

European Social Fund
Gender Equality and Equal opportunities
Mainstreaming Plan

For England and Gibraltar 2007-2013

Updated for the second half of the ESF programme
(2011-2013)

Revised : February 2012



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1. Aim of this plan

This plan aims to:

- reinforce and support the **commitments** made in the 2007-2013 England and Gibraltar ESF Operational Programme to mainstream gender equality and equal opportunities;
- provide the national ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Sub Committee with a **management tool** and **point of reference** for assessing progress in mainstreaming gender equality and equal opportunities;
- propose objectives which support the achievement of **equality targets** and to contribute, in particular, to increasing the **female participation** rate for the second half of the programme period.

Although this plan is primarily a management tool for the national ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Committee, it will be published on the national DWP/ ESF website for the information of all ESF partners and stakeholders.

2. Policy and legislative context of this plan

The mainstreaming approach

This plan is designed primarily as a management tool for mainstreaming gender equality in the ESF Operational Programme (OP).

The OP explains that the mainstreaming approach for the current ESF programme aims to integrate gender equality and equal opportunities into the key programme processes of:

- (a) planning;
- (b) implementation;
- (c) monitoring; and
- (d) evaluation.

The ESF OP also explains that ESF aims to promote a 'dual' approach to mainstreaming i.e:

- horizontal mainstreaming of equality -all projects / providers take equality into account ,using **equality policies** and **equality mainstreaming implementation plans** as tools to help actively promote equality and help meet ESF regulatory obligations as well as the general duty of the Equality Act 2010 ; and
- vertical mainstreaming – a number of projects providing specialised support for specific equality groups.

The approaches adopted at programme and delivery level aim to ensure that the programme complies with the various domestic and EU legislative requirements as well as the Structural Fund's own regulatory requirements

Progress in mainstreaming is discussed in more detail in section 3.

EU Policy Context

The ESF programme's promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities is important in the context of wider European and domestic policy.

The economic crisis has exacerbated problems faced by disadvantaged people in the EU and poses new challenges for the promotion and mainstreaming of equality. Key challenges include: a shrinking workforce; the need to increase the employment rate for women, young people and older workers; 80 million people with low or basic skills; and 20 million people in or at risk of poverty in the EU.

ESF is one of the EU's key financial tools designed to support the **EU 2020** economic growth strategy – a strategy designed to help the EU recover from the economic crisis. Inclusive growth will be an important component of the strategy. In this context, ESF has a clear role in supporting two of the EU 2020 strategy's **flagship initiatives: Agenda for new skills and jobs and European platform against poverty.**

The European Commission expect the ESF programme to play an important role in supporting the **EU Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men (2011-2015)** which builds upon the Roadmap for Equality Between Men and women. The strategy adopts key priorities set out in the European Commission's **Women's Charter.**

More detail on ESF and its role in promoting equality in the wider European context is given in Annex 1.

Domestic Policy Context

The ESF's support for women and people who face barriers in the labour market directly supports the Government's equality strategy "**Building a Fairer Britain**" by promoting social mobility, supporting a fair and flexible labour market and helping to embed equality within Government.

DWP has the lead responsibility for promoting the Government's **Social Justice** agenda across Government and ESF will have an important role to play in supporting agenda. For example, DWP CFO will use ESF to help families with multiple problems as well as help people on incapacity benefit and income support who would not normally be eligible for the Work Programme to access it on a voluntary basis.

Legislative / Regulatory Context

Information about domestic legislation and the relevant regulations for equality are provided in Annexes 2 and 3.

3. Progress made in mainstreaming gender equality and equal opportunities in the first half of the programme

This section of the plan explains:

the progress that the programme made towards achieving key equality targets as well as details on some of the key equality indicators for jobs and skills progress towards the **key** aims and objectives set out in the plan for the first half of the programme

Progress towards key programme equality targets

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement	Difference +/-
1.	Total number of participants	1,790,000	3,903,798	+2,113,798
8.	Female participants	51%	38%	-13%
7.	Participants from ethnic minorities	19%	20%	+1%
5.	Participants with disabilities or health conditions	19%	17%	-2%
6.	Participants aged 50 or over	19%	17%	-2%

Source: DWP ESF 'INES' database (November 2011)

The table above compares the target participation rates for the various protected groups listed.

The table shows that the total number of participants is more than double the original target and, of these, over 1.8 million were **unemployed**.

The issue of female participation rate being lower than the target that was anticipated at the start of the programme was discussed at the national ESF Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) meeting in September 2010.

ESF Evaluation Team explained that there was a shortfall because:

There has been a higher number of unemployed participants in Priority 1 than forecast in the first half of the programme and the higher number of male participants reflects the gender imbalance in the unemployed population. The programme flexed to respond to the increase in unemployment which increased more among men than women in England, thereby supporting the European Economic Recovery Plan.

Following the PMC meeting, the European Commission wrote to ESFD stating that :

Gender equality is a fundamental issue for the European Commission. The ESF operational programme was predicated on the basis of promoting gender equality.

