

# **Chapter 6: Development Partnerships**

## **Introduction**

6.1 The National Assembly for Wales is committed to working in active partnership with the business sector, the voluntary sector and local government. It also works closely with the equality commissions, voluntary bodies working for equality of opportunity and a wide range of other organisations, including its sponsored bodies. "Development Partnerships" are central to the arrangements for implementing EQUAL and are very much in tune with the National Assembly's overall approach to partnership working. This chapter sets out an overall framework for Development Partnerships in Wales.

## **Background**

6.2 Under previous EU human resource initiatives, small-scale projects have been supported by single entities. Despite the often positive and innovative actions of small promoters, their distance from the policy process has meant that mainstreaming of their experience has proved difficult. Under EQUAL there will be a more strategic basis for projects to ensure a greater co-operation between project promoters and the involvement of relevant partners.

6.3 EQUAL will operate by bringing together the key players in a geographical area or economic/industrial sector into Development Partnerships (DPs). Each DP will choose a main thematic field 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 Member State (or with a non-member state involved in the Phare; Tacis or Meda programmes). However, a DP will be more than just a network of project promoters, operating in the same territory or thematic field. It will be a partnership of committed players, sharing a common purpose. Partners will pool their efforts to find innovative solutions to the specific problems they have identified. Their work together will be based on a formal agreement and work programme.

## **Approach to Development Partnerships in Wales**

6.4 The main aim is to develop arrangements which will ensure that the EQUAL initiative is effective in meeting its objectives. To achieve this, the initiative must support the development of strategic partnerships which have the capacity to develop innovative solutions to identified problems of inequality and discrimination and to effectively disseminate the lessons learned.

6.5 DPs in Wales can be organised on a geographical, economic sector or industrial sector basis. Geographical partnerships can be formed on an all-Wales, regional or local basis depending on the policy focus of their chosen activity. Based on the GB planning assumptions,

it is estimated that there will be up to six DPs operating at any one time in Wales over the programme period. This, and the need to ensure that organisations with an important role in developing and implementing policies to tackle discrimination and inequalities in the labour market are engaged in the development of EQUAL from the outset, suggests that geographical DPs in Wales will cover larger rather than smaller areas.. Thematic work related to assisting Asylum Seekers/Refugees will be organised on a UK wide basis but will also involve Wales based organisations.

6.6 There will be a strong preference in favour of integrated, thematic based approaches to tackling the complex and multi-dimensional problems faced by the different target groups, rather than having DPs which focus on particular target groups. DPs in Wales will potentially assist a wide range of disadvantaged groups as a result of their thematic approach, but they will need to ensure that their 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).

6.7 The principle of empowerment will be central to each DP in Wales and every effort will be made to ensure that the views of recipients of support are taken into account and that they are involved in the decision making and evaluation of work programmes.

### **Selection of Development Partnerships**

6.8 Development Partnerships will be selected on the basis of applications submitted in response to a GB wide call for proposals. The GB Monitoring Committee will agree a common approach to the selection of DPs. In applying the GB wide selection criteria, the Wales EQUAL Management Committee will look for evidence that DP applicants:

- have the capacity to work effectively with the National Assembly; local authorities; relevant public sector bodies; employers (especially SMEs) and trade unions; the voluntary sector and community organisations in Wales in developing and taking forward their work programmes;
- are aware of, and have taken into consideration, national, regional and local employment and social inclusion policies and strategies and the potential for supporting these through EQUAL;
- have an understanding of the mainstream European Structural Fund programmes in Wales and the potential for complementing these in innovative ways through their EQUAL work programmes and trans-national co-operation agreements;
- propose to involve those targeted for support to ensure that their needs and aspirations are fully reflected in the activities which are planned, either in the composition of their

partnerships or in other ways, and can demonstrate that equality principles will be reflected in the operation of the partnership;

- will ensure equality of opportunity for Welsh speakers and are sensitive to the needs of bi-lingual communities; and
- have the administrative and financial capacity to manage and account for significant amounts of public funding.

6.9 Selection will take place at two stages. The main selection will be based on an application presenting an outline strategy submitted by at least two different types of partner. It will explain why the partnership is being set up and what it intends to do. It will also include an action plan for the initial period of funding and an outline of the main types of activities planned thereafter. If the partnership is selected, it will receive an initial allocation of funding to consolidate the Development Partnership, to find transnational partners and to firm up its detailed work programme. All of these aspects will have to be in place before selection for the second stage, which is the implementation phase. Further information on the selection of DPs is provided in the GB EQUAL CIP.

**Membership of Development Partnerships**

6.10 Development Partnerships will typically include organisations that are actively involved in implementing aspects of work programmes; organisations or individuals operating in an advisory capacity and representatives of groups which are being targeted for support (including recipients of support). It is not possible to identify all of the potential partners but there are a number of key strategic and representative organisations in Wales that are likely to be involved in some capacity. Table 6.1 provides a list of these by thematic field.

**Table 6.1**

[DN. To be completed on receipt of questionnaires from partner organisations]

Thematic Fields	Strategic Organisations	Representative Organisations

Employability Themes		
Entrepreneurship Themes		
Adaptability Themes		
Equal Opportunities Themes		

Asylum Seeker/Refugee Theme		
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