in carrying out dissemination, the mainstreaming has mainly been limited to the local level rather than to policy development. There had been notable exceptions to this where EMPLOYMENT projects were able to demonstrate contributions to national policy initiatives including the National Childcare Strategy, New Start initiative and the wider social inclusion agenda and disability policy, which were supported by interviews with the relevant policy influencers.

It was no great surprise that vertical mainstreaming impacts were largely confined to the Department for Education and Employment. However, where ADAPT had been tailored to meet a policy gap - there was considerably more interest in the potential findings, for example, from the ADAPT Round 3 UfI projects.

Under Equal, there is a greater scope to include, for example, other Departments from the first stage of the programme.

#### **3.4.3.2 Mainstreaming recommendations for EQUAL**

1. Improve involvement of policy makers and influencers in development and in making best use of project findings;
2. Policy input to programme development - to identify areas for inclusion in the programme;
3. Policy input to the appraisal process - clear requirements for policy relevance;
4. Policy targets for formative and final dissemination;
5. Ensure that project ideas fit with current and medium term policy requirements, and that targets can be clearly identified for both formative and final dissemination activities; and

## 6. Expand policy input beyond DfEE

### 3.4.3.3 Implications of EQUAL on mainstreaming

The development of EQUAL has taken on board the stronger policy focus. Although several recommendations specified that projects should develop a mainstreaming plan - this has largely been overtaken by the design of EQUAL which will give much greater support to mainstreaming from the outset. However, keeping up with policy developments will represent a continued challenge under EQUAL, and disseminating emerging findings which can influence the implementation, will continue to be important.

The report recommended that projects should be encouraged to select partners who may be able to provide routes to influence policy. For example, where projects were working with national bodies, such as the National Childcare Bureau and National Training Organisations, routes to influence national policy were more direct. The design of EQUAL should enable this much closer link with a stronger requirement to work with key organisations.

Following previous experience under EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT, the transnational nature of EQUAL and the potential for cross-border co-operation it is proposed to develop a mainstreaming strategy with the Special EU Programmes Body and the Republic of Ireland Managing Authority.

This co-operative approach to the mainstreaming strategy is important for the following reasons;

- 1) This will broaden the range of projects from which examples of best practice can be determined;
- 2) It will be possible to achieve economies of scale through joint assessment of mainstreaming opportunities;
- 3) There will be an opportunity for mutual learning; and
- 4) There will be a strengthening of the North/South element of the Programme.

It is proposed in consultation with the Special EU Programmes Body and the managing Authority in the Republic of Ireland to implement this strategy under the auspices of the Special EU Programmes Body and establish mainstreaming groups North and South which would meet jointly. The key relevant Government Departments, state agencies, social and project partners will be represented on the mainstreaming groups and possibly the NSS, which will be required to;

- 1) Undertake research into mainstreaming possibilities;
- 2) Develop North/South cross project initiatives to assist mainstreaming; and
- 3) Prepare an annual input in respective Employment Action Plans.

For DP or project selection the potential for mainstreaming is clearly a key criteria which may be determined by;

- 1) The link of the project's proposed activity to current national policy and the aims of EQUAL;
- 2) The capacity within DPs to achieve mainstream outcomes;
- 3) The actual quality of the proposed mainstream activities; and
- 4) The link to private sector activities which may be included in the project proposal.

DPs should submit projects with a budget for mainstreaming in line with the strategy outlined in the full EQUAL CIP.

In order to monitor the projects for mainstreaming potential they will need to be followed closely during Action 2 and this information needs to be disseminated and reviewed on a regular basis.

There is a range of mainstreaming initiatives currently being developed within mainstream organisations, such as gender mainstreaming under Structural Fund Regulations.

For the purpose of effectively implementing EQUAL mainstream organisations which are relevant for specific projects need to be identified at an early stage through the mainstreaming groups and where practicable they need to closely liaise with appropriate Development Partnerships. To promote mainstreaming it will be necessary to;

- 1) Develop data systems to enhance the profile of DPs under EQUAL;
- 2) Provide in-service advice/workshops within relevant mainstream organisations in relation to realising outcomes from DPs; and
- 3) Develop systems adequate to assess the impact of current and new policy on DPs.

### 3.5 Thematic lessons

There are lessons to be learned from the final evaluation of EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT. Some of the key points are reflected in this section.

#### **Theme A: access to the labour market**

The experience of EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT shows that when helping disadvantaged groups enter or return to the labour market the context and method of delivery can be just as important as the actual project activity.

A progression route or "pathway" approach can bring together a number of key activities ( guidance, training, mentoring and placement) and establish how well individual competencies meet the needs of the changing labour market. The provision of a single "gateway" or a "one-stop-shop" can improve access and Individual tutoring and mentoring can improve support.

Project effectiveness is maximised when there is an environment which supports and encourages partnership and co-operation between all the partners and where the target group participate in decision making as active and responsible partners. The involvement of employers and trade unions is also an essential ingredient for project success.

## **Theme H: gender segregation**

EMPLOYMENT has demonstrated that proving the businesses advantages of utilising individuals potential, changing workplace culture and exploiting new developments in traditional male or female sectors can be effective in initiating long-term change in segregated sectors.

1. ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT projects have introduced a range of practical steps to help employers improve their recruitment and selection processes. Measures that have proved particularly successful have included.
2. helping organisations to review and amend their procedures for recruitment selection and promotion to attract and retain more women or men,
3. Equal opportunities measures agreed by senior management and targeted at shop floor and at middle management level.
4. Mentoring programmes to change stereotypical attitudes.

Whilst these approaches are relevant for gender equality, they could also inform work under the employability pillar.

## CHAPTER 4: Strategy for the implementation of EQUAL in Northern Ireland

This chapter describes the process by which EQUAL will be implemented in Northern Ireland. This includes information about project selection, publicity, partnership, dissemination, mainstreaming and financial arrangements.

### 4.1 Subsidiarity

#### 4.1.1 Devolution

The establishment mechanisms for devolution in Northern Ireland were put in place in December 1999 and now power has been devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly for most areas of government. Northern Ireland has a separate Community Initiative plan for EQUAL. This plan covers all activities except provision for asylum seekers, as policy on asylum seekers has not been devolved. Action on asylum seekers will be taken forward on a UK basis.

The Special EU Programmes Body, SEUPB, will, in the interest of North/South cooperation, continue to explore with the Managing authorities in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland and in consultation with the Commission, the potential for extending its operational remit under EQUAL as the Programme develops. In this regard, the SEUPB will in particular and as far as is practicable, seek to establish coherence between its operational involvement in INTERREG III, PEACE II and EQUAL.

The Department of Finance and Personnel, DFP, has the overall responsibility for the CSF and Community Initiatives in Northern Ireland and the DFP Minister will present the EQUAL CIP to the Northern Ireland Assembly. Following acceptance by the Assembly the SEUPB will present the EQUAL CIP to the North/South Ministerial Council established by the Belfast Agreement and defined in section 98(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

#### 4.1.2 Managing Authority

EQUAL will be implemented in line with Council Regulations Nos. (EC) 1260/1999 and 12/62/1999. The Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment, DHFETE, will act as the Managing Authority (see Art. 34) for NI.

The Managing Authority will have the following responsibilities:

- 1) chairing and providing the secretariat for the Monitoring Committee (Article 35.2);
- 2) assembling statistical and financial information required for monitoring the Operational Programme. The relevant information will be supplied to the Monitoring Committee and in a computerised format to be determined in agreement with the European Commission, to the CSF Managing Authority, Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and to the European Commission; (Article 34.1);

- 3) drawing up the annual implementation report for approval by the Monitoring Committee and submission to the Commission (Article 34.1);
- 4) organising in cooperation with the Commission, and DFP, the mid-term evaluation of the Programme (Article 42);
- 5) submitting payment claims to the Paying Authorities for the Structural Funds in compliance with any instructions which these authorities may issue;
- 6) ensuring the correctness of operations financed under the assistance. This involves ensuring that implementing bodies and final beneficiaries properly account for and manage EU funded expenditure and that these bodies maintain a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for such expenditure;
- 7) ensuring compliance with EU policies, particularly regarding competition policy, public procurement, publicity, the environment and equality (Article 34.1);
- 8) ensuring the preparation and implementation of a CIP Communications Action Plan for Information and Publicity (Articles 34.1 and 46); and
- 9) preparing the programming complement for approval by the Monitoring Committee any subsequent adjustments to the complement (Article 34(3)).

The Managing Authority will have primary responsibility for the correctness of management and implementation of those operations under the CIP financed by Structural Funds (Article 34.1, Council Regulation 1260/99). It is responsible for gathering reliable information, ensuring proper accounts are kept, that the operations are correct and there is compliance with Community rules.

#### **4.1.3 Paying Authority**

All payment claims will be made to the Commission by the DHFETE. The Commission issues a payment to the Paymaster's General Account (NI Consolidated Fund) Bank of England, London. The Northern Ireland Office, Belfast, NIO, is notified by HM Treasury that monies are being held for NI. NIO Belfast confirms the amount with DHFETE and arranges for a transfer to the Paymaster General's Account NI. The money received is routed through the Northern Bank Limited into the Paying Authority's accounts. Separate accounts are reserved for EC receipts. These accounts do not bear interest. The Paying Authority will pay the final beneficiaries on receipt of valid claims. The Accounting Officer responsible for the EU funds and public sector matching funds is the Permanent Secretary of DHFETE, the paying authority.

The Managing Authority will be responsible for ensuring that payments systems used have robust financial controls. Standards of probity and propriety consistent with those used for UK government expenditure will be applied to the management of ESF grant funds while these are under the control of the Managing Authority. Procedures will be established to ensure that on submission of valid and properly completed claims, applicants are paid promptly. These claims are subject to the departmental check and can be audited by the Department's dedicated Financial Audit and Support Team (FAST), the Department's Internal Audit Service, the Northern Ireland Audit Office, the European Commission and the European Court of Auditors.

Systems will be maintained to clearly identify all receipts from the Commission and individual payments to final beneficiaries. Procedures will be set up to ensure that EC regulations on prompt payments are complied with.

As the Paying Authority, the DHFETE will, in relation to the Structural Funds co-financed expenditure, be responsible for:

- 1) submitting not later than 30 April of each year expenditure forecasts to the Commission for the current and following year (Article 32.7);
- 2) managing the payment on account of Funds;
- 3) drawing up and submitting certified payment applications to the Commission on the basis of expenditure actually incurred by the Final Beneficiaries;
- 4) ensuring that the final beneficiary receives the EU contribution as quickly as possible; (Article 32.3) and final (Article 32.4); and
- 5) recovering sums due to the Funds and for the application of financial corrections where they arise as a result of the discovery of administrative errors, or from events arising from the management of the programmes or from the establishment of irregularities under Article 39.

The Development Partnerships, through the designated Lead Partner, will be responsible for submitting eligible expenditure in the format, (both electronic and hard copy), required by the Managing Authority in order for payment claims to be made by the Paying Authority

The Lead Partner will be responsible for ensuring that all payment claims for Structural Fund expenditure submitted are supported with receipted invoices, audit documents and that a clear audit trail exists. They will also be responsible for ensuring that only eligible expenditure actually incurred, in respect of co-financed measures/projects, is submitted to the Managing Authority. It will be the responsibility of the Managing Authority to ensure that control checks are carried out on at least 5% of expenditure transactions (Article 3.1(b) and 3.2 of Commission Regulation 2064/97). These controls will be carried out as an independent function.

#### **4.1.3.1 Use of Euro and Conversion Rates**

In accordance with Article 33, Council Regulation 1260/99 all commitments and payments are made in euros. Statements of expenditure have also to be made in euros. Since the UK does not have the euro as the national currency amounts of expenditure incurred will be converted into euros. This will be by applying the rate in force on the last but one working day at the Commission in the month preceding the month during which the expenditure was recorded in the accounts of the Paying Authority.

#### **4.1.3.2 Audit arrangements**

The system-based audits of EU cofinanced expenditure required under Article 3.1 (a) of Commission Regulation 2064/97 will be performed by the Finance and Audit Support Team, FAST, of DHFETE, which is independent of the Unit responsible for the management and payment of the Structural Funds Assistance. The Internal Audit Services of DHFETE will be responsible for random audit checks of Fund related expenditure.

When the Structural Funds Assistance is wound up the Head of the Internal Audit Services will be responsible for presenting to the Commission a declaration summarising the conclusions of the checks carried out during previous years and shall



assess the validity of the application for payment of the final balance and the legality and regularity of the transactions covered by the final certificate of expenditure (Article 38.1 (f) of the regulation).

#### **4.1.3.3 Irregularities and financial corrections**

For Northern Ireland the DFP will be responsible for reporting irregularities, notified to them by DHFETE, the Managing Authority, to the Commission, Article 38.1 (e), Council Regulation 1260/99. The Financial Management and control arrangements are summarised in Annex 1.

#### **Role of the Member State**

In accordance with Article 39(1), the Member State's Paying Authority has in the first instance, responsibility for investigating irregularities, acting upon evidence of any major change affecting the nature or conditions for the implementation or supervision of assistance and for making the financial corrections required.

Financial corrections shall be made in connection with the individual or systematic irregularity and shall consist of the cancelling of all or part of the Community contribution. Community Funds released in this way may be re-used by the Member State for the assistance concerned.

In accordance with article 39(4), any sum found to have been received unduly and to be recovered shall be repaid to the Commission together with the interest.