DG EMPL readily acknowledges the impact that the economic crisis has had on mainstream provision in England, with its focus on unemployed and young people, but feel that the programme should be rebalanced by pro-actively targeting female participation within the unemployed target group and refocusing provision on more inactive participants in P1 and P4.

Within priority 2 there should be more pro-active targeting to continue targeting female groups who now face even greater difficulty on entering the labour market.

ESFD should consider alternative strategies to encourage female participants onto the programme, in particular, enhancing affordable support for childcare, increasing support for women with caring responsibilities and providing help for women entering non-traditional occupations as well as providing support for progression to flexible and sustainable employment.

The targets for female participation will remain the same during the second half of the programme period. This plan contains a specific aim to achieve female participation targets in the second half of the programme in the section 5 Action Plan.

Good progress has been made towards the other equality targets with the target for ethnic minority participation being exceeded by 2% and the profile for disabled and people aged 50 and over falling short by only 2%.

Progress towards key employment and skills indicators for protected groups

	In work on leaving (ESF OP priorities 1 and 4 only)	Gained basic skills on leaving	Gained full qualification at level 2 or above on leaving (ESF OP Priorities 2 and 5)
Cumulative	248,982	119,472	348,925

	In work on leaving (ESF OP priorities 1 and 4 only)	Gained basic skills on leaving	Gained full qualification at level 2 or above on leaving (ESF OP Priorities 2 and 5)
achievement			
% female	36%	51%	47%
% disabled	21%	11%	8%
% aged 50 or over	12%	13%	17%
% ethnic minority	17%	29%	16%

Source: DWP ESF 'INES' Database (November 2011)

The table above shows key jobs and skills indicators for groups with protected characteristics.

The table shows that:

- 47% of leavers in Priority 2 and Priority 5 gaining a level 2 (or above) qualification were women;
- 51% of leavers gaining basic skills were women
- 29% of leavers gaining basic skills were from ethnic minority groups
- 36% of those going into employment on leaving ESF for work were women
- 8% of leavers gaining a qualification at level 2 or above in P2 and P5 were disabled

Participants in Priority 2 and 5 are employed. The Skills Funding Agency have explained that it is possible that the low levels of disabled people participating in Priority 2 and 5, and achieving qualifications at level 2 may be partly explained by participants failing to disclose their disability when they register for training.

A summary of progress made towards the ESF mainstreaming plan's key aims and objectives in the first half of the ESF programme (2007-2010)

Aim 1: To promote high level commitment to gender equality and equal opportunities

- Progress reports are presented to national ESF Programme monitoring committee (ESF PMC) on a regular basis.
- The cross-cutting themes are a standing agenda item at ESF PMC.

Aim 2: To promote a balanced participation of men and women in the management and delivery of ESF

- A report and good practice guidance on gender balance in monitoring committees was included in the 2009 mainstreaming progress report.
- National equality mainstreaming training provided as part of the ESF Technical Assistance project run during 2008-2009 highlighted the importance of CFO providers having equality policies and implementation plans that related to their own staff as well as delivery for ESF participants.

Aim 3: Establishing a reporting system on equality mainstreaming

- A reporting system has been developed and implemented which is aligned to the ESF annual implementation reporting system for the programme.
- Three annual progress reports have been produced so far (2009, 2010 and 2011).
- Aim 4: To set up an ESF Technical Assistance project delivering equality training for key CFO staff (2008-09)
- Nearly 200 delegates participated in training workshops across the country along with a number of regional training events.
- Presentations on gender equality and equal opportunities were delivered to the ESF regional committees that existed at the time of the training.
- An equality toolkit for equality policies and plans was developed and published on the ESF website.

Aim 5: To update the original Equality Impact Assessment for the ESF programme

- The update to the EIA was completed in 2011 and published on the ESF / DWP website in August 2011.

Aim 6: To ensure that gender equality and equal opportunities is a highly visible theme

- Equal opportunities is fully integrated into the programmes publicity arrangements, for example: there have been regular equality-related features in the ESF e-zine; there is a dedicated web-page on gender equality and equal opportunities on the ESF website; the ESF-Works good practice website contains many examples of good practice in helping disadvantaged groups; and a virtual equality network was piloted in 2010.
- The annual ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming Awards were successfully launched in 2010, with a new

`Gender Equality Leader' award being introduced in 2011. These awards received high-level coverage at the ESF mid-programme review event held in Birmingham in 2010 and the global 2011 `World Skills' Event held in London Docklands.

Aim 7: To consider the findings and recommendations made from the evaluation of gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming conducted during 2009 and published in 2010.

- DWP has launched new ESF 13 checklists to help clarify what contract managers and compliance managers need to check when assessing progress and minimum standards for equality policies and implementation plans. These new checklists build upon and clarify the toolkits developed under the TA
- training project. Further training is planned (see section 5 - Action Plan)

A copy of the full evaluation report is available at:

http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_667.asp

4. Key future priorities for mainstreaming in the second half of the ESF programme (2011-2013)

The action plan for mainstreaming gender equality and equal opportunities is provided in section 5 below.

