

Chapter 7: Implementation Arrangements in Wales

Introduction

7.1 The arrangements for implementing the GB EQUAL Community Initiative Programme (CIP) in Wales will take account of the devolved nature of government in the UK and the need to ensure that the initiative reflects the policy priorities of the National Assembly for Wales and its partner organisations. There will be a strong emphasis on ensuring that the initiative is effectively linked into the policy development and implementation processes in Wales, whilst maximising the potential for the joint working and the sharing of experience across GB and with other Member States.

7.2 The EQUAL Community Initiative in Wales will be overseen by a sub-group of the GB Monitoring Committee – the Wales EQUAL Management Committee. This Committee will have responsibility for ensuring that the initiative is effectively implemented in Wales and for reporting to the GB Monitoring Committee on progress. A Wales EQUAL Implementation Plan will be prepared and agreed by the GB Monitoring Committee. This will provide a framework within which Development Partnerships in Wales will operate. The Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and the GB EQUAL Support Unit will collectively provide the support structure for the initiative. The sharing of experience and the dissemination of outcomes will be supported through the participation of National Assembly Policy Divisions and Development Partnerships in Wales in GB-wide Thematic Networking Groups.

7.3 The diagram at Table 1 provides an overview of the arrangements for implementing EQUAL in Wales and further details are provided in the remainder of this Section.

Great Britain Monitoring Committee

7.4 A GB Monitoring Committee (GBMC) for EQUAL will oversee strategy, policy, monitoring and evaluation. It will also agree the broad framework for the selection of Development Partnerships, the role of the Thematic Networking Groups and agree and oversee a GB wide publicity strategy. A representative of the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE) will chair the GBMC for EQUAL and the committee will be assisted by a permanent secretariat. DFEE will be the managing authority for EQUAL in Great Britain but will delegate specific functions to the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Executive.

Wales EQUAL Management Committee

7.5 The Wales EQUAL Management Committee will be formally constituted as a sub-committee of the GB EQUAL Monitoring Committee. Two of its members will also be members of the GB Committee.

7.6 The Wales Committee will be chaired by a member of the National Assembly and will comprise 12 members (see Annex 1). Membership will include, in equal proportions, representatives from the public sector; social partners, voluntary sector and equality organisations. Representatives from the three statutory equality commissions in Wales (ie the Equal Opportunities Commission; the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission) will have full membership status on the Committee. Every effort will be made to ensure gender balance in the Committee's membership from the outset. Representatives from the main equality representative organisations (ie. Disability Wales; Chwarae Teg; AWEMA; Stonewall Cymru and Age Concern Cymru) will also be invited to attend meetings of the Committee in an advisory capacity.

7.7 The Committee's primary functions will be to ensure that EQUAL is developed in a way which reflects policy priorities in Wales; to oversee the effective implementation of the EQUAL initiative in Wales on the basis of an agreed plan and to report to the GB Monitoring Committee and the National Assembly on progress. It will put forward recommendations to the GB Monitoring Committee on the selection of Development Partnerships in Wales and monitor the implementation of their work programmes and transnational co-operation agreements. The Committee will also ensure that the outcomes of projects in Wales are effectively disseminated and that Wales benefits from the experience of EQUAL in other parts of GB and in other Member States.

7.8 The Committee will agree conflict of interest procedures requiring members to declare any interest in a particular DP proposal and matters associated with the operation of a particular DP. Where such an interest is declared the Member(s) concerned will not be permitted to participate in Committee discussion and decision making relating to the DP in question.

Wales EQUAL Implementation Plan

7.9 Within the overall framework of the GB EQUAL CIP, this plan will set out the priorities for development work in Wales within each thematic area, taking account of the Welsh labour market and policy context. It will also provide a framework for implementing the initiative through Development Partnerships. The Wales plan will be supported by an allocation of XXX m euro from the UK Governments overall EQUAL allocation.

Development Partnerships

7.10 Development Partnerships (DPs) will be the basic working element of EQUAL. DPs will focus on specific thematic areas and bring together interested parties with relevant experience to develop and implement agreed work programmes and transnational co-operation agreements. Further information on how DPs will be selected and operate in Wales is provided in Chapter 6.