#### **Role of the Commission**

In accordance with Article 38(4), the Commission may make observations following examinations and evaluations, particularly regarding the financial impact of any irregularities detected. These observations shall be addressed to the Member State's Paying Authority and the Managing Authority and shall be accompanied, where necessary, by requests for corrective measures to remedy the management shortcomings found and correct those irregularities which have not already been corrected. The Member State's Paying Authority shall have the opportunity to comment on these observations. Where the Commission adopts conclusions, the Member State's Paying Authority will take the necessary steps within the deadline set by the Commission and will inform the Commission of its actions.

In accordance with Article 38(5), the Commission may suspend all or part of an interim payment linked to a serious and uncorrected irregularity. The Commission shall inform the Member State's Paying Authority of the action taken and the reasons for it.

If, in accordance with Article 39(2), after completing the necessary verifications, the Commission finds that the Member State's Paying Authority have not complied with their obligations or finds that all or part of the operation does not justify either part or whole of the contribution from the Funds, or finds that there are serious failings in the management or control systems which could lead to systematic irregularities, then again, the Commission may suspend the interim payment in question and stating its

reasons, request that the Member State's Paying Authority submit its comments and, where appropriate, carry out any corrections within a specified time period.

In accordance with Article 39(2), if the Member State's Paying Authority objects to the Commission's observations it shall be invited to a hearing by the Commission, in which both sides in co-operation based on the partnership make efforts to reach an agreement.

In accordance with Articles 38(5) and 39(3), if five months after the Commission requested corrective measures to remedy a financial irregularity the reasons for the suspension remain or the Member State's Paying Authority has not notified the Commission of the measures taken to correct the serious irregularity, or if at the end of the set period no agreement has been reached and the Member State's Paying Authority has not taken account of the comments made, the Commission may, within three months, decide to:

- 1) reduce the payment on account referred to in paragraph 6.4(a)
- 2) make the financial corrections required by cancelling all or part of the contribution from the Funds to the assistance concerned.

Corrections of this type will have regard to proportionality, the type of irregularity or change and the extent of the financial implications.

In the absence of a decision to do either i or ii, the suspension of interim payments shall cease.

#### **4.1.4 Monitoring Committee**

In accordance with Article 35 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/99, a Monitoring Committee, (Northern Ireland EQUAL Monitoring Committee, NIEMC), for EQUAL will be established no more than three months after the Programme has been approved to oversee strategy, policy, monitoring and evaluation. It will agree its own terms of reference and will be chaired by a representative of DHFETE, the Managing Authority for EQUAL in Northern Ireland. It will also agree the broad framework for project selection and agree and oversee a NI wide publicity strategy. The NIEMC will be assisted by an ad hoc secretariat responsible for the preparation of papers for discussion by the Committee or for clearance by written procedure, agendas and minutes of meetings.

The NIEMC will reflect the principles of partnership. It is important that it has a strong impact on policy and it is therefore essential that the structure reflects the key organisations that can make this happen. It will comprise representatives from the Northern Ireland Assembly, SEUPB, key policy representatives of Government, the Equality Commission and other policy, geographical and sectoral representatives as yet to be established. The European Commission will be represented in an advisory capacity.

#### **4.1.4.1 Duties of the Monitoring Committee**

NIEMC will be chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Managing Authority or his nominee. The Committee will draw up its own rules of procedure and agree them with the Managing Authority. The Committee's duties are defined below.

At its first meeting the Committee shall approve detailed provision for the proper and efficient discharge of the duties assigned to it, including the frequency of its meetings.

These provisions shall include particularly:-

- 1) arrangements to review progress towards achieving the specific objectives of the Programme; and
- 2) NIEMC shall satisfy itself as to the effectiveness and the quality of the implementation of the Programme.

In order to meet these provisions the NIEMC shall;

- 1) confirm or adjust the Programme Complement, including the physical and financial indicators to be used to monitor the assistance. Its approval must be obtained before any further adjustments are made and implemented by the Managing Authority;
- 2) not later than six months from the approval of the Operational Programme, consider and approve the criteria for selecting the projects financed under each Measure;
- 3) periodically review progress made towards achieving the specific objective of the Programme;
- 4) examine the results of implementation, particularly the achievement of the targets set for the different measures and the mid-term evaluation;
- 5) consider and approve the annual and final implementation reports before they are sent to the Commission;
- 6) consider and approve proposals to amend the contents of the approved Programme; and
- 7) it may propose to the Managing Authority adjustments or review of the Programme and Programme Complement in order to help attain the Programme objectives, or to improve the management of the Programme, including financial management.

Computer systems will be set up to gather reliable financial and statistical information on implementation. They will keep records and provide common information for all projects.

Non-Permanent Members from the Member States or other relevant organisations may be invited by the NIEMC to attend Monitoring Committee meetings in response to specific agenda items.

#### **4.1.5 Compatibility with Community policies ('State Aids')**

According to Article 12 of the Council Regulation 1260/1999, measures financed by the Structural Funds or the FIFG must be in keeping with the provisions of the Treaties, Community legislation based on the treaties, and Community policies. This compatibility is checked when funding applications are examined and while the measures are being carried out. In this connection, the following principles must be observed.

##### **Rules on Competition**

Co-financing by the Community systems of State aid for undertakings is subject to the aid being approved by the Commission, in accordance with Articles 87 and 88 of the Treaty.

Under Article 88 (3) of the Treaty, the Member States must inform the Commission of any plans to grant, extend or alter State Aid to undertakings.

At project development stage it will be necessary to identify any operations that might constitute state aid within the meaning of Article 87.1 of the Treaty. For example, certain types of employment and training aid are within the scope of Article 87.1 as are certain infrastructural measures. Measures related to the unemployed or students or which involve the provision of public service goods in the form of basic or general education or training for students or the unemployed are considered to be outside the definition of state aid.

No payments of aid will be made until the Commission has approved the aid in question by formal decision, unless the State Aid falls within the *de minimis* rule or other block exemption.

The "de minimis" threshold of 100,000 Euro in aid over a three-year period applies to the total amount of aid granted to a single company under all aid measures which are covered by the "de minimis" Rule. Accordingly, adequate mechanisms must be established to facilitate monitoring and control of cumulation of "de minimis" aid. Those responsible directly for the implementation of the measures in question will be required to report details of all individual "de minimis" payees and payments made until this measure to the National Authority.

Aid will be paid in accordance with EU Rules and with the Commission Regulation (EC) n° 69/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to *de minimis* aid (OJ L 10/30, 13.01.2001). Accordingly, individual payees will be informed, before payment, that the support is of a "de minimis" nature, the implications of that will be outlined to them and they will be required to verify that all "de minimis" aid received by them will remain within the threshold. In this context while the total amount of "de minimis" aid to the same recipient must not exceed €100,000 over a three year period, it is noted that the application of more than one aid scheme to a given investment project must respect the rules set out in the Commission Communication on the cumulation of aids for different purposes (OJ C3, 5.1.1995). The Commission (DG Competition) has indicated, in relation to that Communication, that the controls on the cumulation of aid for different purposes

applies in general and not merely to “de minimis” aids. Any new aid schemes and new notifiable ad hoc grants not foreseen in the initial decision approving the CIP will be notified to the Commission.

### **Training, Employment and Regional Aid and Specific Sectors**

The Commission’s Framework on Training Aid issued in November 1998, covers both specific and general training supports whether provided directly by firms or by public/private training centres. Exemptions are provided for aid given by way of education and initial training (including apprenticeships and day release schemes) and the training of unemployed people including traineeships in enterprises.

### **Approved levels of Aid under EU Framework on Training Aid**

	Gross % Aid	
	Specific Training	General Training
Standard Rate (large firms outside assisted areas)	25%	50%
• Supplements to Standard Rate for		
• SMES	+10%	+20%
• Art 87.3 (a) regions	+10%	+10%
• Art 87.3 (c) regions	+ 5%	+ 5%
• Beneficiaries: disadvantaged workers	+ 10%	+10%

A variety of other aid regimes are also controlled under the Treaty such as Employment Aid and Regional Aid, neither of the two Themes (measures) set out in this CIP are considered to be of a nature covered by either regime and are not therefore considered to require notification in either of those contexts. Many training measures are not caught by State Aid Rules in that most training forms part of the tasks normally carried out by the State and benefits people and workers in the general labour market does not favour certain undertakings or the production of certain goods within the meaning of Article 92(1) of the Treaty.

However, given that separate sectoral aid regimes are also applicable across the European Union in relation to the following sectors and that some of the themes (measures) may relate specifically either to 7 (Agriculture) or 8 (Fisheries and Aquaculture), they require notification and clearance or approval prior to implementation.

### **Notifiable Measures**

Activities under the EQUAL Themes which relate to the unemployed or students or involve the provision of public service goods in the form of basic or general education or training for students or the unemployed are considered to be outside the definition of aid.

## **State Aids-Block Exemptions**

In present EU legal circumstances and in the event of changes to existing measures or in the event of new measures being put forward within the CIP, the Commission will be informed by the implementing body/Managing Authority, as appropriate, under existing procedures of any intention to use further such exemptions as de minimis. No other decisions have been taken at this point on the possible future approach to block exemption by the Commission in such areas as de minimis. SME's and Training Aid. The situation will be reviewed and changed if and as necessary during the tenure of this CIP.

In the event of changes to existing measures or of new measures being put forward within the CIP, these will be notified by, where relevant, the implementing body to the Commission where required under the notification rules in force. Pending clearance or approval by the relevant Commission authorities and following the approval of such changes in the CIP by the Monitoring Committee, the revisions will be formally notified to the European Commission (DG Employment and Social Affairs) for a modification decision. The introduction of a new measure with an aid effect or an ad hoc amendment to an existing measure of approved aid will, in any event, require modification involves a co-funded measure, eligibility of expenditure for ESF support will be from the date on which the modification request is sent to DG Employment and Social Affairs in accordance with Article 30 of Regulation 1260/99/EEC.

State Aid meeting the "de minimis" conditions laid down by the Commission at Community level for State Aid to SMUs does not need to be notified and therefore requires no prior approval. The aid is covered by the implementing provisions set out in the Commission's notice on the de minimis rule for State aid.

As regards new aid schemes and new notifiable ad hoc grants not foreseen in the initial decision approving the OP, the following UK provisions shall apply to Northern Ireland:

1. The UK will notify to the Commission (DG Competition) for approval any new aid schemes and ad hoc grants;
2. Once the new aid schemes or ad hoc grants have been approved, and following the approval by the Programme Monitoring Committee of the insertion of these additional approved aid schemes and ad hoc grants in the Community Initiative Programme, UK will submit a revised list of state aid schemes and ad hoc grants to the Commission (DG Employment and Social Affairs);
3. In accordance with Art 30 of the General Regulation, the starting date for eligibility of expenditure will be the date on which GB submits to the Commission the request to modify the assistance by a formal Commission decision.

## 4.2 Calls for proposals

### 4.2.1 The way forward following admissability of the CIP by the Commission.

During the course of the negotiation process, and after the approval of the programme, DHFETE will consult further with interested parties throughout Northern Ireland to establish more about their views and concerns on the composition and optimum geographical level of operation of Development Partnerships.

In tandem, DHFETE will ensure that EQUAL is fully understood by all relevant divisions of Government Departments and clarify with them their own potential role in the programme and the importance of their involvement to influence policy.

Once the programme is approved, and prior to the call for proposals, detailed guidance will be issued that ensures that all interested parties and as many as possible of the small organisations whose involvement must be secured have a clear understanding of the purpose of EQUAL and the process of selection. It will be important to issue guidance on the likely number, or at least budget size of DPs in order that expectations and proposals are realistic.

At the same time, the proposed **Northern Ireland EQUAL Monitoring Committee**, NIEMC, refer section 4.1.4 will be established and will meet to work on selection criteria and discuss other means to ensure that DPs are effective and inclusive and maximise policy influence.

DHFETE will also hold meetings with interested groups to discuss proposals for DPs and will endeavour to bring together groups with overlapping proposals.

Eligibility and selection criteria will be developed by members of NIEMC with experience in project selection, EU funding as well as policy matters, partnership working and addressing labour market disadvantage. This group must be independent from Development Partnerships. Where a member has any interest in a DP they must declare it.

The Group will liaise with counterparts in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland at least, on scoring and selection, in order to share experience of best practice and derive optimum methods and criteria.

The criteria will cover all aspects of eligibility of the EQUAL Programme, and a number of key questions that explore in depth the composition of the partnerships, the experience of partners in working with groups that face discrimination and disadvantage in the labour market, and in respect of the chosen themes, arrangements for the partnership to work together, including a partnership agreement; the aims, objectives and outline work programme of the DP; arrangements for involving smaller organisations; clear evidence of exploration of added value to mainstream programmes and complementarity with other Structural Funds interventions; real evidence of innovation, with a clear description of why the proposed strategy is needed, is innovative, represents an opportunity to fill a gap in existing work; and

well-thought out evidence of how efforts will be made and achievements likely in terms of policy influence.

Selection criteria will be transparent and made widely available.

There will then be an open call for proposals for Development Partnerships. This is the first call and it is expected that the second (final) call will be made midway through the Programme period.

In the event that there is a large number of applications with overlapping aims and appropriate and innovative content, DHFETE will again aim to bring together partnerships to discuss the scope for joint activity.