The aims and priorities for action are informed by the following:

ESF programme Performance / Equality Targets

- On-going performance in terms of progress towards equality targets – with the need to try to increase female participation rate is a particular priority.

ESF Equality Impact Assessment Update

- Recommendations from the updated ESF Equality Impact Assessment – which includes taking action **to increase female participation** by setting up an ESF Technical Assistance Project to:
- deliver national gender equality workshops in ESF to identify current practices **in promoting gender equality**, including procurement, contracting processes and monitoring – as well as well as considering delivery issues such as **care provision and other good practice**;
- update the mainstreaming plan of the second half of the programme to include a **specific aim to increase female participation rates** during the second half of the programme;

- promote gender equality through the ESF Leader Awards for 2011 by having a **specific gender category** of the award;
- update equality guidance for CFO staff so that it is tailored to meet their needs;
- promote good practice as identified in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) Triennial Review of equality (for example, EHRC's Trans Research review report no. 27);
- ask the Skills Funding Agency to report on under performance of representation of disabled people in Priority 2 and as the Skills Funding Agency to explain what action they can take to increase participation rates of this group; and
- to produce annual updates of the EIA – these will be much briefer than the original update and will focus on key issues identified and may be incorporated as a specific section within the annual mainstreaming progress report .

Evaluation of ESF gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming Report

Key actions identified in this report included the need to:

- improve female participation rates;
- agree a position statement on CFO contract managers and monitoring officer roles in actively promoting equal opportunities as part of the programme's mainstreaming requirement and amending the national guidance accordingly;
- agree minimum standards for assessing equal opportunities policies and implementation plans, including on-going progress, as well taking into account existing or planned procurement arrangements as far as possible;
- provide targeted training workshops where required to ensure a consistent level of expertise and updating good practice guidance and training materials where necessary; and
- agree good practice for publicising and recruiting people from ethnic minorities and other protected groups.

Annual mainstreaming reports

Key recommendations identified in the annual ESF gender equality mainstreaming progress report identified the need to:

- address the shortfall in the female participation rate;
- promote female participation through DWP CFO's Priority 1 provision for families with multiple problems;
- commission action research on unemployed female participation (Skills Funding Agency);
- update the mainstreaming plan; and
- continue promoting good practice

Legislative and regulatory requirements, including commitments to maintain equality covered in the ESF Operational Programme

The need to maintain mainstreaming processes in-line with on-going commitments made in the ESF Operational Programme i.e. integrating equality into planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as meeting general and specific duties and Equality Act 2010.

Obviously, there is some duplication and overlap between issues and priorities identified and the recommendations made in the various reports listed above.

Web links for the key documents listed above are given below:

Update to the ESF Equality Impact Assessment 2011:

<http://dwp.gov.uk/docs/eia-esf-august-2011.pdf>

Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming Plan used in first half of ESF Programme:

<http://dwp.gov.uk/docs/equal-opps-plan.pdf>

Annual mainstreaming progress reports:

<http://dwp.gov.uk/docs/opps-progress-report-10.pdf>

5. Action Plan

Introduction

Aim 1 of the action plan in section 5 below is clearly the most substantial aim of the plan and reflects the high priority that will be given to trying to increase female participation in order to achieve OP targets in the second half of the programme (i.e. contracts starting in 2011-2013), including the overall OP target of 51% in 2011-2013 (compared to the 38% that was achieved in the first half of the programme). This recognises that although it will not be possible to achieve the female participation for the whole of the 2007-2013 programme, the programme will aim to achieve the targets for the 2011-2013 period only.

The plan is sub-divided into milestones which focus on:

- analysis and preparatory action **for current contracted provision** (milestone 1)
- analysis and preparatory action for **future provision** (milestone 2)
- ensuring action is taken by providers to promote gender equality through contract monitoring / compliance and promoting positive action using good practice checklists based on findings from NIACE's action research on engaging with unemployed women learners as well as other good practice identified at CFO level (milestone 3)
- monitoring progress (comparing progress in first half of the programme with progress in the second half of the programme)

- communicating the aims of the action plan and promoting positive action to promote female participation.

Aim 1 of the plan is supported by **Aim 2** which is concerned with running a TA project to provide further training and improve guidance for new and existing CFO contract monitoring and compliance officers on assessing gender equality and equal opportunities policies and implementation plans. This training will offer further scope to embed knowledge on good practice in promoting gender equality amongst key CFO staff involved in monitoring and influencing their providers provision.

Aim 3 of the plan is to maintain on-going gender equality and mainstreaming commitments made in the ESF Operational Programme in order to ensure that legislative and regulatory requirements concerning gender equality and equal opportunities are met.

Aim 4 of the plan is to consider 'lessons learned' from the gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming approach taken during the current programme period to inform the preparation and delivery of gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming approach during the new ESF programme period (2014-2020)

Action Plan

Aim 1 : To aim to increase the female participation rate in order to achieve OP targets for the second half of the ESF programme (i.e. provision starting in 2011-2013)

Milestone 1: Analysis of performance and procurement arrangements and other preparatory action required to help achieve Aim 1 for current contracted provision.