EQUAL Support Structure

7.11 The Support Structure for EQUAL in Wales will be provided jointly by the GB EQUAL Support Unit and the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO). WEFO is an agency of the National Assembly for Wales and is responsible for the day to day administration of all European Structural Fund programmes and Community Initiatives in Wales. WEFO will provide a permanent secretariat to the Wales EQUAL Management Committee. Its delegated responsibilities for EQUAL will include the monitoring of DPs; the certification of claims; the making of payments; the maintenance of accounting systems and the implementation of financial controls. It will also organise the appraisal of DP proposals in WALES, within the selection framework agreed by the GBMC, and will work closely with the GB EQUAL Support Unit in this and other areas, including publicity, dissemination and evaluation.

7.12 The GB Support Unit will work with the support structures in Wales and Scotland to develop and implement an effective GB EQUAL publicity strategy and to co-ordinate assessment work on DP applications. It will provide secretariat support to the GB Thematic Networking Groups and help them to develop and implement their dissemination strategies. The Unit will also co-ordinate co-operation in European networking, including working closely with the support structures in other Member States (and non-member states eligible for funding under the Phare; Tacis and Meda programmes) to help potential DPs to find suitable transnational partners, and to collect and share relevant information. It will work with WEFO to help DPs in Wales to develop good quality and effective work programmes and transnational co-operation agreements and to develop a GB database of all DPs, in accordance with the Commission's guidance.

Thematic Networking Groups

7.13 Thematic Networking Groups (TNGs) will be established at a GB level for each theme within the EQUAL programme and will include policy representatives from the National Assembly for Wales, in addition to representatives from DFEE; other Government Departments; the Scottish Executive; the statutory equality organisations; social partners and Development Partnerships. All DPs in Wales will become members of the relevant TNG.

7.14 The TNGs will report to the GBMC for EQUAL. Their main roles will be to ensure that

EQUAL maintains its strategic focus; to consider England and GB-wide DP applications and to recommend on selection to the GBMC (the TNGs will also provide advice to the Wales Management Committee on Welsh DP proposals as part of the overall appraisal process, but the Wales Management Committee will be responsible for making recommendations on selection to the GBMC); and to develop and agree dissemination strategies with the GBMC. The TNGs will also participate in dissemination and evaluation at a European level.

Application Arrangements

7.15 A GB wide first call for applications will be made during spring 2001. The call will be publicised through media press notices; the WEFO website and Newsletter and by targeting organisations on the Wales EQUAL mailing list and the WEFO database. All publicity activity undertaken will be bi-lingual, in accordance with requirements of the Welsh Language Act. Potential applicants will be able to obtain access to guidance and the application form from the WEFO website. Application packs will also be available from any of WEFO's offices.

7.16 Applicants will have up to three months to complete the EQUAL application form. The selection system will be designed to encourage and reward strategic partnerships, which share common thematic objectives and show that they can work together effectively. Preliminary checks on completed applications will be carried out by WEFO. Applications will then be independently appraised, in accordance with the selection framework and criteria agreed by the GBMC. These criteria will ensure that proposed activities address a specific policy gap, are innovative, have the potential to influence mainstream policy and do not duplicate other Structural Fund programme activity. During the autumn of 2001, the Wales Management Committee will consider these appraisals (and the views of the TNGs) and put forward recommendations to the GBMC on the DPs to be funded in Wales.

Contractual Arrangements

7.17 The National Assembly for Wales will either contract directly with each Development Partnership in Wales (where it is a legal entity) or with the nominated Lead Organisation within the Development Partnership. The contract letter will set out the terms and conditions under which funding will be provided and will constitute a binding contract between the Managing Authority and the Development Partnership or Lead Organisation. Contractual agreements relating to the first call for applications will be entered into by 15 November 2001.

