

# Evaluation of Supported Employment in Action Project

## Action 1 Evaluation Report

29 June 2006



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This report is available in accessible formats upon request.

## Glossary

SEA Project	Supported Employment in Action
NIUSE	N.I. Union of Supported Employment
DHSSPS	Dept. of Health, Social Services & Public Safety NI
DEL	Dept. for Employment and Learning NI
DAS	Disablement Advisory Service (DEL)
SSA	Social Security Agency
DP	SEA Development Partnership
MA	Managing Authority (D.E.L.)
NSS	National Support Structure (EQUAL)
NTN	National Thematic Network (EQUAL)
ESF	European Social Funds
BSP	Building Sustainable Prosperity
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DE	Department of Education
EU	European Union
SROI	Social Return on Investment
WEA	Workers' Educational Association

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The Supported Employment in Action Project

1.1.1 The Supported Employment in Action Project (SEA) has been funded under Round 2 of EQUAL funding and will operate in the following timescales:

- ◆ Action 1: October 2004 - June 2005
- ◆ Action 2: 1 July 2005 - 31 June 2007
- ◆ Action 3: 1 July 2007 - 31 December 2007 (Action 3 can commence at any given period within Action 2)

The SEA Project falls within the EQUAL Employability Theme, subset “facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market, which must be open to all”.

1.1.2 The rationale for the SEA project is to address the policy gap that results in people with disabilities, in particular people with significant disabilities, being under represented and marginalised in accessing and staying in employment. Its key aims are:

- ◆ to review the practices and policies impacting on people with disabilities accessing employment,
- ◆ to examine and develop the model of Supported Employment,
- ◆ to explore policies and practices for people with disabilities and the Supported Employment model in other European countries,

- ◆ to influence policy and practice relating to Supported Employment, and
- ◆ to further explore the model for other socially excluded groups.

**1.1.3** The project is being delivered through a Development Partnership which currently involves representation from the Disablement Advisory Service within the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), the Social Security Agency (SSA) within the DSD, the Disability Unit within the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the NI Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE). NIUSE is the Lead Partner on the Development Partnership. It is anticipated that the Development Partnership will also ultimately include representation from Supported Employment practitioner organisations and Supported Employment beneficiaries.

**1.1.4** Under the requirements of EQUAL funding the SEA Development Partnership (DP) has formed a transnational partnership, in this case with Development Partnerships in the Czech Republic, Wales and France. Following changes to the original Transnational Partnership (the Netherlands withdrew), NI was nominated to act as Secretariat (the Netherlands had been Secretariat) and as such has taken responsibility for communications and potential commissioning of the transnational evaluation. It is worth noting that due to the Netherlands withdrawing the TCA needed to be re-validated.

## 1.2 The Evaluation

**1.2.1** In August 2005 the SEA Project commissioned an evaluation of the funded EQUAL project involving separate evaluations of Action 1 and Actions 2 and 3. This report outlines the findings of the evaluation of Action 1 and, in line with PROTEUS recommendations on evaluation approaches which were adopted by the SEA project, it focuses on considering the appropriateness of:

- ◆ what is to be achieved
  - aims, objectives
  - qualitative and quantitative outcomes
  - wider impacts
  - sustainability
  - value for money
  - innovative approaches
- ◆ how outcomes will be achieved
  - partnership
  - empowerment
  - transnational activities
- ◆ how results can be applied outside of the DP
  - mainstreaming
  - transferability

### 1.2.2 The evaluation of Action 1 has involved:

- ◆ Meetings with the Lead Partner of the Development Partnership
- ◆ Meetings with SEA project staff
- ◆ Meetings with each of the Development Partnership representatives
- ◆ Consideration of the Development Partnership Agreement, Transnational Co-operation Agreement and Action Plans to assess the extent to which key actions, outputs, outcomes, milestones, delivery agents and costs have been outlined and clarified and the extent to which it meets EQUAL requirements and the needs of the wider labour market.
- ◆ Consideration of information on the need for the project
- ◆ Consideration of resource inputs

## 2 The Context

### 2.1 The EQUAL Programme

**2.1.1** The EQUAL Programme is funded by the European Social Fund and aims to test new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality experienced by those in work and those looking for a job, with a view that new ideas could change future policy and practice in employment and training.