Objective	Indicator	Target (T) & Profile (P) NB: profile to be updated annually	Who and When	Notes / progress
<p>Milestone 1, Objective 1</p> <p>1. Each CFO to construct a priority list which identifies those ESF providers who:</p> <p>(a) <u>currently</u> have female participation rate below 51%; <u>and</u></p> <p>(b) those providers who have the scope to make the biggest impact in terms of improving female participation rate during these second</p>	<p>No. of priority lists</p> <p>No. of providers on each CFO priority list</p>	<p>T= 1/ CFO P = TBC</p> <p>P = TBC</p>	<p>CFOs Feb / March 2012</p>	<p>DWP data not available until Nov 2012</p> <p>The CFOs priority list will inform the monitoring visits schedule (see below)</p>

<p>half of the programme (this could include providers exceeding 51% female participation).</p> <p>The priority list for each CFO will have to be refined and updated on an on-going basis. The list will evolve and build over time. The list will be submitted to ESFD.</p> <p>DWP's list to be produced later in 2012 when their 'families' provision becomes more established.</p> <p>There will be cases where CFO providers are primarily targeting men (e.g. provision in men's prisons) and where there is limited scope to increase female participation. This should of course be taken into account when compiling provider lists and monitoring providers.</p>				
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<p>Milestone 1, Objective 2</p> <p>2. CFOs to use the priority list to prepare a review schedule to target current ESF projects / providers with greatest potential to increase female participation. This list will need to be updated and shared with the Managing Authority on an on-going basis.</p>	<p>No of CFO provider reviews produced in calendar year</p> <p>No. and % of providers on list who were reviewed</p> <p>No. and % of providers on priority list still to be reviewed (i) calendar year and (ii) next calendar year.</p> <p>NB these indicators will have to be treated as 'snapshots' in each calendar year / annual mainstreaming progress report.</p>	<p>T = 1/CFO P =</p> <p>T = P =</p>		<p>The review schedule will need provider details, dates for reviews. A review checklist of key things to discuss, based on NIACE research checklist and other good practice, and tailored to the CFO provision will also be required (please see Milestone 3 Objective 1 below).</p> <p>CFOs will need to record agreed action – and this will inform part of the annual mainstreaming progress report.</p>
<p>Milestone 1, Objective 3</p> <p>3. CFO plans, CFO procurement arrangements, ITTs / specifications and contracts for current provision to be reviewed for equality content including gender equality – with specific reference to access,</p>	<p>A brief report produced by each CFO confirming how current procurement / contracting arrangements support gender equality along with recommendations or suggestions for changes that could be made for any remaining</p>	<p>T = 1/CFO P =</p>	<p>ESFD to co-ordinate With CFOs via AIR reporting process</p>	<p>The work leading up to this report and the report itself will help inform parts of the gender equality workshop as well as any updates to the Equality Impact Assessment.</p>

recruitment, outreach, childcare / elder care, mentoring, flexible provision, specialist support and other flexible arrangements that support female participation / access.	bidding rounds and which may also inform procurement arrangements in the new programme.			
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Milestone 2 : Analysis and preparatory work to increase female participation for future provision (i.e. provision that is yet to be contracted in the 2007-2013 programme)

Objective	Indicator	Target & Profile (To be completed)	Who and When	Notes / progress
Milestone 2 : Objective 1 Following the review of gender equality coverage in CFO procurement arrangements, including ITTs (cf Milestone 1 objective 3), CFOs to agree any appropriate changes with their procurement teams to ensure that any changes that will help further promote	Number of CFO reports on changes made to procurement / ITT Number of timetables for future bidding rounds	T = up to 1/CFO P = T = up to 1/CFO P =	CFOs / CFO procurement teams	

<p>female participation are reflected in the remaining bidding rounds.</p> <p>CFOs to report on any changes to ESFD and ESF gender equality sub committee.</p> <p>CFOs to produce an estimated timetable for any remaining bidding rounds.</p>				
<p>Milestone 2 : Objective 2</p> <p>To set up and deliver two national gender equality workshops covering current practices in promoting gender equality – including delivery issues such as care support provision and other good practice.</p> <p>The workshops will require CFOs to report on the early progress they are making towards the milestones listed in this plan and any issues arising</p>	<p>Number of workshops delivered</p>	<p>ESFD / CFOs</p>	<p>April 2012 (To be confirmed)</p>	

<p>from the monitoring visits schedule, the visits checklist and procurement / ITT arrangements as well as proposed monitoring arrangements.</p> <p>CFO providers will be invited to speak and provide input to these workshops.</p> <p>NB These workshops will be delivered as part of a proposed TA project – the TA project is subject to final Ministerial approval and negotiation of work timetable with contractors who are yet to be appointed.</p>				
<p>Milestone 2: Objective 3</p> <p>To update the current national ESF Gender Equality Good Practice Guide and so that it draws upon the latest good</p>	<p>National ESF gender equality good practice guide updated to incorporate good practice identified in NIACE research.</p>	<p>T = 1 P =</p>	<p>ESFD March 2012</p>	