#### **4.2.2 Publicity**

The Managing Authority will be responsible for ensuring that Commission regulations regarding information and publicity for the Structural Funds shall be applied in line with Information and Publicity Regulation 1159/2000.

The Managing Authority shall be responsible for ensuring that publicity is given to the Community Initiative Programme and particularly for informing:

- potential final beneficiaries, trade and professional bodies, the economic and social partners, bodies promoting equality between men and women and the relevant non-governmental organisations about the opportunities afforded by the assistance;
- the general public about the role played by the Community in the assistance concerned and its results.

The Managing Authority shall ensure that an appropriate and effective annual publicity strategy is prepared setting out details of publicity measures to be undertaken which will be agreed with the Northern Ireland EQUAL Monitoring Committee. Development Partnerships will be required to implement the requirements of the publicity regulation.

In accordance with Article 18.3 (d) of Council Regulation 1260/1999, the Programme Complement will include – in addition to an overall communication action plan – a detailed description of the publicity and information measures to be carried out.

#### **4.2.3 Guidelines for applications**

##### **4.2.3.1 Timetable**

The NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee will launch the first call for proposals during late spring 2001. The call will be publicised via a media press notice, newspaper advertisements and to those on the EQUAL mailing list. Potential applicants will be able to obtain access to guidance and the application form, from the ESF web site. Application packs will also be available from DHFETE.



Applicants will have up to three months to complete the EQUAL application form and completed applications will be independently appraised. During the autumn scoring and selection will be undertaken in the first instance by the Managing Authority. In the event that an individual has an interest, they must declare this, and will not be involved in the scoring of the proposal in question.

Where necessary, the group will refer to others to clarify linkages with existing policy and intervention.

The Managing Authority will put forward its recommendations for selected proposals to the NIEMC.

### **Key Dates**

- 15 September 2000** – submission of draft CIP to European Commission;
- November 2000** – draft CIP to the NI Assembly Committee and North South Ministerial Council;
- November 2000** – negotiating meetings with the European Commission commence;
- February 2001** – conclusion of negotiating meetings with European Commission;
- March / April 2001** – EQUAL NI CIP presented NI Assembly and North /South Ministerial Council
- March / April 2001** – EQUAL NI CIP to be formally approved by European Commission;
- April 2001** – establish NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee;
- April 2001** – Programme launch;
- May 2001** – 1<sup>st</sup> call for Development Partnership proposals (Action 1);
- End June 2001** – Development Partnerships proposals to be submitted;
- September 2001** – Development Partnership proposals (Action 1) approved by NI EQUAL MC.;
- October 2001** – Work Programmes and Transnational Co-operation agreements to be prepared by Development Partnerships (Action 1 maximum period 6 months).
- March 2002** – Work Programmes (Action 2) selection/commencement.

#### 4.2.3.2 Actions

50% of the NI budget will be allocated to first round activities. The first round will cover half of the EQUAL Programme period. EQUAL will fund activity under the following four actions:

- Action 1:** setting up Development Partnerships and transnational co-operation;
- Action 2:** implementing the work programmes of the Development Partnerships;
- Action 3:** thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy;
- Action 4:** Technical Assistance to support actions 1, 2 and 3.

Actions 1 and 2 are sequential. Member States will be expected to be in a position to start Action 3 at the earliest point that results are available to disseminate. Action 4 will provide support from before the commencement of Action 1.

In keeping with EU expectations, Development Partnerships have to make separate applications to their respective Member States.

##### *Action 1 : Setting up Development Partnerships and transnational co-operation*

Action 1 aims to facilitate the creation or the consolidation of durable, effective Development Partnerships and to ensure that transnational co-operation will have a real added value. **The time period available for Action 1 is not expected to exceed 6 months and will be restricted to 5% of total funds available for the first call for Development Partnerships.**

Action 1 will consist of three stages:

1. Application for Action 1
2. Selection for Action 1
3. Submission of Development Partnership Agreements and Transnational Co-operation Agreements

#### 4.2.3.3 Application

Selection for Action 1 will be based upon an application submitted jointly by a number of organisations which form the Development Partnership. The application should identify:

- the partners to be involved in the Development Partnership at the outset; the arrangements for ensuring that all relevant partners can become involved during the life of the partnership including, in particular, appropriate small organisations; and the arrangements for handling the administrative and financial responsibilities;
- the rationale for the partnership, a diagnosis of the problem to be addressed and an explanation of how the needs of all the potential beneficiary groups will be taken into account;
- the objectives of the partnership;
- a work programme for Action 1;

- the nature of the activities they intend to implement in Action 2;
- the expectations for the transnational co-operation; including identification of at least one partner from another Member State.

#### **4.2.3.4 Selection**

Selection criteria, refer also 4.4.1, will reflect the general principles of EQUAL. The procedures for selecting Development Partnerships fall within the competence of the Department for Further and Higher Education, Training and Employment (DHFETE), in co-operation with the NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee. Unsuccessful applicants will be given reasons for their non-selection.

#### **4.2.3.5 Submission of Development Partnership Agreements and Transnational Co-operation Agreements**

At the end of Action 1, each Development Partnership must submit two documents in order to have selection confirmed and receive funding to implement Action 2:

- i) a Development Partnership Agreement (DPA); and
- ii) a Transnational Co-operation Agreement (TCA), see also section 4.3.3.2.

The **Development Partnership Agreement** should contain as a minimum:

- an indication of the duration of the partnership, normally half of the Programme period;
- geographical DPs should indicate their specific territories;
- an assessment of current labour market exclusion, discrimination and inequality, within the thematic field and territory/sector concerned;
- objectives and priorities for action, reflecting the learning from previous relevant action in the territory/sector;
- a detailed work programme accompanied by a realistic budget;
- a clear identification of the agreed role of each partner, including the arrangements for steering and managing the partnership and administering the financial support;
- a mechanism for on-going assessment including the presentation of data and information on the Development Partnership and the analysis of results;
- the commitment of the Development Partnership to collaborate on Action 3; and
- its strategy and mechanisms for implementing the agreed mainstreaming approach.

The **Transnational Co-operation Agreement** should contain:

- a transnational work programme accompanied by a budget;
- the role of each transnational partner, the common methods of decision making and the organisational arrangements for implementing the common work programme;

- full details if co-operation is to extend to similar projects in a non-Member State eligible for funding under the PHARE, TACIS or MEDA Programmes; and
- the methodologies for monitoring and assessment of joint activities.

At least one Partner from another Member State must be identified by the DP, preferably working in the same thematic field. The Managing Authority proposes, in consultation with the Managing Authority in the Republic of Ireland, in the interests of North/South co-operation, to encourage applicants where relevant and feasible to form a transnational partnership in the first instance with a partner in the Republic of Ireland in addition to a transnational partner(s) in other Member States.

The DPA and TCA must also demonstrate that the Development Partnership fulfils the following conditions:

- **Transparency:** the Development Partnership must demonstrate the availability of the necessary co-financing.
- **Representative capacity:** the Development Partnership must be able to demonstrate its capacity to mobilise different actors in order that they work together. Particular attention will be given to the arrangements for ensuring that all relevant actors, such as: public authorities; the public employment service; NGOs; the business sector (in particular SMEs); and the social partners, can become involved during the life of the partnership. The Development Partnership must show that appropriate small organisations are able to participate fully.
- **Co-operative spirit:** the Development Partnership must be able to demonstrate its capacity and its willingness to work in a context of transnational co-operation and explain the expected value added of transnational co-operation in implementing the different components of the work-programme. In addition, the Development Partnership must plan to co-operate in networking, dissemination and mainstreaming activities at both national and European level.

Following consultation with SEUPB DHFETE will confirm the initial selection of the Partnership if these conditions are fulfilled. They will notify the partnership of the multi-annual budget available to implement its work programme.

#### **4.2.3.6 Review process**

If a Development Partnership is not selected for funding, DHFETE, as the Managing Authority, will write and let them know enclosing the marks awarded by the selection panel and explaining the review procedure. There will be a review process where Development Partnerships wish to question against non-selection.

*Action 2 : Implementation of the work programmes of Development Partnerships*

**The implementation of work programmes selected under Action 2 would normally cover an initial period of 2 to 3 years.** However, if the results obtained justify an extension, a further grant may be approved, along with an extension of the

period of financing for the Development Partnership. **The maximum percentage of funds available for Action 2 will be 72% of total funds available for the first call.**

*Action 3: Thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy*

Networking, dissemination and mainstreaming activities within EQUAL will be a separate mandatory action. DHFETE will be responsible for ensuring this is organised in such a way as to facilitate maximum input into labour market and employment policy and the involvement of social partners.

The NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee will agree a strategy for mainstreaming at both the horizontal level (the level of organisations active in the same or a similar field) and the vertical level (the level of regional and national policy, including the National Action Plan (NAP) and the Structural Funds). These mechanisms should aim to:

- identify factors leading to inequality and discrimination in connection with the labour market and monitor and analyse the impact or potential impact of the Development Partnerships on policy and on the different groups subject to discrimination and inequality;
- identify and assess good practice and benchmark performance;
- disseminate good practice, from the end of Action 1

These activities will normally involve Development Partnerships acting either singly or in groups on the basis of their specific expertise and proven capacity. Development Partnerships would receive additional funding for this purpose.

**The maximum percentage available to the Managing Authority to allocate to the Development Partnerships under Action 3 will be 15% of total funds available for the first call.**

*Action 4 : Technical Assistance*

The Technical Assistance priority must respect Commission Regulation No. 1685/2000 laying down detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation No. 1265/2000 as regards the eligibility of expenditure co-financed by EU Structural Funds and in particular Rule No.11: costs incurred in managing and implementing the Structural Funds.

**The maximum percentage available to the body providing Technical Assistance under Action 4 will be 8% of total funds.**

**Technical Assistance will be available to support the implementation of the CIP and the monitoring, audit and evaluation of actions both within Member States and at the European level.** It will be used particularly:

- 1) to advise on and facilitate the consolidation of partnerships and the search for suitable transnational co-operation partners (Action 1);

- 2) to collect, edit and disseminate the experience and results, including annual reports of the Development Partnerships (Action 2);
- 3) to support the thematic networking, the horizontal dissemination activities and the setting up of mechanisms for policy impact (Action 3); and
- 4) for co-operation in European networking and to ensure the sharing of all relevant information with the other Member States and the Commission to carry out mid-term and final evaluation of the programme.

Technical Assistance (TA) is to support the implementation of the CIP, by providing professional services both to the managing authority, and the DPs. Effective TA will be crucial for the success of each CIP, in view of the complex and innovative approach, resulting from the EQUAL principles of partnership, empowerment, and mainstreaming.

It has been agreed, with the Heads of ESF Missions, that TA will constitute a priority axis of any EQUAL CIP. The EQUAL Commission Guidelines, (§ 61), stipulate that Member States have to present a description of the arrangements for Technical Assistance to implement the CIP by activity and the selection procedure for the Development partnerships.

#### **4.2.3.7 Selection of the bodies rendering TA services**

According to § 49 of the EQUAL guidelines, Member States will apply their own procedures to the selection and funding of those who will carry out technical assistance activities in a transparent way.

Having agreed the precise role, a contract will be awarded for the national support structure. This contract will be through competition and in line with Commission, Government Purchasing Agency and Departmental guidance. Those elements of technical assistance which fall outside the remit of the national support structure ( eg evaluation ) will be commissioned in line with a technical assistance strategy to be agreed with the NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee.

In principle, management authorities have the following organisational options for establishing their TA:

- 1) To perform the functions of technical assistance in-house, with civil servants seconded full-time (by duly documented decision), and with staff specifically recruited for technical assistance work;
- 2) To assign the functions of technical assistance to another public authority; or
- 3) To select any competent service provider(s) by means of a public call for tender.

In applying the UK rules and procedures, with any pertinent NI modifications the following three relevant legal European provisions will be observed;

- 1) the obligations for the award of public service contracts as specified in Council Directives 92/50/EEC of 18 June 1992, and the amendments of 97/52/EC of 13 October 1997. These Directives specify the conditions, rules and procedures for public service contracts, the estimated value of which, net of VAT, is not less than 139,312€. If Contracting authorities plan to award their public service contracts by negotiated procedure, this exceptional procedure has to be duly justified;

- 2) the arrangements for Technical Assistance as agreed in the CIP, relating to;
  - a) The type and volume, organisation and deliverables of the services required;
  - b) The interfaces with the management authority, DP's, thematic networks, and the TA established at European level, as well as with other providers of the services;
  - c) The selection and award criteria; and
- 3) the obligations to involve the partners who have to monitor the CIP (i.e., the designated members of the future Monitoring Committee), as laid down in Art. 15 (6) of the General Regulation.

#### 4.2.3.8 The form of the Technical Assistance Activities and Budget

Following the Commission EQUAL Guideline No. 46 the Technical Assistance activities will follow the three categories.

