

Gender and Wider Equal Opportunities Horizontal Principle Annual Reporting Template

For the period Jan. to Dec. 2011

1. Name of Activity:

No.: ESF ____2.9_

2. What actions have taken place over the last year to incorporate the principle of gender and wider equal opportunities into the Activity?

(Examples: new objective created; new indicator developed; altered project selection criteria; collecting and/or reporting new data or collecting it in different ways; pursuing case studies; carrying out equality impact assessments; interpreting existing data in a different way; equality proofing exercises, promoting awareness and/or visibility of equality principle within activities, consultation with representatives of the wider equality grounds).

(a) Ongoing Actions:

The objective of this activity is to contribute to addressing labour market gaps for specific groups that are experiencing barriers to participation and employment, including those created by gender inequality and wider inequalities. The programme aims to put in place measures to improve labour market access and participation of groups experiencing inequality across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation.

(b) New Actions:

The EMU focused on the following areas of work across 4 strands of activity in 2011.

STRAND A: Support packages to promote Equality Mainstreaming within the VEC and Further Education sector

The Equality Mainstreaming Unit issued a public Call for Proposals on 21 April 2011 seeking applications from VECs (Vocational Education Committees) to develop projects that would apply an equality mainstreaming approach for the inclusion of Travellers in mainstream vocational education and training. The VEC sector was in the process of reviewing its services in order to ensure that Traveller learners would not be disadvantaged in accessing mainstream courses once the Senior Traveller Training Centres are phased out.

During 2011, we funded 7 VECs to develop and implement action plans to prepare VECs to facilitate the inclusion and integration of Traveller learners. The receivers of funding were – County Cork VEC, Limerick College of Further Education, County Wicklow VEC, North Tipperary VEC, City of Galway VEC, County Galway VEC and Roscommon VEC. All of these participants successfully concluded their projects with a minimal seed funding and carried out a number of significant actions: focus groups, training sessions on Traveller culture and Equality, consultations with Traveller learners and VEC staff, senior management meetings and the drafting of

action plan on Traveller inclusion into mainstream VEC provision. A particular issues facing Traveller women and men in relation to education and training were also raised and documented. The projects followed loosely the process model that had been developed by Co. Louth VEC in a similar project funded by EMU in 2010.

STRAND B: Sectoral Projects to support workplace equality

The aim of this strand of funding is to support the formation of strategic partnerships to devise and implement projects that support workplaces to be planned and systematic in their approaches to equality. The intention is that these workplaces become proactive in combating discrimination and promoting equality. Five sectoral projects were successfully concluded during 2011. Each of these projects demonstrated a partnership approach including employer and employee representatives in the design and delivery of their actions. The following are some of the project achievements.

The **Irish University Association's Equality Network** developed and tested an online equality and diversity training module on workplace equality for all staff within the university sector. The online programme allows each participant the flexibility to complete the course at times and places that are most convenient to them. The need for this type of flexibility was identified early in the project. The programme consists of 5 modules and participants can save their progress and return at any time.

Module 1 – Understanding Diversity

Module 2 – What's it got to do with you?

Module 4 – From Compliance to Commitment

Module 4 – Recruitment & Selection

Module 5 – Dignity & Respect

Six universities were actively involved in the implementation of this project. These were:

- Trinity College Dublin
- University of Limerick
- National University of Ireland Galway
- University College Cork
- University College Dublin
- Dublin City University

Full details of this project can be viewed on www.leadequalitynetwork.com.

SIPTU (Services Industrial Professional Trade Union) and the Commercial Mushroom Producers (CMP) reviewed the existing employment policies and procedures for workers in the mushroom industry to ensure their compliance with equality legislation. The majority of these workers are women and the specific issues for migrant women employees was critical. They developed an Employment Handbook for employees in the mushroom industry. Given the variety of languages spoken by employees in this sector, the Employment Handbook was translated into Polish, Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Romanian.

Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (IBEC) undertook to research, develop and pilot a gender pay audit tool. Tackling the gender pay gap remains an ongoing issue in the Irish and European labour market. Results from the CSO National Employment Survey of August 2011 reports that the gender pay gap in Ireland has widened. The purpose of the project is to assist employers to carry out a gender equal pay audit. IBEC successfully developed a template and guidelines for companies who wish to conduct a gender equal pay review.

During the pilot phase of this project, IBEC engaged with a range of organisations to ensure the review tool was relevant and effective. The review tool was piloted amongst different companies across a variety of sectors. These included a number of Irish Medical Devices Association companies and a multinational financial services company based in Dublin. The gender review tool will be disseminated and promoted with employers at HR forums, IBEC events and networks. It is also envisaged that the Gender Pay review tool will be available to member via the members section of the general IBEC website.

The Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) developed and piloted a high quality interactive online self-assessment tool on lesbian, gay and bisexual diversity, for employers in the financial services and in the information technology sector. Citigroup, Ernst and Young, Ulster Bank, Microsoft, Dell and IBM participated in the pilot phase. The tool includes 15 downloadable resource guides. These guides include information on good practice from a range of organisations including An Garda Síochána, IBM, Microsoft, University College Cork, Irish National Teachers Organisation and the Public Service Executive Union. The online assessment tool is available here. www.diversitychampions.ie

One Family developed a project in partnership with Marks & Spencers, Boots and Superquinn. They produced a practical tool-kit on tips for employing and retaining lone parents. *Six Steps to Promote Equality for Lone Parents in the Retail Sector* introduces the key elements of successful retail businesses as well as detailing six practical steps to promote equality for lone parents in the workplace. Finally, it showcases a number of good practice examples from retail businesses.

STRAND C: Supports to Trade Unions' and Employers' Networks

During 2011, EMU issued a call for proposals for trade unions' and employers' networks to develop projects to encourage, inform and support planned and systematic approaches to workplace equality. The following three organisation were approved for funding:

Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME)

ISME developed a handbook for SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) on Equality in the Workplace. This was made available to all members of ISME and also to visitors on the ISME website. The handbook was officially launched at the ISME Annual Delegate Conference held on November 11th, 2011 at the RDS in Dublin. It is available on the following website <http://www.isme.ie/advice-page54874.html>

Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)

Congress have designed a comprehensive equality course as part of the general provision of Congress Education and Training Service. The course is available on the INTO learning site, www.intolearning.ie. It was introduced to trade union equality and education and training contacts at a joint meeting of the Education and Training Committee of Congress on 29th November. The online course will prepare trainees for face-to-face sessions on taking a case to the Equality Tribunal and will be supported by a Congress resource previously funded by EMU - 'Equality How? An ICTU guide to taking a cases under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2011). This resource is available at: <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/equalitytribuna.html>

Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (IBEC)

On the 29th November 2011, IBEC organised a seminar and networking event in the Burlington Hotel, Dublin. The aim of the seminar was to showcase some of the equality and diversity work that employers in Ireland are engaged in. A particular emphasis at the seminar was put on highlighting and promoting a range of tools, resources and guidelines that have been developed over the last few years, many with the support of the Equality Authority or the Equality Mainstreaming Unit,

There were presentations from a range of key employers including Citi, Dell, Deloitte and Ernst & Young highlighting a range of different diversity initiatives. Attendees spanned small, medium and large employers, private and public sector and NGOs. The majority were from the financial services, ICT, health and pharmaceutical sectors.

Following the seminar, IBEC had requests from a number of employers to engage with them on developing a diversity strategy or setting up networking groups or awareness programmes. Three new organisations also joined the IBEC Diversity Forum.

5. Identify any issues arising that need to be drawn to the attention of the Managing Authority, the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Representatives or other Departments.¹

N/A

¹ The issues could relate to specific implementation concerns e.g. collection of data, or could relate to more general findings concerning the principle in question e.g. a particular policy in another department is obstructing your Activity from promoting the principle.

6. Please feel free to attach any relevant additional material to this reporting template.

N/A