<p>practice identified in the recent NIACE research report on engaging with unemployed women to promote basic skills as well as good practice identified in Priority 5 provision.</p> <p>This good practice guidance will be presented at the two gender equality workshops and should help inform discussions relating to checklists for provider monitoring etc.</p>				
<p>Milestone 2: Objective 4</p> <p>To continue to promote gender equality through the annual ESF Mainstreaming Leader Awards as well as through wider publicity (see milestone 5 below).</p>	<p>Number of gender equality mainstreaming leader `winner' identified each year.</p>	<p>T = 1 P =</p>	<p>Awards launched in May each year</p>	<p>Case studies and examples of good practice arising from the gender equality leader awards to be placed on ESF website / ESF-works website to help share effective practice.</p>

Milestone 3 : Ensuring CFO providers (current and future in the 2007-2013 programme) take action to promote gender equality in-line with contracted commitments

Objective	Indicator	Target & Profile (to be completed)	Who and When	Notes / progress
<p>Milestone 3 Objective 1</p> <p>ESFD to agree with each CFO a review checklist for gender equality to support the monitoring visits schedule referred to in milestone 1 objective 2 above as well as for any future provision in the 2007-2013 programme. The checklist to be based upon good practice, including NIACE good practice checklist.</p>	<p>No. of monitoring visit checklists designed</p>	<p>T = 1 / CFO P =</p>	<p>ESFD & CFOs - by March 2012</p>	<p>The checklist will need to inform provider equality implementation policies and action plans where appropriate and should be covered in equality training referred to in milestone 2 Objective 2 (above) and in Aim 2 (below) and will need to be compatible with guidance produced for gender equality and equal opportunities policies and implementation / action plans.</p>
<p>Milestone 3 Objective 2</p> <p>CFOs to undertake reviews in line with the review schedule and to record :</p>	<p>Number and % of CFO providers on the review schedule who</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>CFOs ESFD to report on progress</p>	<p>This information should be used to help inform the mainstreaming</p>

<p>(i) action taken by CFO providers to promote female participation;</p> <p>(ii) any future action that CFO providers have agreed to take to further promote gender equality;</p> <p>(iii) issues arising from reviews, including the suitability of the review checklist itself.</p> <p>The review checklist should help inform agreements for future action.</p>	<p>have taken specific action to promote female participation (NB : more detailed indicators on action taken are covered in milestone XX below)</p> <p>Number and % of CFO providers on the review priority list who have agreed to take specific action in future (i.e. within the calendar year of the review).</p>		<p>in annual progress report</p>	<p>progress report - see below)</p> <p>Action taken will be covered in monitoring.</p>
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Milestone 4 : To monitor progress in increasing female participation

during the second half of the ESF programme

Objective	Indicator	Target & Profile (To be completed)	Who and When	Notes / progress
<p>Milestone 4 : Objective 1 AIR reporting system (which incorporates data requirements for the annual gender equality and mainstreaming progress report) to be amended so that it gathers information on indicators listed in the milestones above as well as indicators covering:</p> <p>(a) number and % of CFO providers offering childcare;</p> <p>(b) number and % of providers <u>actually providing</u> childcare support;</p> <p>(c) number and % of CFO providers using outreach methods to recruit female participants;</p> <p>(d) number and % of providers offering mentoring</p>	<p>AIR Action note with appropriate indicator / information requirements issued to CFOs.</p> <p>Annual mainstreaming report produced covering indicators listed (a) – (e) and including examples of action taken to promote gender</p>	<p>T = 1 annually</p> <p>P = TBC</p> <p>T = 1 annually</p> <p>P = TBC</p>	<p>ESFD</p> <p>CFOs to report by end of March 2012</p> <p>ESFD</p> <p>November each year</p>	

Objective	Indicator	Target & Profile (To be completed)	Who and When	Notes / progress
<p>support for female participants;</p> <p>(e) number and % of providers offering other specialised support for female participants.</p> <p>The reporting system to gather examples of the action taken, including good practice that was effective as well as any issues arising.</p> <p>The annual national mainstreaming progress report to provide, by CFO and priority, details of progress regarding indicators listed above - as well as examples of action taken / good practice.</p>	equality.			
<p>Milestone 4, Objective 2</p> <p>Design a MI ESF 'standard report' using INES ESF MI database which will, as far as possible, enable a data comparison to</p>	MI report produced for sub committee and PMC.		ESFD March / April 2012	

Objective	Indicator	Target & Profile (To be completed)	Who and When	Notes / progress
<p>be made between female participation rate during the first half of the programme and in the second half of the programme (in percentage terms). Data to be disaggregated by Priority and CFO type and available on an on-going basis.</p>				
<p>Milestone 4 Objective 3</p> <p>To ensure that the ESF cohort survey questionnaires covers issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engagement of female participants – what attracted them to the provision / what may have deterred them?; • barriers faced by female participants whilst on ESF – including 	<p>A set of questions relating to female participation etc to be designed and included in questionnaire survey</p> <p>Cohort survey includes a section on</p>			<p>The findings for the cohort survey should inform the appropriate annual mainstreaming progress report as well as the ESF evaluation synthesis report.</p>