Category	Reference	Type of activities
A <b>Measure 1: EQUAL specific support actions</b>	Eligibility Rule N° 11.2; EQUAL Guidelines §46	Support for thematic networking, dissemination of results, and mainstreaming, and providing advice and support to the Development Partnerships regarding the principles and methodology of EQUAL, in particular the thematic priorities, the partnership approach and transnational co-operation
B <b>Measure 2: Basic administrative and financial TA activities</b>	Eligibility Rule N° 11.2	Management, implementation monitoring and control of the CIP, notably activities related to preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of operations, to meetings of monitoring committees, and to audits and on-the-spot checks of operations, which could include the salaries of civil servants seconded to carry out such "basic TA activities"
C <b>Measure 3: Complementary TA activities</b>	Eligibility Rule N° 11.3	Studies, seminars, information actions, evaluation, and the acquisition and installation of computerised systems for management, monitoring and evaluation. For these activities, salaries of civil servants are not eligible

The EQUAL Guideline No. 48 and Eligibility Rule 11.2.5 require that the budget spread should be over the three measures when the ESF contribution to the Technical Assistance priority axis exceeds 5%. The budget is as follows;

Activity	Budget
<b>Measure 1:</b> Support for thematic networking, dissemination of results, and mainstreaming, and providing advice and support to the Development Partnerships regarding the principles and methodology of EQUAL, in particular the thematic priorities, the partnership approach and transnational co-operation	3%
<b>Measure 2:</b> Management, implementation monitoring and control of the CIP, notably activities related to preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of operations, to meetings of monitoring committees, and to audits and on-the-spot checks of operations, which could include the salaries of civil servants seconded to carry out such “basic TA activities	2%
<b>Measure 3:</b> Studies, seminars, information actions, evaluation, and the acquisition and installation of computerised systems for management, monitoring and evaluation. For these activities, salaries of civil servants are not eligible	3%

Rule No. 11.2.5 requires that Measures 1 and 2 can not exceed 5% of the total ESF contribution if the overall budget exceeds 5% and Measure 1 must be greater than Measure 2. The maximum amount of Technical Assistance is 8%. The Managing Authority is proposing the maximum rate for the Technical Assistance because the overall EQUAL budget is small and the higher rate will be needed to enable the Support Structure to fulfill the additional administration requirements, to establish the database and comply with the detailed monitoring and reporting controls.

The National Support Structure, NSS, will have two basic functions;

- 1) Supporting the Managing and Paying Authorities and the DPs to effectively implement the NI EQUAL CIP; and
- 2) Ensuring the objectives of EQUAL are met at both National and European levels.

At the national level the NSS will provide on-going monitoring information to the Managing Authority. The NSS will assist with the liaison between DPs their TPs and DHFETE. It will ensure complementarity at the operational level between other EU Programmes and Initiatives. The NSS will also help with the collation of outcomes at the national level to a European level and will be involved in meetings organised by the Commission.

The NSS will be required to help the DPs to meet their aims and to assist them with their monitoring and reporting commitments, including financial.

Where necessary, the Managing Authority in compliance with its obligations under Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2064/97 and in accordance with public procurement requirements specified above, select a competent service provider to



perform certain tasks on behalf of the Managing Authority. These tasks will include audits and on the spot checks of activities and operations, Measure 2 of Technical Assistance. Similarly the evaluation process and acquisition of the IT systems will, where necessary, be carried out by competent service providers on behalf of the Managing Authority, Measure 3 of Technical Assistance.

The tender for the on-going evaluation of the CIP will be published after the adoption of the CIP by the Commission.

#### **4.2.3.9 Modalities and timetable for establishing TA**

The Commission timetable for EQUAL requires Member States to synchronise their calls for proposals under EQUAL, and publish their DP first calls for proposals by end February 2001.

The implications of this date for the activities of TA will be the following:

- 1) TA services under category A " EQUAL specific support" should be in place when the first call for proposals will be published;
- 2) TA services under category B " basic administrative and financial support " should be in place when the first call for proposals will be published; and
- 3) TA services under category C " Complementary TA activities" will be established on demand. The tender for the ongoing evaluation at the level of the CIP, however, has to be published after the adoption of the CIP by the Commission.

In order to have ad hoc TA services available before the proper establishment of TA services under each of the three measures, Member States may:

- 1) Issue ad hoc contracts for services under EQUAL for the preparatory work, in line with the EU and national rules for the award of public service contracts. The Commission has notified all Member States on the date of eligibility of expenditure under EQUAL; and
- 2) Make use of the resources of the National Support Structures established under ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT, In cases where this requires additional financial resources, the necessary contractual commitments should have been done before January 1, 2000.

#### **4.2.3.10 Relationship between TA activities and activities related to Action 3**

In order to describe the implementation of EQUAL it is necessary to clarify the roles of, and relationships between, DPs and the providers of TA, for networking, dissemination of results, and for mainstreaming of proven examples into policy and practice.

In view of §43 and §46 of the EQUAL Guidelines;

- 1) Action 3 will be organised under the responsibility of the Management Authority. In order to do so effectively, the Management Authorities are encouraged to draft a mainstreaming plan, to be endorsed by the Monitoring Committee, and to be updated annually, on the basis of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the DPs, and of their networks. An outline of that

plan has to be presented in the CIP, describing the main national mechanisms to facilitate mainstreaming at both the horizontal and vertical levels, EQUAL guidelines, § 62;

- 2) Action 3 will be mainly carried out by DPs selected on the basis of their specific expertise and proven capacity. For this purpose, those DPs selected to act as network organisers will receive additional funding under Action 3. Pertinent activities carried out by these DPs, would include:
- Validation and synthesis of the experience, methodology and results of individual DPs, through
    - analytical work, moderated group work or comparative studies aiming at a better understanding of the main factors leading to inequality and discrimination in the relevant thematic field; and
    - self-evaluation workshops or peer reviews aiming at assessing the conditions for successful partnerships and good practice in terms of e.g. approach, methodology, organisational arrangements, resources, political contexts, labour market dynamics;
  - Dissemination of good practice and validated results at horizontal level to peer actors and partnerships, through publications and conferences, Internet presentations or presentations at relevant events;
  - Enriching, through demand-led dissemination in the vertical level, the political debate on the further development of employment and training policies, through bringing in innovative solutions and working examples from the DPs into relevant institutions and organisations, fora, committees or assemblies, thus providing the ground for integrating EQUAL results into policy and practice of key actors at national and regional level, and to the social partners.

## 4.3 Leading principles of EQUAL

### 4.3.1 Partnership approach

Partnership is a cornerstone of UK policies to improve employability and to promote human resources development. The partnerships of the 1994-1996 European Social Fund programmes has broadened and deepened during their lifetime. It is expected that EQUAL partnership will build on previous experience and include representatives of workers and employers, the Equality Commission, education and training communities, the voluntary and social economy sectors and the management authorities in Northern Ireland.

EQUAL partnerships will be established at geographical or sector level and called Development Partnerships. These Partnerships will bring together representatives of different target groups who will define and agree a strategy to be followed for tackling inequality and discrimination in the labour market within a selected theme. Within this strategic overview, Partnerships will commission sub-groups to develop innovative methods of helping specific target groups.

Development Partnerships will also participate with other Development Partnerships in thematic networks which will co-ordinate appropriate dissemination and mainstreaming of lessons learned from their activities. These networks will be expected to engage policy makers and influential organisations such as the Equality

Commission to help ensure the development of a stronger policy focus and best use of project funding.

### **4.3.2 Empowerment / participation**

The principle of empowerment will be central to each Development Partnership. In practice this will mean that those who will be targeted for support will also have an opportunity to influence the design and evaluation of the proposed activities. The active participation of those targeted for assistance should be positively assessed in the selection for Action 1 funding and the confirmation of selection for Action 2.

### **4.3.3 Transnationality**

Research and findings of previous evaluations have demonstrated that transnational work can significantly boost the confidence of those that face disadvantage in the labour market and therefore contribute substantially to breaking down barriers to their participation.

#### **4.3.3.1 Transnational Co-operation: Distribution and evaluation at European level**

EQUAL is to undertake “pilot studies” for the development and promotion of new implementation methods for employment policies. To do this close co-operation is required between all Member States, the social partners and the Commission, in order to successfully exploit the potential for impact on the European Employment Strategy of good practice developed throughout the European Union.

The work programme of this co-operation, thematic studies, periodic evaluation discussion forums, etc. and its methods will be determined in parallel with the increasing pace of the Initiative. To this end, each year, a detailed work programme of the European level actions will be established in close co-operation between the Commission and the representatives of the Management Authorities. One of the first tasks, following the drafting of CIPs and the start of the DPs, will consist of a European inventory of the situation regarding discrimination and inequality in employment.

Within the frameworks of networking and national distribution of good practice Action 3, the Management Authority will be responsible for encouraging, organising and supporting the work of the DPs required to take part in the actions at European level. The travelling expenses incurred by this participation in actions at European level will be covered by the Budget envisaged for Action 3.

#### **4.3.3.2 Transnational co-operation at the level of the DP**

At the end of the Action 1, as referred to above, each DP has to conclude a Transnational Co-operation Agreement, TCA, refer to section 4.2.3.5, with at least one DP in another Member State. In addition, this co-operation will also be able to stretch to similar projects financed in a non-Member State under the PHARE, TACIS or MEDA programmes. On an exceptional and duly justified basis, co-operation could also be extended to another partner external to EQUAL provided that the

potential value added is clearly ascertained and this associated partner brings the proof of its capacity to cover its own expenditure carried out within the framework of this co-operation. Partners outside EQUAL will be called “associated transnational partners” and their participation will be submitted for approval by the Management Authority.

Within the framework of transnational co-operation, each DP shall be in contractual relation, for those issues concerning itself, with the Managing Authority to which it gives account. Nevertheless, the various DPs (transnational partners) are connected among themselves by a TCA which specifies the objectives and common work methods of their “co-operation network”. This agreement, mixing partners of different countries brought together around a joint project, obviously exceeds the national scope of each partner and requires methods of management at European level.

To this end, the Commission will set up on its own servers, via a Web interface, the tools necessary to present, update and allow the approval of the TCAs. The DP which assures the secretariat of the co-operation network will enter the data concerning the transnational partners and the agreements concluded. An electronic validation by the various contracting transnational partners and by the various Management Authorities concerned will be necessary.

Each co-operation network will choose for itself a name which identifies it, and will specify in its transnational co-operation agreement:

- The dependent partners and the possible associated partners
- The objectives pursued by co-operation and the value added expected by each partner
- The detailed work programme (nature of the activities, budget allocated to each activity, timetable of implementation)
- The role of each one of the DPs or associated partners or other projects (financial amount allocated to co-operation; responsibilities in relation to implementation);
- The collective decision-making methods (description of the mechanism)
- The management methods (co-ordination, secretariat)
- The mechanisms of evaluation of co-operation efforts.

It is intended that funding for transnational activities should not exceed 15% of a Development Partnership’s overall Budget.

#### **4.3.4 Innovation**

All activities undertaken by Development Partnerships must be innovatory in some way. Examples of innovation may include new methods of delivery or new systems or new qualifications. Development Partnerships must show what they have done to

test the assertion that activities are innovatory. They must identify how the success of the innovation is to be measured and how, if successful, the innovatory outcomes will be incorporated into mainstream programmes or otherwise put into practice.

In addition, Development Partnerships will be required to demonstrate how they are developing models of good practice, which can be subsequently transferred to other parts of the European Union. Partnerships must be clear on the demonstration objectives to ensure that lessons are not lost or become secondary to the achievement of hard outputs. Much can be learned from innovative approaches which are unsuccessful as those which are and it will be possible for projects to fail but still contribute to mainstreaming activity. Innovative approaches which emphasise the identification of qualitative outcomes and key lessons will be encouraged.

#### **4.3.5 Thematic Approach**

EQUAL will operate in thematic fields defined in the context of two of the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy (EES): Employability and Equal Opportunities.

The strategy for EQUAL in Northern Ireland aims to:

- ensure that proposals principally benefit those subject to the main forms of discrimination (based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) and inequality and each thematic field will be fully accessible to all such groups;
- ensure that the promotion of equality between women and men is integral to the thematic fields in both pillars as well as being targeted through specific actions in the Equal Opportunities pillar;
- have in mind the ideal of improving the supply of and demand for quality jobs with a future;
- encourage the effective use of existing mechanisms (for example those that exist for social dialogue) to improve awareness of the factors leading to discrimination, inequality and exclusion in connection with the labour market.
- provide an opportunity for innovative cross-border co-operation through the formation of Development Partnerships made up of organisations in the North and South of Ireland.

#### **4.3.6 Dissemination**

Community wide dissemination of progress and outcomes of projects is central to the success of the EQUAL initiative in particular in ensuring that innovatory ideas are transferred across the Community and ensuring that information is widely available about existing provision and developments. In order to disseminate good practice and benchmark achievements, NI Development Partnerships will be expected to liaise with the GB Thematic Network Groups (TNGs) which are to be established. TNGs will have a role in working with the Development Partnerships on thematic networking and help to identify suitable partnerships, which will contribute to thematic clusters and discussion at EU level. The NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee will collate the outcomes from the DPs and undertake dissemination of good practice.

#### **4.3.7 Mainstreaming**

The development of EQUAL has a strong policy focus, and by design will give much greater support to mainstreaming from implementation of the Development Partnership work programmes. Keeping up with policy developments and ensuring that the lessons learnt from individual projects or groups of projects are used to influence the policy process at the local, national or European level will represent a continued challenge under EQUAL.

DHFETE will be responsible for ensuring that mainstreaming is organised in such a way as to facilitate maximum input into labour market and employment policy and the involvement of social partners.

The NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee will agree a strategy for mainstreaming at both the horizontal level (the level of organisations active in the same or a similar field) and the vertical level (the level of regional and national policy, including the National Action Plan (NAP) and the Structural Funds). These mechanisms should aim to:

- identify factors leading to inequality and discrimination in connection with the labour market and monitor and analyse the impact or potential impact of the Development Partnerships on policy and on the different groups subject to discrimination and inequality;
- identify and assess good practice and benchmark performance;
- disseminate good practice, from the end of Action 1

These activities will normally involve Development Partnerships acting either singly or in groups on the basis of their specific expertise and proven capacity. Development Partnerships would receive additional funding for this purpose.

Given the potential for cross border co-operation under EQUAL, it is proposed to develop the mainstreaming strategy in conjunction with the Special EU Programmes Body and the Republic of Ireland Managing Authority. Relevant aspects of the strategy will be implemented under the auspices of the Special EU Programmes Body and mainstreaming groups North and South will be established to work jointly. The key relevant Government Departments, state agencies, social and project partners will be represented on the mainstreaming groups and possibly the NSS.

For the purpose of effectively implementing EQUAL mainstream organisations which are relevant for specific projects need to be identified at an early stage through the mainstreaming groups and where practicable they need to closely liaise with appropriate Development Partnerships.

#### **4.3.8 Gender mainstreaming**

All Plans for intervention under the mainstream Structural Funds and Community Initiatives are expected to demonstrate compliance with and contribution to EU legislation and policies in respect of equality of opportunity between women and men.

The fourth pillar of the EES is concerned with strengthening equal opportunities policies for women and men; and the fifth policy field of the ESF is concerned with improving women's access to and participation within the labour market.

The Equal Opportunities pillar of the EES was substantially strengthened in 1999, and Guideline 19 obliges Member States to adopt a gender mainstreaming approach in implementing the Guidelines of all four pillars. Similarly, the ESF Regulation states that within the five policy fields, the Fund shall take account of equal opportunities for women and men as part of the mainstreaming approach. This is one of three horizontal aspects covered by the ESF Regulation.

The definition of gender mainstreaming according to the EC is as follows.

*“Gender Mainstreaming involves ensuring that all general measures and operations openly and actively take into account – during planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – their effects on the respective situations of women and men. It also involves the complementary design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of specific measures and operations to promote equality and to assist women to participate and benefit equally.”*

Thus, equality of opportunity between women and men is expected to be both a horizontal and vertical priority of Plans, with mainstreaming ensuring gender consideration and monitoring in each policy field.

The NI EQUAL Programme under the Equal Opportunities pillar will place a strong emphasis on the implementation of the gender mainstreaming approach, through the following key means:

1. Involvement of the Equality Commission, at least in an advisory capacity, in every Development Partnership supported through the EQUAL Programme. The Equality Commission will ensure that gender equality is taken into consideration at every stage of implementation, from development of DPs' plans to their monitoring and evaluation;
2. Inclusion of selection criteria on mainstreaming gender equality on which all proposals put forward by DPs will be scored. The Equality Commission and key gender equality of opportunity bodies will advise on these criteria;
3. Involvement in the Monitoring Committee of key gender equality groups, including the equality commission;
4. Disaggregation of input, output and impact data wherever possible in respect of gender equality;
5. A separate section in the evaluation of EQUAL on mainstreaming equality of opportunity.

Section 2.3.2 of this document also makes clear that what is effectively a mainstreaming approach to equal opportunities that stretches beyond gender is now enshrined in legislation in Northern Ireland.

The Agreement reached through multi-party talks on Northern Ireland includes a section: 'Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity', that sets out a commitment to introducing a statutory duty on equality. Subsequently new statutory duties on public authorities to mainstream equality and good relations were included in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 at Section 75.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity –

- (e) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial groups, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- (f) between men and women generally;
- (g) between persons with a disability and persons without, and
- (h) between persons with dependants and persons without.

Section 75 is a mainstreaming approach to equality in that it makes equality central to the whole range of public policy making in Northern Ireland. The statutory duties are complementary but additional to other UK and EU equality legislation or directives.

Northern Ireland also expects to learn from the UK ESF Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming Action Plan that is currently being developed.

The Mainstreaming Action plan also sets out the importance of monitoring and evaluation in mainstreaming equal opportunities and this will be taken fully into account in the NI EQUAL Programme.

## 4.4 Selection , Eligibility Criteria and Contracts

### 4.4.1 Selection

Selection criteria will reflect the leading principles of EQUAL. The procedures for selecting Development Partnerships fall within the competence of DHFETE in co-operation with the NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee. Unsuccessful applicants will be given reasons for their non-selection.

The project selection system for 2000 - 2006 will be designed to encourage and reward strategic partnerships which share common thematic objectives and show they can work together effectively. It is proposed that preliminary checks on applications will be undertaken by the Managing Authority. These checks will be based on criteria drawn up by the NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee which will follow the principles laid down in this Community Initiative Programme. The eligible projects will then be assessed and ranked against more qualitative criteria by experts independent of the Development Partnerships. A report on the balance of Development Partnerships proposed for selection, taking into account value for money considerations, will be made by the NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee.



#### **4.4.2 Eligibility of activities**

The normal eligibility rules of the ESF apply. EQUAL may fund action normally eligible under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) or Financial Instrument for Fisheries guidance (FIFG) rules. We would expect this type of activity to complement action under ESF. The standard rule that a single item of capital equipment can cost no more than £1000 will apply. We would expect most of the activity under EQUAL to focus on eligible ESF activity rather than a bias towards capital expenditure. Exceptions to this rule could be made if the Development Partnerships could make a strong case to justify the required capital expenditure.

#### **4.4.3 Contractual arrangements with Development Partnerships**

The Managing Authority will normally contract directly with the Development Partnership, refer also to 4.2.3.5. However if the Development Partnership is not a legal entity the Managing Authority will contract with the Lead Partner within the Development Partnership.

The contract letter will set out the terms and conditions and once the Development Partnership or Lead Partner has completed profile forms and signed and returned a copy of the contact letter there will be a binding contract between the Managing Authority and Development Partnership or Lead Partner.

#### **4.4.4 Co-Financing**

Given the innovatory nature of EQUAL and the close link to policy development it may be appropriate to consider co-financing targeted initiatives to take forward elements of EQUAL

#### **4.4.5 Controls for implementing EQUAL by the Managing Authority**

As mentioned in section 4,1,2 the Department of Higher Education, Training and Employment (DHFETE) is the Managing Authority for the NI EQUAL CIP. As such the Department must:

1. Comply with the implementation timetable agreed by the Commission and the Member States;
2. Develop and co-ordinate policy on the Initiative including the development of linkages, where appropriate, with other Community Initiatives and with National Operational Programmes;
3. Co-ordinate policy with other Government Departments and Agencies in respect of the Initiative;
4. Liaise with European Commission and other Member States on policy and progress and communication with technical support unit on such matters;
5. Chair and provide Secretariat for the CIP Monitoring Committee;
6. Assemble and supply statistical, financial information and comprehensive information to the Monitoring Committee on issues relevant to the operation of the Initiative;

7. Seek to ensure that ESF support is accounted for and managed in accordance with relevant Community rules, to include prevention of double funding;
8. Arrange for certified and verified payment requests and progress reports to be submitted to the Commission in compliance with Community rules; and
9. Issue rules and procedures from time to time to Project Promoters and other relevant bodies and organisations, as necessary, in order to ensure compliance with, in particular, financial control in accordance with ESF and Structural funds Regulations.

#### 4.5 Complementarity

DFP will promote complementarity between EQUAL and the INTERREG III and URBAN II Community Initiatives in Northern Ireland. DARD will ensure the same level of complementarity with regard to the LEADER+ Community Initiative. In all cases efforts will be made to ensure that there is no double funding of projects. This will be achieved through:

- cross -representation on programme committees;
- ensuring liaison between the relevant Managing Authorities and the EQUAL NSS;
- consultation on operational plans; and
- a shared approach to events and publicity.

The main link between EQUAL and the Northern Ireland CSF, and in particular its ESF elements, will be through DHFETE, which will seek to ensure that lessons learned are used to inform the design and targeting of mainstream ESF. In addition, presentations will be made to other Monitoring Committees and a central website will provide information on all programmes to encourage greater clarity.

The selection system will also ensure that there is no duplication between EQUAL and the Transitional Objective 1 Programme and PEACE II. The Monitoring Committees will be consulted at the DP selection stage.

#### 4.6 Territorial Employment Pacts

Territorial Employment Pacts, (TEPs), are EU Initiatives aimed at reducing unemployment in the areas in which they currently operate. A total of 89 pacts exist EU-wide. For Northern Ireland, the District Council of Newry and Mourne was selected. In the Republic there are four TEPs, the areas selected were Dublin City, Limerick, Westmeath and Drogheda/Dundalk. The new ESF Regulation (1260/1999) provides a strong role for activities in the area of local development, in particular Article 2.2:

“Within the policy fields set out in paragraph 1 the Fund shall take account of support for local initiatives concerning employment, in particular initiatives to support local employment and Territorial Employment Pacts”.

Quite clearly, the learning and development of the existing Territorial Employment Pacts will inform activities under EQUAL, in particular the activation of “bottom-up” local initiatives and the cementing of local and territorial (geographical) partnerships and the creation of a climate of co-operation. The Pacts must also adhere to actions within the scope of the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy.

The NI TEP may well form a Development Partnership with an ROI TEP under the cross-border element of the NI and ROI EQUAL CIPs.

## 4.7 Financial Plan

The Financial Plan for the NI EQUAL CIP is presented in Annex A to the Commission Decision. Certain assumptions have been used in the preparation of the plan;

1. Expenditure has been included in the year 2000 as per instructions from the Commission;
2. The allocations to Member States are as outlined in the Commission note of 27.7.2000;
3. The NI allocation 11.69 Meuro has been calculated by subtracting the GB's annual budget, as outlined in the GB EQUAL CIP, from the UK total; and
4. The allocations per Pillar are Employability 60%, Equal Opportunities 32% and Technical Assistance 8%.

### 4.7.1 Summary of the UK Financial tables to include Northern Ireland

The table shows NI annual allocation at 1999 prices amounting to 11 Meuro. Indexation to 2006 increases the allocation to 11.896 Meuro. The annual NI allocation is given from 2000 as requested by the Commission. This is broken down by Measure in Annex A to the Commission Decision. The table goes on to show the NI allocation from 2001 onwards excluding 2000. This is then incorporated in the total for the UK:

#### **EQUAL – SUMMARY UK FINANCIAL TABLES**

**NI Allocation - Total at 1999 prices to be awarded = 11.000m euro**

Allocation in Meuro at 1999 prices

NI	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
	1.761	1.719	1.555	1.440	1.315	1.556	1.654	11.000

Allocation to include indexation to 2003

NI	2.924%	2.926%	2.926%	2.925%	2.926%	2.926%	2.926%	2.926%
Annex A	1.796	1.788	1.650	1.559	1.423	1.684	1.790	11.690
Revised Allocation	0	<b>1.788</b>	<b>1.974</b>	<b>1.972</b>	<b>1.979</b>	<b>1.990</b>	<b>1.987</b>	<b>11.690</b>

Allocation to include indexation to 2006

NI Annex A	0	1.788	1.974	1.972	2.009	2.057	2.096	Total
Revised Allocation	0	0	0	0	<b>2.009</b>	<b>2.057</b>	<b>2.096</b>	<b>11.896</b>
<b>Summary</b>								Total
NI	0.000	1.788	1.974	1.972	<b>2.009</b>	<b>2.057</b>	<b>2.096</b>	<b>11.896</b>
GB	0.000	59.312	65.478	65.450	<b>66.632</b>	<b>68.285</b>	<b>69.602</b>	<b>394.760</b>
UK	0.000	61.100	67.452	67.422	<b>68.642</b>	<b>70.342</b>	<b>71.698</b>	<b>406.656</b>

The NI 2001 – 2006 annual budgets (Annex A to the Commission Decision) and the GB 2001 – 2006 annual budgets (Annex A to the Commission Decision) add up to the UK annual allocations.

## 4.8 Co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

### 4.8.1 Introduction

Under the North/South provisions of the Belfast Agreement, the CIP contains arrangements for co-operation on common policy areas at Development Partnership level and at operational level between CIP Managing Authorities in Northern Ireland and the Republic. In the first instance, an all-Ireland mainstreaming strategy has been proposed. The second North/South strand will invite and encourage the establishment of cross-border Development Partnership links in the context of transnational co-operation and/or as active cross-border partners within the DPs.

### 4.8.2 Special EU Programmes Body

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), one of six North/South implementation bodies established under the Belfast Agreement, is, in law responsible for the preparation, for the approval of the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) in close consultation with the Finance Departments (North and South), and other relevant Departments, detailed Programme proposals for the Community Initiatives. For practical purposes the NSMC agreed at its meeting on 16 June 2000 that the SEUPB would delegate its functions in that regard to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment who will be the managing authorities for EQUAL in the Republic and in Northern Ireland respectively. In accordance with the practical administrative arrangements devised, the NSMC approved the EQUAL proposals on the 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2000. The SEUPB will have an administrative role in the operation of the cross-border dimension of EQUAL, and the other Community Initiatives LEADER+ and URBAN II, and is responsible for the administration of the new PEACE Programme and INTERREG III Community Initiative. It will also be responsible for monitoring and promoting the implementation of the Common Chapter which puts in place a framework for increased co-operation between both economies and across all sectors where this is appropriate and mutually beneficial.

