



EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in Your Future
European Social Fund



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

PMC 17 June 2019 - Agenda Item 10

Update on Implementation of Horizontal Principles

Mid-term Evaluation Report - December 2018

The Evaluation Report notes that the OP had embraced the two key HPs of gender equality and non-discrimination quite commendably and noted that no specific commitments were set for Sustainable Development in the OP. It noted that

- formal consideration of the HPs was integrated into intervention design and planning,
- there were regular reporting processes across the OP
- information and expertise was available to advise and support delivery agents in meeting their obligations and consequently
- understanding of the HPs has been enhanced, and performance is moving beyond minimally compliant levels to more thorough consideration, examination and reporting on accomplishments and further challenges.

Horizontal Principles Working Group (HPWG)

As recommended at the 4th PMC meeting in May 2017, a HPWG was set up to consider how to give practical guidance to projects on promoting the principles, how to embed the principles more effectively into projects and how to improve reporting on them in respect of ESF Activities under PEIL for PMC meetings.

The main outcome from the initial meeting was the need for increased communication between the MA and the IBs (or the Beneficiary where there is no IB in the cascade) on guidance for reporting and linking the reporting to Public Sector Duty. In this regard the MA hosted a focused guidance seminar in May 2018 for IBs and Beneficiaries. The seminar was very well attended with representatives from all IBs. Presentations were given by the ESF MA, Gender Equality Unit in DJE and IHREC, and followed by facilitated small group discussions. It was agreed that the HPWG would continue its work and consider the potential to facilitate Beneficiary training for one or two activities as a pilot.

The group met in December 2018 and had a discussion around some of the issues that were raised at the seminar and how best to progress with the guidance work.

Since then, membership of the group changed significantly, with two changes of personnel from IHREC and three from Gender Equality Division in DJE. The MA would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by Deirdre Toomey, AnnMarie Quarry, Carole O'Sullivan and Anne Byrne during their time on the working group.

Membership of the HPWG is now as follows:

- Jacqueline Healy - IHREC (the Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission);
- Hannah Collins - IHREC;
- Eimear O'Brien - Gender Equality Division in Department of Justice & Equality (DJE);
- Seamus Concagh - EU Funds Unit in DJE;
- Andrew Diggins, ESF MA;
- Therese Callery, ESF MA;
- Stuart Morris, ESF MA.

The 1st meeting of the group with all new members took place on 29th May. The potential to facilitate a number of training events for Beneficiaries was considered with some group members having concerns regarding the time involved and the resources available. It was agreed that:

- the group will work on modifying the existing HP reporting templates, to make them more user friendly and easier to complete with meaningful and relevant information and will draw up a checklist to accompany each template for use by IBs/Beneficiaries when completing the templates;
- a 2nd seminar will be held in early 2020 focusing on how the IBs can obtain assistance from beneficiaries/projects with the reporting process under PEIL and how IBs can provide guidance to them in this regard;
- linked to the seminar, the group will consider developing a short guidance document for beneficiaries/projects;
- the MA will consider adding a section on the ESF website dedicated to HPs, which will contain relevant guidance documents and publications;
- It was suggested that a review of the application of the horizontal principles to the PEIL would be beneficial and would inform enhanced reporting on the principles in future rounds of ESF funding.

The HPWG will progress with the above tasks over the coming months and expect to meet again in October.