Objective	Indicator	Target & Profile (To be completed)	Who and When	Notes / progress
<p>flexibility of provision and specialist support;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of childcare and elder care; <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issues (positive and negative) arising from care provision. <p>The cohort survey report should have a specific section covering female participation and issues which may be arising which may be affecting participation rates.</p>	<p>female participation and issues relating to participation.</p>			
<p>Milestone 4 Objective 4</p> <p>To run a workshop to assess any gender-related and operational issues arising from the introduction of</p>	<p>No. of workshops run</p>	<p>T= 1 P =</p>	<p>ESFD / DWP CFO / DWP CFO providers</p>	

Objective	Indicator	Target & Profile (To be completed)	Who and When	Notes / progress
<p>new Priority 1 delivery arrangements in DWP CFO , in particular, in relation to support for families with multiple problems. A report on the workshop should be produced with key findings and recommendations as appropriate. This should help inform :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the annual gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming progress report; • the EIA update; and • the evaluation of DWP CFO support for families with multiple problems planned for the second half of the programme. 			Date TBC – probably late 2012	

Milestone 5: To communicate the milestones and objectives set out in this action plan and to promote positive action to increase female

p[participation to all ESF partners (NB This milestone is on-going).

<p>In addition to workshops and training provided through the proposed TA training project, the aim to increase female participation through positive action (and not direct discrimination) will need to be communicated on an on-going to all ESF partners via the ESF website, ESF e-zine and also the ESF-works website.</p>	<p>No of articles in e-zine, ESF webpage and ESF works website</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>ESFD / ongoing</p>	<p><u>As far as possible</u>, this communication and dissemination will be co-ordinated alongside the action being taken 'on the ground' so that it supports contract monitoring and compliance officers and providers alike.</p>
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Aim 2: To provide further training and improve guidance for new and existing CFO contract monitoring and compliance officers on assessing gender equality and equal opportunities policies and implementation plans.

Objectives	Success Criteria	Target & Profile (to be completed)	Who / When	Notes / progress
<p>2a. The ESF Technical Assistance project described in Aim 1 above to provide 15 workshops for CFO staff / contract managers / compliance monitoring officers as well as tailored e-learning modules.</p>	<p>New guidance includes position statement on contract managers role</p> <p>CFO contract management / compliance officers understand the link between implementation plans and achievement of programme targets, as well</p>		<p>ESFD / Contractor</p> <p>March - November 2012</p>	

Objectives	Success Criteria	Target & Profile (to be completed)	Who / When	Notes / progress
<p>The training workshops to include updated training / relating to Equality Act 2010 and also UN Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD)</p> <p>NB These workshops will be delivered as part of a proposed TA project – the TA project is subject to final Ministerial approval and negotiation of work timetable with contractors who are yet to be appointed at the time of writing.</p>	<p>as the relationship between equality targets and target groups, including female participation targets and wider target groups.</p> <p>CFO staff understand the minimum standards for policies and implementation plans, as well as assessing progress,</p> <p>A broadly consistent level of expertise achieved across CFOs (this will be assessed via evaluation feedback sheets of workshops delivered).</p>			
<p>2b. To prepare guidance for ESF providers and publish it on the ESF website, describing minimum requirements of policies and plans (including</p>	<p>A publicity `flyer` developed for providers showing how the data they produce / record is used and how it feeds into the whole process – and why it is important!!! To</p>	<p>ESFD to lead , consulting with ESF Evaluation team & Commercial Policy DWP June 2012</p>		

Objectives	Success Criteria	Target & Profile (to be completed)	Who / When	Notes / progress
for staff and participants) and how their policies and plans will be assessed. Guidance to also include an explanation as to the importance of female participation rate and other equality targets.	be incorporated into the ESF e-zine and used at CFO events etc. A sample of providers provide positive feedback on guidance. Guidance incorporated into future CFO procurement / briefing events where appropriate.			

Aim 3: To maintain on-going gender equality and mainstreaming commitments made in ESF Operational Programme in order to ensure that legislative and regulatory requirements concerning gender equality and equal opportunities are met.

Objectives	Success Criteria	Target & Profile (to be completed)	Who/ When	Notes / progress
3a. To maintain a high level of commitment to promoting the gender equality and equal opportunities theme by: maintaining the national gender and equal opportunities sub committee; ensuring that the cross cutting themes are standing	Equality targets / performance are regularly discussed at national PMC meetings as standing agenda item National ESF guidance manuals updated as appropriate ESF-Works and national ESF website	(Ongoing)	ESFD lead ESFD lead Report once per	

