

## **1. COMPETITIVENESS AND EMPLOYMENT MONITORING COMMITTEE**

### **INNOVATION AND MAINSTREAMING WORKING GROUP**

#### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

##### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Competitiveness and Employment Monitoring Committee (Monitoring Committee) has established the Innovation & Mainstreaming Working Group (IMWG) to assist the Managing Authority for the Northern Ireland European Social Fund (NI ESF) programme 2007-13 with the implementation of Dedicated Innovative activity and the process for feeding back the results and lessons learnt to inform future employment policy development.
- 1.2 The IMWG will operate under the direction and authority of the Monitoring Committee.

##### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Dedicated Innovative activity will be promoted under Priority 1 and 2 of the Northern Ireland ESF programme 2007-13. Innovation requires a focused, demand-led approach and the themes for innovation should relate to gaps in policy and practice and thus, introduce a 'pull' dimension to mainstreaming. Dedicated Innovative activity will be selected through open competition, with an emphasis on what outcomes are to be achieved rather than how they are to be achieved. Where appropriate, projects engaging in Dedicated Innovative activity should take forward and develop best practice and ideas from the Northern Ireland EQUAL Programme.
- 2.2 The Managing Authority, with the assistance of the IMWG will select a number of themes for Dedicated Innovative activity and inform the Monitoring Committee of the themes.

- 2.3 All Dedicated Innovative projects will be required to have an evaluation strategy so that the methods and results of the project can be independently assessed. Innovative projects will also be required to make the results of their project available for dissemination and possible mainstreaming so that good practice lessons can be made widely available.
- 2.4 Dedicated Innovative projects must network with the relevant policy makers who selected the themes to enable the identification of workable and cost effective new methods of delivering policy objectives. This networking builds on the lessons from the EQUAL National Thematic Networks.
- 2.5 There will be close links between Dedicated Innovative and trans-national and inter-regional activities. All Dedicated Innovative projects will be encouraged to engage with two or more Member States to research alternative methods of delivering the objectives of the theme selected for innovation. This may involve sharing information, experiences, results and good practices. As part of the selection process, projects will be required to detail how they will carry out trans-national or inter-regional activity. It is envisaged that projects will already have partners or contacts in other Member States and so build on existing links rather than establish new ones. The lessons from the EQUAL Programme indicated that this was a more effective way of working at the trans-national level.

### **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 The role of the IMWG is to support the Monitoring Committee and to assist the Managing Authority for the NI ESF with the implementation of Dedicated Innovative activity and the process for feeding back the results and lessons learnt to inform future employment policy development.
- 3.2 The IMWG will:
- Assist the Managing Authority for the NI ESF with the selection of themes for Dedicated Innovative activity;

- Identify best practice from the Dedicated Innovative activity for mainstreaming across the NI ESF programme and central Government employment policy;
- Examine the trans-national and inter-regional element of the Dedicated Innovative activity projects and identify best practice;
- Advise on the process to be established to disseminate the results and lessons learnt from the Dedicated Innovative activity to inform future employment policy development.
- Advise on the process to be established for projects to network with the relevant employment policy makers to enable the identification of workable and cost effective new methods of delivering policy objectives.
- On request from the Monitoring Committee take any other action appropriate to enhance Dedicated Innovative activity under the NI ESF 2007-13 programme.

#### **4. Membership**

- 4.1 The IMWG membership will be drawn from the permanent and deputy membership of the Monitoring Committee and appropriate officials from the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), including staff from the Northern Ireland Equal programme Managing Authority, and the Department of Finance and Personnel. As with the Monitoring Committee, where possible, the membership of the IMWG will recognise a gender balance taking cognisance of Human Rights and Equality Commission aims.
- 4.3 There may be occasions when the subject matter under discussion could benefit from input from other specialist representatives. When such occasions arise the IMWG may agree additional representation.
- 4.4 The IMWG will meet as often as necessary and not less than twice each calendar year, provided a quorum is present. A quorum is defined as 9 members of the IMWG, of whom 3 are also members of a Monitoring

Committee. A Chair and vice-chair of the IMWG will be elected at the first meeting. In the absence of the appointed chairperson or vice-chair, those present shall elect a temporary chairperson. The role of Chair can only be taken by a member of the Monitoring Committee.

## **5. Procedures**

### **5.1 The procedures for the IMWG are:-**

- Secretariat duties will be performed by the ESF Managing Authority;
- Informed by the wishes of the IMWG the Secretariat will draw up agendas for meetings and the Chair will authorise them. The agenda and supporting documentation will normally be issued 15 days in advance of the meeting. Members can request the inclusion of agenda items by writing to the Secretariat for onward transmission to the Chairperson. This should normally be done at least 10 working days ahead of the scheduled meeting;
- AOB can be tabled at the discretion of the Chair;
- Draft minutes and summary action points of each meeting will be produced and sent to members and relevant advisers within 10 working days of each meeting;
- The IMWG will meet at least twice per calendar year and as often as necessary. It will also conduct its business in a transparent manner. Minutes will be placed on the Member State webpage;
- The IMWG can form sub-committees to take forward particular issues;
- The IMWG will report formally to the Monitoring Committee at least once per calendar year, and shall provide ongoing reports as required;
- The IMWG will agree a work programme, including a budget and submit it to the Monitoring Committee for approval; and
- The Terms of Reference for the IMWG, and any subsequent amendments, will be approved by the Monitoring Committee.