WALES EQUAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: MEMBERSHIP

<u>ORGANISATION</u>	<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>ALTERNATE</u>
Chair		
National Assembly for Wales		
Public Sector		
National Assembly for Wales		
Welsh Local Government Association		
Welsh Development Agency		
National Council for Education and Training		
Social Partners		
Business Wales		
Business Wales		
Wales TUC		
Wales TUC		
Others		

Wales Council for Voluntary Action		
Equal Opportunities Commission		
Commission for Racial Equality		
Disability Rights Commission		

Annex 2

CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS IN WALES

Introduction

At the start of the process, in May 1999, the European Task Force decided to establish a sub committee to consider the implications for Wales of the 4 proposed Community Initiatives. As a result an EQUAL Consultative Group was formed in order to advise the Task Force on, amongst other things, four key issues; geographical coverage of the Initiative; an assessment of the potential for and value added by the Initiative in Wales; proposals for policy priorities and proposals for implementation and management. The Consultative Group produced its final report in June 2000.

Since that time a range of consultative approaches have been adopted in the development of the programme, including the setting up of a Wales EQUAL Liaison Group; the distribution of questionnaires; meetings with key organisations and the use of a range of existing networks. In addition discussions have taken place with the relevant National Assembly Policy Divisions.

Formal Consultation

As part of the UK wide consultation exercise carried out by the Department for Education and Employment during July and August 2000, the National Assembly for Wales invited views from a wide range of organisations across Wales.

Questionnaires and accompanying background papers were sent to over 100 organisations. A list of the 23 organisations which responded is attached. An analysis of the responses was

forwarded to the Department for Education and Employment to inform the development of the GB EQUAL programme document. The responses have also been carefully considered in preparing the Wales Implementation Plan.

EQUAL Liaison Group

In addition to this formal consultation, the National Assembly for Wales established an EQUAL Liaison Group (ELG) with the remit to support the development of the GB programme and advise the Assembly on the development and implementation of EQUAL in Wales. The following organisations are represented on the Group:

The National Assembly for Wales

Welsh European Funding Office

Welsh Local Government Association

Employment Service

Welsh Development Agency

Wales European Centre

Wales TUC

Cyngor NTO Cymru

Fforwm (Association of FE Colleges in Wales)

Careers Wales

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Age Concern Wales

CYTUN (Association of Christian Churches in Wales)

Disability Wales

Chwarae Teg

All Wales Ethnic Minority Association

Stonewall (Stonewall Cymru upon establishment)

Welsh Refugee Council

Disability Rights Commission

Commission for Racial Equality

Equal Opportunities Commission

In addition, organisations involved in the Business Wales network (eg CBI Wales; Chambers of Commerce and the FSB) have been consulted. *[DN. Need to confirm this or add to list above following round of meetings]* Furthermore, many of the organisations involved in the ELG have their own networks of constituent organisations which have in turn been invited to comment on drafts of the GB EQUAL programme and the Wales Implementation Plan.

Developing the Wales Implementation Plan

During the early stages of developing the Wales Implementation Plan, officials from the National Assembly held individual meetings with the statutory equality organisations and a range of other key interests. The main purpose of these meetings was to discuss the priorities for action in Wales. During October and November 2000, meetings were held with the following organisations:

Federation of Small Businesses

CBI Wales

Chambers Wales

Welsh Development Agency

Wales TUC

Equal Opportunities Commission

Disability Rights Commission

Commission for Racial Equality

Disability Wales

Age Concern Cymru

Wales Co-operative Centre

Welsh Refugee Council

All Wales Ethnic Minority Association

Responses received to the EQUAL Consultation in Wales

No	Organisations
1	Disability Wales
2	Age Concern
3	EBBW Fach Development
4	Agoriad Cyf
5	Countryside Council For Wales
6	Uni. Of Wales, Lampeter
7	Chair Equality Partnership C/O Chwarae Teg
8	FE Sector

- 9 HE Sector
- 10 TEC South East Wales
- 11 North Wales Open Collage Network
- 12 Cam Ymlaen
- 13 Chwarae Teg
- 14 Environment Agency Wales
- 15 WCVA
- 16 Employment Services Wales
- 17 WLGA
- 18 CWMNI Cynnal (Welsh)
- 19 Wales TUC
- 20 Anglesey County Council
- 21 AWEMA
- 22 WDA