Objectives	Success Criteria	Target & Profile (to be completed)	Who/ When	Notes / progress
<p>agenda item at the national ESF Programme Monitoring Committee; and updating the published national guidance and good practice as required.</p> <p>3b. To maintain on-going monitoring of progress towards female participation rate targets as well as participation rates and performance of other 'protected groups' as described in the operational programme. This will be included in progress reports presented to the national PMC. This aspect of performance also to be covered in the annual mainstreaming progress reports for the second half of the programme.</p>	<p>highlight good practice in promoting gender equality and equal opportunities equality in ES.</p> <p>Progress reports cover equality targets at PMC</p> <p>Annual mainstreaming progress reports produced and action plan updated accordingly.</p> <p>Gender equality and equal opportunities issues covered in future evaluations and help inform the synthesis report on 2012 (see Aim 4 below).</p> <p>Data from the</p>		<p>year to appropriate committees ESF Evaluation Team</p> <p>ESF Evaluation Team</p>	<p>The AIR update to include reference to progress with female participation as well as any gender equality and equal opportunities issues arising</p>

Objectives	Success Criteria	Target & Profile (to be completed)	Who/ When	Notes / progress
<p>3c. The on-going ESF evaluation strategy, which will include a second cohort survey as well as evaluation of Priority 1/4 provision and an evaluation of the DWP CFO support for families with multiple problems, will consider gender equality and equal opportunities issues. For example, the extent to which new provision is enabling women and other protected groups to access provision.</p> <p>3.d To produce brief annual updates to the annual implementation report in-line with Departmental policy</p> <p>To ensure that</p>	<p>cohort survey will help inform one of the annual updates of the ESF Equality Impact Assessment along with MI data from ESF INES database.</p>			<p>from procurement / contract management / equality coverage in CFO plans</p>

Objectives	Success Criteria	Target & Profile (to be completed)	Who/ When	Notes / progress
equal opportunities is a highly visible theme in the ESF by integrating equality into publicity material / websites etc.				

Aim 4 : To consider `lessons learned' from the gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming approach taken during the current programme period to inform the preparation and delivery of gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming approach during the new ESF programme period (2014-2020)

Objectives	Success Criteria	Target & Profile (to be completed)	Who/ When	Notes / progress
The final synthesis report to be produced by the ESF Evaluation Team will need to include a summary of the gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming approach, lessons learned and implications for future programme.	The key lessons learned are identified in the synthesis evaluation report, with clear recommendations that help inform the mainstreaming of gender equality and equal opportunities in the next programme period.		ESF Evaluation Team (in consultation with ESFD and other CFO partners) December 2013	

Annex 1

ESF in the context of EU equality / social inclusion policy priorities

The European Commission has placed jobs, new skills and the fight against poverty at the heart of its economic, employment and social agenda - the **Europe 2020 Strategy** – which aims to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Inclusive growth means:

- raising Europe's employment rate by creating more and better jobs especially for women, young people and older workers;
- helping people of all ages anticipate and manage change through investment in skills and training; and
- modernising labour markets and welfare systems ensuring that the benefits of future growth reach all parts of the EU.

The Europe 2020 Strategy that Europe needs inclusive growth because:

Europe's workforce is shrinking as a result of demographic change – a smaller workforce is having to support a growing number of inactive people; the economic crisis has brought high youth unemployment (over 21%) and made it harder for people out of work to find jobs; the EU has around 80 million people with low or basic skills; even before the current economic crisis, there were 80 million people at risk of poverty, including 19 million children; and

The EU targets for inclusive growth include:

- 75% employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 by 2020 – to be achieved by helping more people into work, especially women, the young, older and low-skilled people and legal migrants;
- better educational attainment , for example, 40% of 30-34 year olds completing third level education or equivalent; and
- at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social inclusion.

The EU will use two flagship initiatives to help promote inclusive growth:

- **Agenda for new skills and jobs** – helping people acquire new skills and adapt to labour market change as well as modernising labour markets to raise employment levels;
- European platform against poverty – which aims to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, guarantee respect for the fundamental rights of people experiencing poverty and mobilise support to help people integrate in the communities they live, find training and help find a job.

EU policy has a particularly strong focus on **gender equality**. Equality between women and men is one of the European Union's founding principles and can be traced back to 1957 when the principle of equal pay for equal work became part of Treaty of Rome. The European Commission adopted a **Women's Charter** on 5 March 2010 which committed it to strengthening gender equality across all of its policies.

The European Commission has developed a **Strategy For Equality Between Women and Men** (2011-2015) which builds upon the Roadmap for Equality Between Women and Men (2006-2010) as well as the European Pact for Gender Equality.

The European Commission's Strategy For Equality Between Women and Men (2011-2015) describes 5 priority areas for action (four of which were identified in the Women's Charter):

- equal economic dependence (to help women and men exercise control
- over their lives and to make genuine life-choices);
- equal pay for equal work and work of equal value;
- equality in decision making (especially at the highest levels);
- dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence; and
- gender equality in external actions (i.e. work undertaken by the EU in 'third' countries) .

The Strategy for Equality between Women and Men supports key aspect of the EU2020 growth strategy, in particular, inclusive growth and some of the related targets. The Europe 2020 targets are unlikely to be achieved unless women are helped into employment.

The **European Social Fund is the key European financial tool** for supporting employment and social inclusion and is therefore important for contributing to the EU202 Strategy and, in particular, the two flagship initiatives – Agenda for New Skills and Jobs and European Platform against Poverty.