**2.1.2** The EQUAL programme incorporates six key principles

Partnership	bringing together key players into development partnerships and ensuring links with other member states
Innovation	testing and promoting new ways of combating discrimination and inequality faced by those groups most disadvantaged in the labour market
Equal Opportunities	cross cutting feature of the programme
Transnational Co-operation	the transnational dimension ensures that lessons are learned across member states and examples of good practice are exchanged
Mainstreaming	EQUAL has been designed so that its actions inform policy developments and ensure that policy makers learn lessons from its activities.
Empowerment	those who are targeted for support also have an opportunity to influence the design and the evaluation of the proposed activities.

**2.1.3** EQUAL operates by bringing together the key players in a geographic area or sector into Development Partnerships (DP) to pool their expertise and experience. Development Partnerships must establish links with at least one partnership from another European member state. The EQUAL Programme has 5 key themes, within which there are 9 subsets. The themes include Employment, Entrepreneurship, Adaptability, Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and Asylum Seekers.

**2.1.4** The NI EQUAL Community Initiative Programme is positioned within the wider labour market policy context of N.I. and aims to ensure that:

- ◆ Employment opportunities are spread more equally
- ◆ Concentrations of unemployment among certain groups in society are reduced
- ◆ Long term unemployment and inactivity are removed
- ◆ Welfare dependency is reduced

### 2.1.5 The EQUAL programme in NI is structured as follows:

<b><u>Managing Authority</u></b> European Unit within DEL	Overall responsibility for the implementation & delivery of EQUAL in NI
	Responsibility for payment and monitoring finance
<b><u>National Support Structure</u></b> PROTEUS NI	Assist with the provision of some of the more specialist DP Support roles.
	Monitor DP activity
	Assist with transnational co-operation
	Offer ongoing advice and guidance to Development Partnerships.
	Training (e.g. in monitoring/evaluation and partnership working)
	Web sites, newsletter, conferences, workshops, seminars
<b><u>National Thematic Network</u></b> Representatives from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors & each DP	Adopting a strategic focus ensuring that EQUAL continues to focus on priority areas
	Identifying, selecting and analysing good practice
	Recommending projects for approval by NI EQUAL Monitoring Committee in the 2nd round of EQUAL
	Developing and agreeing a dissemination strategy
<b><u>North/South Steering Group</u></b> - Managing Authorities in NI and RoI, National Support Structures in NI and RoI, the Equality Commission (NI) and	Established to facilitate and promote cross border co-operation

the Equality Authority (RoI).	
<b><u>Joint Support Structure</u></b> Managing Authorities and National Support Structures representing NI, RoI, England, Scotland and Wales	Assist the co-ordination and standardisation of processes and procedures for EQUAL

**2.1.6** The N.I. EQUAL Programme has adopted two of the 9 subsets within the 5 key themes as being appropriate to the needs of the NI labour market. These are:

Theme	Subset
Employability	Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market, which must be open to all
Equal Opportunities for men and women	Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation

**2.1.7** The NI EQUAL programme has identified the priority groups to be targeted by EQUAL projects as:

- ◆ long term unemployed men and those who are economically inactive
- ◆ women who face difficulties in being (re)integrated, especially those with caring responsibilities and those with low levels of qualifications
- ◆ disabled people, those experiencing mental health problems and those with learning difficulties

- ◆ “Status 0” young people

**2.1.8** There are two funding rounds within the EQUAL programme. Round 1 commenced in November 2001 and will end in November 2005. Round 2 commenced in October 2004 and will end in December 2007. In NI 13 organisations received funding under the second round of EQUAL. The list of projects is included in the Appendices. The SEA project was funded under the Employability Theme above.