The Transitional Objective 1 Programme has identified particular areas with good potential for co-operation North/South. In the labour market and training fields there has been a series of joint operations between DHFETE and FÁS. There is, similarly, significant ongoing co-operation between the respective Departments of Education, third level and other educational institutions and bodies, on a range of educational matters.

Both the education and training fields have seen recent Ministerial bilaterals. A range of co-operative ventures and contacts between the various other sectoral interests involved in the Operational Programme and their Republic of Ireland opposite numbers have taken place over the last funding period. Similarly, ongoing and regular contact and co-operation takes place at Official level in relation to the development of all Community Initiative Programmes and other associated areas of common and mutual interest.

At the first meeting of the North South/Ministerial Council (Special EU Programmes) in June 2000 the Ministers agreed in relation to the 2000 to 2006 CSF period that:

“The European Commission and the Authorities of Ireland and Northern Ireland emphasise that the provision of €400 million for North/South Co-operation is a minimum and all parties are committed to optimising the level of, and accompanying investment in, North/South co-operation. This objective will be kept under specific and continual review both in the development and implementation of the Operational Programmes North and South and by the EU Programmes Body in the ongoing discharge of its responsibility in this area.”

Accordingly, DHFETE, in co-operation with the SEUPB and the Managing Authority in the Republic of Ireland, in adopting this objective in the context of EQUAL, will endeavour to maximise the scope for North/South co-operation in the Development Partnership process and within priorities and measures to be implemented under this CIP.

The North South/Ministerial Council also agreed that Operational Programme Managing Authorities would issue invitations to the Special EU Programmes Body to nominate a representative for membership of the Operational Programme Monitoring Committee in order that it can fulfil its mandate in relation to monitoring North-South Co-operation.

In addition, the Annual Report to be prepared for monitoring purposes will include a separate section dealing with the development of North-South Co-operation in the Operational Programme.

#### 4.9 Reporting

In line with regulatory requirements, DHFETE will submit to the European Commission annual and final programme implementation reports. The data to be included will be discussed with the Commission. The report will be examined and approved by the NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee before it is sent to the Commission and will be used to inform the National Action Plan.

## CHAPTER 5: Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

This chapter provides an outline of the proposed monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, as well as the proposed indicators that will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the activities supported by EQUAL in Northern Ireland and a description of the expected impact of the interventions.

### 5.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

For the 2000 - 2006 EU programme period there is an increased emphasis on the use of research and evaluation to assess the progress and impact of individual programmes and initiatives. This will be the case for EQUAL. The evaluation framework will have to take account of the fact that the projects funded under EQUAL will be innovative and developmental. The focus will, therefore, be more on the method of delivery rather than outcomes as in the mainstream ESF programmes. The evaluation will concern itself with key areas across the three Actions for EQUAL such as:

- partnership
- transnationality
- Innovative solutions
- Empowerment/participation
- Thematic approach
- Dissemination/mainstreaming

The framework reflects the specific features of EQUAL, in particular:

The emphasis on the process/mechanisms of change which transpires from the general objective: EQUAL will act as a testing ground to develop and disseminate new ways of delivering employment policies in order to combat all forms of discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market; strengthen links to the European Employment Strategy through the thematic approach to testing new ways of delivering employment policies and the partnership approach and finally, the clear focus on mainstreaming both nationally and across the European Union.

The Commission has produced a checklist for initial mid-term evaluation 2003, end of 2003 and final assessment 2005 as follows:

#### **5.1.1 Initial mid-term evaluation, 2003.**

The mid-term evaluation, which will be launched upon adoption of the CIP, would initially cover the following aspects:

1. Analysis of the definition of CIP-level and thematic objectives and their operationalisation in the programme complement, the programme consistency as a whole, the application and coherence of selection criteria, an assessment of the adequacy of the activities and the dynamic of the implementation of the programme,

2. Analysis of the monitoring systems: examination of the coverage, the relevance and the reliability of the systems of indicators, availability of quantitative and qualitative information, links with the national systems, collection methods; and
3. Evaluation scope and feasibility: methods, type of analysis, proposal for the sampling of measures (which will be the subject of detailed evaluations), data collection methods (surveys, interviews, etc).

### **5.1.2 End of 2003 evaluation**

At the end of 2003 at the latest, the mid-term evaluation would cover the following principal points:

1. Analysis of the interventions on the basis of financial (input) and physical (output) indicators, checking of achieved objectives, appraisal of 2000 - 2003 results according to the evaluation criteria, analysis of the effects of the measures and their emerging impact;
2. Analysis of the interventions' context: socio-economic environment, operational context, link with the national plans for employment and the national social policies;
4. Analysis of implementation conditions: the partnership, selection of actions (procedures, criteria), the use of technical assistance, information and visibility, management, financial and administrative channels, control;
5. Evaluation of key topics and transverse/horizontal topics; and
6. Summary and conclusions which take account of contextual changes and implementation methods.

Recommendations in the Mid-Term Evaluation should aim to strengthen the effectiveness of interventions and implementation at the time of the mid-term reprogramming of the interventions

### **5.1.3 The final assessment, 2005**

The final assessment in 2005 would involve:

- Update of the mid-term evaluation;
- Evaluation of the mid-term reprogramming;
- Analysis and Conclusions on the emerging impact of the interventions.

Recommendations in the Final Assessment should aim to feed into the preparation of assistance beyond 2006.

The Objective 3 Community Support Framework set out plans to establish an Evaluation Steering Group (ESG) to co-ordinate common evaluation activity across all European Social Fund activities in all parts of the United Kingdom. EQUAL will work within the broad framework for evaluation established by this group, to work towards a consistent approach to ESF evaluation in the UK. The ESF Evaluation Team in DfEE will co-ordinate evaluation work both of the ESG and EQUAL. All evaluation work will take place on the basis of a partnership in which Monitoring Committee members, including social partners, will be encouraged to take part in



steering groups for individual evaluation studies. In addition, the ESF Evaluation Team will feed emerging results from evaluation and monitoring into the work of the Great Britain and Northern Ireland EQUAL Monitoring Committees to inform decision-making. Hence the Northern Ireland Monitoring Committee, NIMC, for EQUAL section 4.1.4 will be able to benefit from the evaluation activities of the ESG.

An evaluation strategy for EQUAL will be developed over the Autumn and will be ready in time for the launch of the programme. The strategy will be discussed and agreed with the Evaluation Steering Group and with the new EQUAL Monitoring Committee. It will include both a mid-term evaluation in 2003 and a final evaluation in 2005 requirements as outlined above. In Northern Ireland a similar evaluation will be managed by DHFETE and as in GB this work will be commissioned to an independent research organisation.

## 5.2 Measures of performance

The aim is to devise a robust and reliable system which places the minimum possible burden on projects, while still having the maximum impact on policy development.

The European Commission's guidelines<sup>10</sup> state that there is a need for an appropriate and effective system of indicators of programme performance. A certain minimum of input and output information is required to provide a picture of the "volume" of activity funded by EQUAL across Great Britain. The proposed indicators set out in the Community Initiative Plan build on the common minimum outlined in the EC guidelines. The set of indicators expands on this minimum to reflect more closely the nature of the Northern Ireland programme, built around the two Pillars. Primarily, the indicators shown in the tables below are of a quantitative nature, although the EQUAL programme has a large qualitative element to it. Qualitative indicators are, however, difficult to establish and measurement of them may be more appropriately addressed through formal evaluation techniques. Consequently, while the table does not include qualitative indicators, section 5.2.4 describes a proposal for monitoring qualitative or soft indicators.

The primary sources of information for the collection of monitoring data are the application form, project closure/final claim form and the annual monitoring form. The Paying Authority will collate this information, section 4.1.3. However, monitoring data will be obtained from project visits carried out by the National Support Structure and from work carried out as part of the various evaluations.

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<sup>10</sup> Guidelines for systems of monitoring and evaluation for the Human Resources Initiative EQUAL in the period 2000-2006, July 2000

### 5.2.1 Expected impact over the whole EQUAL Programme

<b>OVERALL EXPECTED IMPACT OF EQUAL</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Forecast (M Euro)</b>
<u>Action 1</u>		
<u>Input</u>	Funding	0.5845
	Average Amount spent on setting up DPs and TCs	0.02435
	Number of DPs	24
	Average number of partners in a DP	5-10
<u>Action 2</u>	Funding	8.4168
	% Of DPs attempting to measure soft outcomes	100%
	Number of beneficiaries	
	% Of women receiving support	50%
	Average number of transnational meetings attended per DP	6
<u>Action 3</u>	Funding	1.7535
	Average number of national events attended per DP per annum	6
	Average number of European events attended per DP per annum	3

The above table gives details of the overall impact over the whole of the NI EQUAL Programme. The total budget available is 10.7548 Meuro. This is the Northern Ireland allocation minus the total budget of 0.9352 Meuro for Technical Assistance.

### 5.2.2 Expected Impact over the two selected pillars for the 1st Call

<b>PILLAR 1 EMPLOYABILITY IMPACT</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Forecast (M Euro)</b>
<u>Action 1</u>		
<u>Input</u>	Funding	0.1948
<u>Output</u>	Average Amount spent on setting up DPs and TCs	0.02435
	Number of DPs	8
	Average number of partners in DP/TC	5 – 10
<u>Action 2</u>	Funding	2.8056
	% Of DPs attempting to measure soft outcomes	100%
	Number of beneficiaries	
	% Of women receiving support	50%
	Average number of transnational meetings attended per DP	6
<u>Action 3</u>	Funding	0.5845
	Average number of national events attended per DP per annum	6
	Average number of European events attended per DP per annum	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.5849</b>

<b>PILLAR 4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPACT</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Forecast (M Euro)</b>
<u>Action 1</u>		
<u>Input</u>	Funding	0.0974
<u>Output</u>	Average Amount spent on setting up DPs and TCs	0.02435
	Number of DPs	4
	Average number of partners in DP/TC	5 – 10
<u>Action 2</u>	Funding	1.4028
	% Of DPs attempting to measure soft outcomes	80%
	Number of beneficiaries	
	% Of women receiving support	50 –70%
	Average number of transnational meetings attended per DP	6
<u>Action 3</u>	Funding	0.2923
	Average number of national events attended per DP per annum	6
	Average number of European events attended per DP per annum	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>1.7925</b>

There is a general requirement for the chosen system of indicators to be characterised by greater stability and transparency of information<sup>11</sup>. The final evaluation of the Objective 3 programme in Great Britain suggests that “whatever monitoring system is developed, it should be guided by a commitment to promote a robust and reliable system which is consistent over time and place and imposes the minimum burden on projects [and Development Partnerships in the case of EQUAL] necessary to have the maximum impact on policy development and monitoring”. Therefore in Northern Ireland, to be in line with the rest of the UK, in addition to the formal indicators, more detailed monitoring data will be gathered on a number of issues such as beneficiary characteristics and DP activities. This is to enable as comprehensive a picture as possible to be created at a local level in Northern Ireland.

To provide information on the impact of mainstreaming equal opportunities, where appropriate, each of the indicators will need to split out results by gender.

### **5.2.3 Assessing the potential effectiveness and efficiency of the programme**

The quantification of targets for assessing programme performance is notoriously difficult. Certain forms of assistance to develop structures and systems do not lend themselves easily to quantification. Projects which focus on new ways of delivering employment policies cannot easily be quantified, particularly on an annual or short-term basis. These areas are best left until mid-term evaluation when a more qualitative assessment of impacts can be carried out.

<sup>11</sup> Pathways to Employment: The Final Evaluation of ESF Objective 3 in Britain (1994-1999), DfEE Research Report (164)

The targets that have been developed for EQUAL are presented under the two Pillars, enabling us to see how the differing types of support are working. Targets are presented for the entire programme (2000-2006). It has been particularly difficult to develop targets for EQUAL because of the developmental nature of the programme and as a result targets are not presented for all the indicators. As EQUAL is different to the previous Community Initiatives, ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT, it has not been possible to use the monitoring data from these two programmes to predict performance of the EQUAL programme.

The impact of the EQUAL programme will be measured by the extent to which vertical mainstreaming has successfully taken place. The overall objective of the programme is to fund innovative development projects to test out ways of combating labour market discrimination. As EQUAL will be funding development projects it will not be appropriate to look at impacts in terms of the **net numbers of beneficiaries** going into jobs or gaining other positive outcomes. Vertical mainstreaming will be measured as part of the evaluation of the programme and this is where the impact of the programme will be discussed. To provide information on the impact of mainstreaming equal opportunities, where appropriate each of the indicators will need to split out results by gender. Other information on beneficiary characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, disability, previous education attainments) and type of ESF activities funded will be also gathered.

#### **5.2.4 Methodology for the measurement of qualitative/soft outcomes**

The traditional approach to performance indicators emphasises measures of positive outcomes (jobs, self-employment, further training and qualifications). However, it is important to acknowledge that, taken in isolation, they fail to take full account of the positive contribution which activities funded through EQUAL can make. Given the nature of labour market disadvantage faced by the typical EQUAL client group, a fuller assessment of the success of projects could come from looking at the progress of individuals against their own aims set while on the project. Some measure of the 'distance travelled' towards labour market integration might provide a more complete measure of the wider contribution of EQUAL. Although measures of 'distance travelled' by the more disadvantaged beneficiaries could usefully feature in project monitoring, it would not be appropriate to set targets at this stage given the need to establish a reliable method of measurement. Following commissioned research, the GB ESF Evaluation Team in DfEE has set up a working group to look at ways to monitor qualitative/soft outcomes at a national level. As a result of the study 'A Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled' has been prepared and is available to EQUAL projects in Great Britain and Northern Ireland to help them devise systems. This working group will be consulted as to how their work can be used to evaluate programme performance under EQUAL and to inform the measures of success for EQUAL target groups.