Over the current 2007-2013 programme period, more than 10 billion euros have been earmarked for ESF projects that combat social exclusion and promote employment.

The ESF is also an important tool in terms of supporting the Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men (2010-2015), for example by promoting gender equality, promoting jobs for women and men and for increasing skills and contributing to equal pay. ESF therefore contributes, in particular, to the strategy's priority areas of promoting equal economic dependence and equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.

ESF in the context of the UK Government's Equality Strategy and promotion of Social Justice

Equality Strategy

The UK Government's equality strategy "**The Equality Strategy – Building a Fairer Britain**" (December 2010) sets out the Government's vision for a strong, modern and fair Britain.

The strategy explains the UK Government's commitment to tackling the barriers to equal opportunities and social mobility. It sets the framework for how equality will be a fundamental part of the Government's programmes across the UK.

The strategy highlights key issues, such as:

- early years, education and social mobility
- a fair and flexible labour market
- changing culture and attitudes
- embedding equality at the heart of Government

Annex 2 describes the legislative foundation to the strategy, in the form of the Equality Act 2010, which applies broadly to Great Britain (Northern Ireland has its own equality legislation).

Social Justice

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has an ambitious agenda of reform which aims to create a new welfare system for the 21st century; to transform the opportunity for people without jobs to find work and support themselves and their families; and to ensure that the most vulnerable in society are protected.

- tackle poverty and welfare dependency through a simplified welfare system that : encourages and provides an incentive for people to find work; rewards responsible behaviour; and protects the most vulnerable;
- promote high levels of employment by helping people who are out of work, including people in disadvantaged groups, to move into work;
- help people meet the challenges of an ageing society and maintain standards of living in retirement;
- provide opportunity, choice and independence to enable disabled people to take an equal role in society.

The DWP has the lead role in promoting **social justice** within its operations and on a cross-Departmental basis. Social justice involves tackling the root causes of disadvantage and pathways to poverty such as: family breakdown; worklessness; educational failure; addiction; and debt.

For the second half of this programme, the DWP ESF Co Financing Organisation's provision will be supporting families with multiple problems by

helping them move closer to the labour market. The DWP CFO will also be using ESF funds to help people in receipt of incapacity benefit and income support access the Work Programme on a voluntary basis (people in receipt of these benefits would not normally be eligible).

DWP will be publishing its equality objectives, in line with the new specific duties of the new Equality Act 2010 (which came into force in October 2011) by April 2012. It is likely that the equality objectives will be integrated into the business objectives of the DWP Business Plan once it is updated next year.

Annex 2

Structural Fund Regulations & Equal Opportunities

The main General and ESF Structural Fund regulations that relate to gender equality and equal opportunities are:

General regulation: Council regulation (EC) no 1083/2006

Article 16

The Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective is promoted during the various stages of the implementation of the Funds.

The Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the various stages of implementation of the Funds and, in particular, in the access to them. In particular, accessibility for disabled persons shall be one of the criteria to be observed in defining operations co-financed by the Funds and to be taken into account during the various stages of the implementation.

ESF Regulation No 1081/2006

Para 16

“The Member State and the Commission are to ensure that the implementation of the priorities financed by the ESF and the Convergence and Regional competitiveness and employment objectives contribute to the promotion of equality and elimination of inequalities between women and men. A gender mainstreaming approach should be combined with specific action to increase the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment.”

Article 3 (scope of assistance)

Paragraphs under this Article list a wide range of actions which ESF can support, including “mainstreaming and specific support to improve access to employment, increase the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment and reduce gender-based segregation in the labour market,

including by addressing the root causes, direct and indirect, of gender pay gaps.”

Article 6 (Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities)

The Member States shall ensure that operational programmes include a description of how gender equality and equal opportunities are promoted in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of operational programmes. Member States shall promote a balanced participation of women and men in the management and implementation of operational programmes at local, regional and national level, as appropriate.

Annex 3 - Legislation

International Legislation

The right to non-discrimination is recognised by key international legal instruments such as:

- the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights;
- the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- the UN Convention on the elimination of racial discrimination;

and

- the ILO convention No 111.

The provisions of non-discrimination contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom were reinforced by the entry into force on 1 April 2005 of a new Protocol 12 to that Convention, which provides for a free-standing right to equal treatment.

Domestic Equality Legislation – The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is the law which bans unfair treatment and helps achieve equal opportunities in the workplace.

This single Act replaces previous anti-discrimination laws as well as strengthening protection in certain instances.

The Act covers nine protected characteristics, which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has one or more of these characteristics listed below, so the Act protected everyone from unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The Equality Act sets out different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person.

The Act prohibits unfair treatment in the workplace, when providing goods, facilities or services when exercising public functions.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The public sector Equality Duty, at section 149 of the Equality Act, requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies (which includes private and voluntary sector organisations delivering public services to the public) to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of equal opportunities, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making by requiring public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities , so that policies and services are accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations, which came into force on 10 September 2011, requires public bodies to be transparent about how they are responding to the Duty, requiring them to publish relevant, proportionate information showing compliance with the Equality Duty and to set Equality Objectives.