## 5.3 Data Collection

### 5.3.1 Consolidation of data at a European level.

To facilitate the transnational work of the projects, to allow the co-ordination of the programmes at European level and to satisfy the needs in particular as regards monitoring and evaluation, the Northern Ireland Managing authority will take part in the common electronic system of data collection set up by the Commission for the specific management of the EQUAL Initiative called, EQUAL Common Database, ECDB.

On the basis of the preparatory work between the Commission and the Member States, precise fields were identified. Set out in Annex 2 they constitute the exhaustive list of the common quantitative data to be transmitted at the European level. In addition to this data consolidated at the European level the DPs will in addition be required to transmit whatever complementary data is intended for the national level alone.

The Managing Authority will collect the physical data from the DPs on the basis of the system to be agreed prior to selection. It will transfer the data concerning the DPS as well as those collected at the level of the programme, to the ECDB, on the basis of the technical protocols defined by the Commission. The data on Actions 1,2 and 3 will be updated continuously by the Managing Authority and will be transferred to the Commission at least once per month. The data relating to the annual report will be transmitted at least once a year and at the latest on 30 June following the reference year.

The Commission, by means of suitable computer systems will make available on the Internet the essence of the information transmitted by the Member States. This will make it possible to consult the activities of each DP at the individual level, as well as the consolidated situation concerning the implementation at the level of all the programmes.

For the closed fields the Commission's application will allow consultation of the fields useful for transnational co-operation in the 11 official languages.

### 5.3.2 Annual implementation report

To facilitate monitoring of the overall implementation of the Initiative and to co-ordinate the networking efforts at national and European levels the annual reports are to have a common structure.

The quantitative minimum common data concerning implementation, to be transmitted at the time of the annual report will be covered by the transmission to the ECDB, Annex 2. The other relevant indicators of situation, result or impact, as anticipated by this CIP, will also be communicated, by means of the annual report.

Each year a common structure for the annual reports will be determined in close co-operation between the Commission and the representatives of the managing Authorities.

## 5.4 Evaluation parameters for the three Actions of EQUAL

### 5.4.1 Action 1 Setting up Development Partnerships DPs and Transnational Co-operation

#### **National and Trans-national Co-operation**

1. What are the types of partners participating in the DP and TC (enterprises, public bodies, social partners, NGOs, geographical/sectoral, private sector) and what is their background, co-operation prior to EQUAL and nature of their links? What difficulties were encountered in forming the partnerships, difficulties in appointing the lead partner to handle funding and administration, what was the use of the Commission database in seeking partners, what was the cost and how long did it take?
2. Preliminary assessment of the potential of the co-operations. This could be based on the representative capacity of the DP/TC in relation to the objectives and expectations of the co-operation and the financial and other commitments of each partner by using in the first place the DP and TC Agreements.
3. Monitor and analyse partnerships/projects that are abandoned during or at the end of Action 1. It would be necessary to register numbers and types and analyse the reasons why they did not successfully finalise the first phase.
4. To what extent of has there been co-operation between NI and ROI in forming Development Partnerships?

#### **Innovation**

1. To what degree have the expectations in terms of testing/developing new modes been explicitly formulated, documented/motivated and quantified?
2. Have the ways in which the national and transnational partnerships are expected to contribute to the testing/development of the method/approach been adequately specified and quantified? What is the role of each partner?
3. What evidence is there of consultation/empowerment /participation of the groups at which the project is targeted in the definition/planning stages?

- Dissemination & Mainstreaming**
1. Is there a strategic plan for dissemination and mainstreaming activities?
  2. Have the ways in which the national and transnational partnerships are expected to contribute to the dissemination/mainstreaming activities been specified? Role of each partner?
- Thematic approach**
1. What evidence is there of a gender perspective being applied in the definition/planning of work programmes and activities?
  2. Specific questions in relation to the link between the DP activities and the selected themes, sub-themes and specific objectives.

#### **5.4.2 Action 2 Implementing Work Programme.**

- National and Trans-national Co-operation**
1. Examine the type and intensity of the realised co-operations, achieved documented activities of the DPs and outcomes of the co-operation, looking into reasons for deviations from original plans.
  2. What can be said about any explicit contribution of/links between (different types of) national and/or transnational co-operation and project outcomes (degree of innovation, effectiveness of activities, empowerment/participation, dissemination/mainstreaming)?
- Innovation**
1. Try to identify determinant factors affecting the degree and type of innovation.
  2. Assess the actual contribution of the national and transnational partnerships to the achieved outcomes.
  3. Assess the achieved outcomes to increase the effectiveness of national policy delivery if transferred, using quantitative follow-ups in combination with qualitative sections ('softer' outcomes for individuals and organisations in terms of e.g. confidence and capacity building, changes in corporate attitudes etc.).
  4. What evidence is there of consultation/empowerment/participation of the groups at which the project is targeted in/through the implementation? What has their reaction to EQUAL been?

**Dissemination  
&  
Mainstreaming**

1. Have project outcomes been documented in a systematic and suitable form to facilitate dissemination and mainstreaming?
2. What has been the intensity and content/type of DPs contribution to the national thematic networking?
3. Analysis of any local/regional/national dissemination and transfers already initiated by the DPs?
4. What has been the specific involvement of transnational partners?

**Thematic  
approach**

1. What evidence is there of a gender perspective being applied in the implementation of work programmes and activities?
2. Specific questions in relation to the link between the DP activities and the selected themes, sub-themes and specific objectives

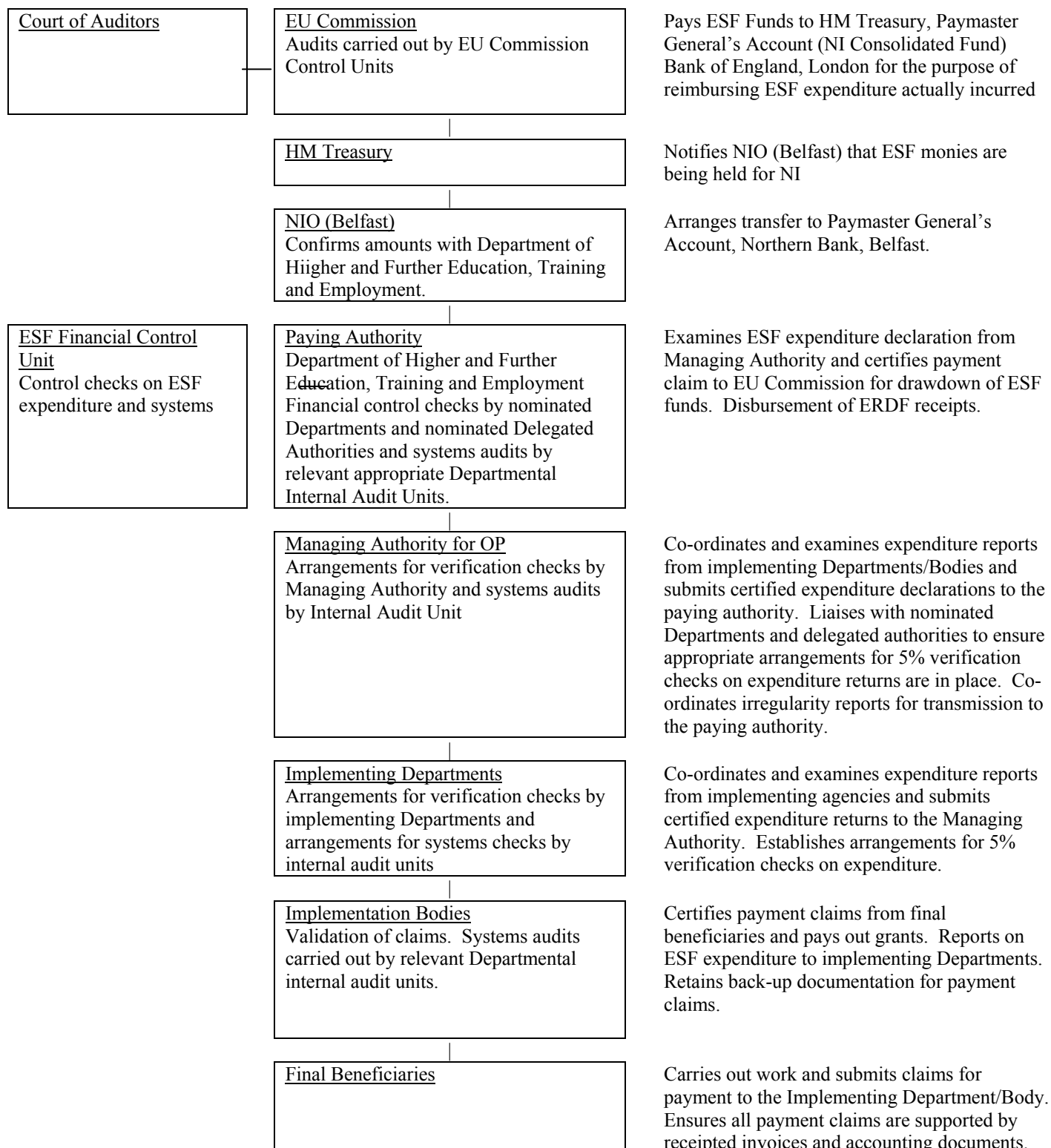
**5.4.3 Action 3 Thematic networking, dissemination and mainstreaming**

1. Is there a methodology for;
  - a quality check; and
  - are there assessment procedures of the DPs' results?
2. Have strategies for horizontal, practices at local/regional/national level, and vertical, policy at regional/national level, mainstreaming been put in place with formal/informal routines for the dissemination to relevant participants? At what level, DP/local/regional/national? Obstacles/barriers?
3. Who have been the participants involved in the process?
4. What evidence is there of actual/potential horizontal and vertical mainstreaming? Obstacles/barriers? Indications of the importance of the transnational co-operation as a factor in the process?
5. What evidence is there of a potential for further dissemination and mainstreaming at the European level?
6. What evidence is there of a gender perspective being applied in the dissemination and mainstreaming strategies and activities?



## ANNEX 1

### Financial Management and Control Arrangement for Drawdown of ESF Funds (Northern Ireland)



**Annexe 2 : Data to be collected for the Equal common database (ECDB)**

18/12/2000

**A. General information (ongoing information)**

**FIELDS** *Type of data / Items...*

A1.	<b>Id Codes</b>	European = Country + national ID <i>Each DP receives a unique code at European level. It is made up of a maximum of 4 letters identifying the Member State and x characters as decided by the Member State.</i>
A2.	<b>Status of the application</b>	<i>Indicate the status of the application in MS</i> Multiple choice Action 1 and/or Action 2 <input type="checkbox"/> in selection process <input type="checkbox"/> approved for action 1 <input type="checkbox"/> approved for action 2 <input type="checkbox"/> project ended

**B. Action 1 : Set up of the Development partnership (ongoing information)**

B1.	<b>Dates</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Application date : date field <input type="checkbox"/> Selection date for action 1 : date field
B2.	<b>Title of the DP' project</b> National language	Text field – max 80 characters  <i>Simple &amp; short Can be modified during action 1</i>
B3.	<b>Title of the DP' project</b> International characters	Text field – max 80 characters  <i>Latin alphabet without accented letters...</i>
B4.	<b>Partners to be involved</b>	<i>For each Item, click in the list of the <a href="#">members</a></i> Concerns DP initiators <input type="checkbox"/> Partner 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner ...n
B5.	<b>DP's managing organisation</b>	One choice in the table of the partners  <i>Concerns the partner who has administrative and financial responsibility within the DP. If the DP has its own legal constitution, that structure will be identified in the list of partners. Click in the list of the <a href="#">members</a></i>
B6.	<b>Other responsibilities –</b>	<i>For each item, click in the list of the <a href="#">members</a></i>

	<b>contacts</b>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Design of the project <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ordination of experimental activities <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, data collection <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Transnational partnership

B7.	<b>EQUAL Theme – Measure</b>	Max 1 choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> Employability - Access to the labour market <input type="checkbox"/> Employability - Combating racism <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship - Business creation <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship - Social economy <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability - Life long learning <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability - Information technology <input type="checkbox"/> Equal opportunities – Reconciling family and professional life <input type="checkbox"/> Equal opportunities - Reducing gender gaps <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum seekers

B8.	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<p>This field is foreseen in the ECDB. The content and the codification will be developed in a second step according to sub-themes coming up from practice. The codification could be set up manually, with help of each NSS.</p> <p>This field is not a compulsory part of the national database</p>
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B9.	<b>Geographical/sectoral</b>	Max 1 choice <i>Size of the geographical area linked with a Nuts table</i>
	<b>If geographical</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural area <input type="checkbox"/> Urban area <input type="checkbox"/> Town, city <input type="checkbox"/> Travel to work area <input type="checkbox"/> .....
	<b>If sectoral</b>	Max 1 choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Economic sector : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Industrial</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Services</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <input type="checkbox"/> Specific discrimination and inequality problems</li> </ul>

B10.	<b>DP's status</b>	Max 1 choice
	Legal form	<input type="checkbox"/> Association without legal form <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit making organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Consortium <input type="checkbox"/> ....
	Pre-existing partnership (before Equal)	Max 1choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ≤ 2 years</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> &gt; 2 years</li> </ul>
		Text field : explanation of the pre-existing partnership
B11.	<b>DP linguistic skills</b>	4 Scroll down menus
		1° Choice : en/fr/de/it/es/pt/sv/fi/da/nl/el/hu/pl/cz/sk/... 2° Choice : en/fr/de/it/es/pt/sv/fi/da/nl/el/hu/pl/cz/sk/... 3° Choice : en/fr/de/it/es/pt/sv/fi/da/nl/el/hu/pl/cz/sk/... 4° Choice : en/fr/de/it/es/pt/sv/fi/da/nl/el/hu/pl/cz/sk/...
B12.	<b>DP's background in CI</b>	Max 1choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> One partner involved in ADAPT/EMPLOYMENT <input type="checkbox"/> Two and more partners involved in ADAPT/EMPLOYMENT <input type="checkbox"/> Nobody involved in ADAPT/EMPLOYMENT
B13.	<b>Rationale for the DP</b>	§33 Rationale for the partnership, diagnosis of the problem to be addressed and explanation of how the needs of all the potential beneficiary groups will be taken into account Text field: Max 3 000 character.
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).
B14.	<b>Objectives of the DP</b>	Response to the rationale; objectives of the partnership Text field : Max 2 000 character.
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).

B15.	<b>Nature of the experimental activities to be implemented</b>	Multiple choice.			
		+	+	+	+
			+	+	+
				+	+
					+
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Training</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reception, orientation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and counselling</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work placement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> employment aids (+ for self-employment)</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to structure and systems and accompanying measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employment creation and support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Training of teachers, trainers and staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improvement of employment services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conception for training programmes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Anticipation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Awareness raising, information, publicity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Studies and analysis of discrimination features</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ...</li> </ul>				

B16.	<b>Innovation</b>	Multiple choice			
		+	+	+	+
			+	+	+
				+	+
					+
	<input type="checkbox"/> Process-oriented <input type="checkbox"/> Goal-oriented <input type="checkbox"/> Context oriented				
	Text field				

B17.	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	Multiple choice in each section			
			<i>In percentage</i>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Assistance to persons</b>	M	F		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Others (without status, social beneficiaries...)				
		100	100		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Migrants <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic minorities <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsies, travellers <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum seekers <input type="checkbox"/> Others				
		100	100		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Others				
		100	100		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Substance abusers <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless <input type="checkbox"/> (Ex-)prisoners <input type="checkbox"/> Other discriminated (religion, sexual orientation) <input type="checkbox"/> Others				
	100	100			
<input type="checkbox"/> < 25 year <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 50 year <input type="checkbox"/> > 50 year					
	100	100			
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Assistance to structure and systems and accompanying measures</b>	+	+	+	+	
		+	+	+	
			+	+	
				+	
<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination and inequality in employment <input type="checkbox"/> Racial discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum <input type="checkbox"/> Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Low qualification <input type="checkbox"/> Gender discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Other discriminations					

B18.	<b>Empowerment dimension</b>	
	1° National partners	Text field: max 800 character Text field: optionally, translation in English
	2° Beneficiaries	Multiple choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> Promoting individual empowerment <input type="checkbox"/> Developing collective responsibility and capacity for action <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in the project design <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in running and evaluating activities <input type="checkbox"/> Changing attitudes and behaviour of key actors
		Text field: max 800 character
		Text field: optionally, translation in English

B19.	<b>ESF budget requested</b>	Max. one choice
		Total requested Budget for action 1 and 2 for the duration of the DP (ESF + national) <input type="checkbox"/> < 250 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 250 000 – 500 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 500 000 – 1 000 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 1 000 000 – 1 500 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 1 500 000 – 2 000 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> 2 000 000 – 5 000 000 € <input type="checkbox"/> > 5 000 000 €
		% of total budget for transnational activities

B20.	<b>Searching transnational partners</b>	Max one choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

B21.	<b>Transnational co-operation intended or searched</b>	Multiple choice	+	+	+	+
				+	+	+
					+	+
						+
		- Exchange of information and experiences - Parallel development of innovative approaches - Import, export or adoption of new approaches - Joint development - Exchange of trainees/trainers/staff				
		Text field				
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).				

B22.	<b>Transnational co-operation – Preferences</b>	Multiple choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> Bfr <input type="checkbox"/> Bnl <input type="checkbox"/> Dk <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> EL <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> Irl <input type="checkbox"/> I <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> NI <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> Fin <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> Ukgb <input type="checkbox"/> Ukni <input type="checkbox"/> candidate countries <input type="checkbox"/> other countries <input type="checkbox"/> no preferences

B23.	<b>Last update on action 1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Date field
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### C. Members of the DP (ongoing information)

C1.	<b>Name</b>	Text field
C2.	<b>Acronym</b>	(not compulsory) Text field
C3.	<b>Address</b>	Text field <i>link with postcode (nuts) and country</i>
C4.	<b>Tel</b>	Text field
C5.	<b>Fax</b>	Text field
C6.	<b>Email</b>	Text field
C7.	<b>Web site</b>	Text field

C8.	<b>Type of organisation</b>	Max one choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> Public authority (national, regional, local) <input type="checkbox"/> Enterprise <input type="checkbox"/> Employers' organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Union <input type="checkbox"/> Financial institution <input type="checkbox"/> Chamber of commerce/industry/crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Organisation providing support and guidance for disadvantaged groups <input type="checkbox"/> Employment services <input type="checkbox"/> Social economy enterprise <input type="checkbox"/> Social services <input type="checkbox"/> Education / training organisation <input type="checkbox"/> University / Research organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Consortium created for managing the DP <input type="checkbox"/> Other

C8b	<b>Type of organisation</b>	Description who the national partners are, what they do, their clients, the aim of the partner organisations, methodologies used etc... (not compulsory)
		Text field
		Text field: Translation in English and optionally in other(s) language(s) (provided by DP or Member state).



C9.	<b>Legal status</b>	Max one choice
		<input type="checkbox"/> Public organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit private organisation (including NGO...) <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-public organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Union, Confederation... <input type="checkbox"/> Co-operative <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Without legal status

C10.	<b>Contact person</b>	For each responsibility taken by the member			
			Name	Email	Tel
		<input type="checkbox"/> Administration and finance <input type="checkbox"/> Design of the project <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ordination of experimental activities <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, data collection <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Transnational partnership <input type="checkbox"/> ... (open field) <input type="checkbox"/> ... (open field) <input type="checkbox"/> ... (open field)			

C11.	<b>Size of the organisation</b>	Max one choice
		<i>Permanent staff</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> staff < 10 <input type="checkbox"/> staff 10 – 50 <input type="checkbox"/> staff 50 – 250 <input type="checkbox"/> > 250

C12.	<b>Date of joining DP</b>	Date field
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C13.	<b>Date of leaving DP</b>	Date field
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C14.	<b>Last update on the DP's member</b>	Date field
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#### D. Action 2 : Implementation of the work programme (ongoing information)

D1.	<b>Dates</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> approval date for Action 2
D2.	<b>Title of the DP' project</b>	See Action 1
D3.	<b>Title of the DP' project (en)</b>	
D4.	<b>Partners involved</b>	<i>For each Item, click in the list of the <a href="#">members</a></i>
		DP members <input type="checkbox"/> Partner 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Partner ...n
D6.	<b>DP's managing organisation</b>	
D7.	<b>Other responsibilities – contacts</b>	See Action 1

D8.	<b>EQUAL Theme – Measure</b>	See Action 1
D9.	<b>Sub-themes</b>	See Action 1
D10.	<b>Geographical/sectoral</b>	See Action 1
D11.	<b>DP's status</b>	See Action 1
D12.	<b>DP linguistic skills</b>	See Action 1
D13.	<b>DP's background in CI</b>	See Action 1
D14.	<b>Rationale for the DP</b>	See Action 1
D15.	<b>Objectives of the DP</b>	See Action 1
D16.	<b>Nature of the experimental activities to be implemented</b>	See Action 1
D17.	<b>Innovation</b>	See Action 1
D18.	<b>Targeted ultimate beneficiaries</b>	See Action 1
D19.	<b>Empowerment dimension</b>	See Action 1
D20.	<b>ESF budget</b>	See Action 1

D21.	<b>DP Agreement</b>	Text field : Summary of the DP agreement in max 1000 characters and, optionally, DP agreement in annexe.
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D22.	<b>Transnational partners</b>	Multiple choice <i>Click in the list of the Development partnerships (cf. Id Code)</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Transnational partner 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Transnational partner 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Transnational partner ...n

D23.	<b>Transnational co-operation partnerships</b>	<i>Click in the European list of the transnational co-operation partnerships (section E)</i>
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D24.	<b>Last update on action 2</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> date field
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#### **E. Transnational co-operation partnerships (European level information)**

E2.	<b>Name of the Transnational co-operation partnership</b>	To be developed
E1.	<b>Transnational Co-operation agreement</b>	To be developed
E3.	<b>DP assuring the secretariat</b>	<i>Click in the list of the Development partnerships (cf. Id Code)</i>
E4.	<b>State of validation</b>	To be developed
E5.	...	

**F. Action 3 : Thematic networking (ongoing information)**

F1.	<b>Participation in networking</b>	
	Participating in National networking	Multiple choice <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic field/network 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic field/network 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic field/network n
	Participating in European networking	Multiple choice <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic field/network 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic field/network 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic field/network n

F2.	<b>Interest in networking</b>	Text field max 1000 character
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F3.	<b>Events</b>	Multiple choice + text field This field is foreseen in the ECDB. The content and the codification will be developed in a second step.
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F4.	<b>Products</b>	Multiple choice + text field This field is foreseen in the ECDB. The content and the codification will be developed in a second step.
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F5.	<b>Last update on action 3</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> date field
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**G. Other information for monitoring at DP level (annually consolidated information)**

G.1	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	Total number of beneficiaries during the year :alphanumeric field This field needs a standardised way of counting beneficiaries : number of persons, number of persons/duration of action ... To be decided.	
		<i>In percentage</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Assistance to persons</b>	M	F
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Others (without status, social beneficiaries...)		
		100	100
	<input type="checkbox"/> Migrants <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic minorities <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsies, travellers <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum seekers <input type="checkbox"/> Others		
		100	100
	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Others		
		100	100

	<input type="checkbox"/> Substance abusers <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless <input type="checkbox"/> (Ex-)prisoners <input type="checkbox"/> Other discriminated (religion, sexual orientation) <input type="checkbox"/> Others				
		100	100		
	<input type="checkbox"/> < 25 year <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 50 year <input type="checkbox"/> > 50 year				
		100	100		
	<b><input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to structure and systems and accompanying measures</b>	+	+	+	+
			+	+	+
				+	+
					+
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination and inequality in Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Racial discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum <input type="checkbox"/> Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Low qualification <input type="checkbox"/> Gender discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Other discriminations				

G2.	<b>Expenditures</b>	Evaluation by the DP of the total amount (ESF and national) spent during the year (rounded 1 000 €):
		Alphanumeric field

G3.	<b>Breakdown of expenditures by experimental activities</b>	<i>Percentage</i>	
		<b>I. National activities</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training</li> <li>- Reception, orientation</li> <li>- Guidance and counselling</li> <li>- Work placement</li> <li>- Employment aids (+ for self-employment)</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to structure and systems and accompanying measures		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employment creation and support</li> <li>- Training of teachers, trainers and staff</li> <li>- Improvement of employment services</li> <li>- Conception for training programmes</li> <li>- Anticipation</li> <li>- Awareness raising, information, publicity</li> <li>- Studies and analysis of discrimination features</li> <li>- ...</li> </ul>	
		<b>II. Transnational activities</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exchange of information and experiences</li> <li>- Parallel development of innovative approaches</li> <li>- Import, export or adoption of new approaches</li> <li>- Joint development</li> <li>- Exchange of trainees/trainers/staff</li> </ul>	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>

G4.	<b>Breakdown of expenditures by action</b>		
		Action 1	
		Action 2	
		Action 3	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>

G5.	<b>Transnational work</b>	Text field max 1000 character
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G6.	<b>National networking</b>	Text field max 1000 character
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G7.	<b>European level networking</b>	Text field max 1000 character
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**H. Other information for monitoring at Programme level (annually consolidated information)**

H1	<b>Total expenditure actually paid out during the year (actions 1, 2, 3)</b>	Amounts have to be consistent with the declaration in the SFC			
			Action 1	Action 2	Action 3
		<input type="checkbox"/> Employability - Access to the labour market <input type="checkbox"/> Employability - Combating racism <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship – Business creation <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship – Social economy <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability - Life long learning <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability – Information technology <input type="checkbox"/> Equal opportunities - Reconciling family and professional life <input type="checkbox"/> Equal opportunities - Reducing gender gaps <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum seekers			

H2	<b>Total expenditure actually paid out during the year (technical assistance)</b>	Priority technical assistance (TA) - Action 4 Amounts have to be consistent with the declaration in the SFC	
			Amounts
		<input type="checkbox"/> Equal specific support actions <input type="checkbox"/> Basic administrative and financial TA activities <input type="checkbox"/> Complementary TA activities	

**Ex Ante evaluation of the EQUAL Community Initiative  
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