**2.1.9** Each project receives funding to complete three Actions:

- ◆ Action 1: Setting up Development Partnerships and transnational co-operation
- ◆ Action 2: Implementing the work programmes of the Development Partnerships
- ◆ Action 3: Thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy (mainstreaming)

**2.1.10** PROTEUS have introduced the use of the Rickter Scale for all NI funded EQUAL projects. The Rickter scale is used to measure soft outcomes. Staff from each project would be trained in its use.

## 2.2 Supported Employment

**2.2.1** Supported Employment originated in the USA in the early 1970s as an alternative to traditional vocational training and employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities, more specifically people with significant disabilities. This followed changes in policy relating to the care of people with disabilities and the growing disability movement, spurred on by the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. The model is based on providing support in real work environments, i.e., “on the job training”, rather than training people for work before placing them in a real work environment and hoping that their skills could be transferable.

**2.2.2** The definition of supported employment which is adopted by NIUSE is “**real work** in an **inclusive** environment with **ongoing support**”:

- ◆ **real work** - work which has not been artificially created, paid at the going rate with the same terms and conditions as other employees doing the same job
- ◆ **inclusive environment** - where disabled and non disabled people work together (in any sector)
- ◆ **ongoing support** - appropriate and individualised ongoing flexible support for a person with a disability. Support is also provide to employer and parent/carer as appropriate.

The principles and values of Supported Employment include the right to the opportunity to work, a focus on capacity and capabilities (rather than incapacity and lack of abilities), and self determination.

**2.2.3** The key elements of Supported Employment, as highlighted by SEA, are to place someone in an employment environment and provide training and support to assist them maintain the job:

- ◆ **Placing in a job** - a Job Support Worker/Job Coach/Employment Officer will interview a service user with a disability to establish their work preferences, skills, abilities, strengths, aspirations and previous work experience to identify and secure a suitable job. They will also contact parents/carers etc.
  
- ◆ **On the Job Training** - consideration of the type and extent of support a person requires to maintain employment. A Job Support Worker/Job Coach/Employment Officer provides on the job training and support to enable the person to learn the skills of the job, provide social interaction within the workplace and assist the person solve problems when they encounter them in the job
  
- ◆ **Maintaining** - the Job Support Worker/Job Coach/Employment Officer provides a declining level of assistance and provides ongoing monitoring through visits to the job site to identify any issues which may have arisen and to provide additional support such as supporting the person to learn new tasks as they take on more responsibility in work or change their job, career development, further training and new employment opportunities.

**2.2.4** The models of Supported Employment include:

- ◆ **Individual Model** - placing an individual in a job and providing appropriate support either through a Job Support Worker/Job Coach/Employment Officer or through other natural supports.

- ◆ **Enclave Model** - individuals who work in a special training group within a regular community based industry with pay and conditions the same as co-workers at the same productivity level. It can be used as a training ground before placing people on a job on their own. However, at the enclave stage, the model segregates people with disabilities from non disabled people.
- ◆ **Work Crew Model** - small number of disabled people who travel throughout a community to a variety of job sites supervised by a Team Leader. They generally work on contracts for specific jobs (building, maintenance, gardening). There is very little, if any, integration with non disabled people.

**2.2.5** The Individual Model is the SEA project preferred model. In N.I. there are some examples of this model delivered through organisations such as MENCAP, Orchardville, Cedar Foundation and the NOW Project, however all are short term funded (mostly through European funding such as ESF, BSP, Peace and Reconciliation funding, match funding from DHSSPS (NI) and/or DEL There is no mainstream funding for Supported Employment projects in NI). Organisations in NI are working towards and/or aspiring to deliver Supported Employment but are restricted by external limitations and barriers, e.g. funding.

## **2.3 Policy Context and Existing Provision**

**2.3.1** In N.I. legislation under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has given people with disabilities rights in a number of areas, including employment and access to goods, facilities and services. Under the Act it is unlawful for employers to discriminate against people with disabilities in the field of employment for a reason relating to their disability.

**2.3.2** Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory duty on designated Government departments and programmes to pay due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between

- ◆ persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- ◆ men and women generally
- ◆ persons with a disability and persons without
- ◆ persons with dependents and persons without

**2.3.3** In 2003 the Government introduced the Welfare Reform and Modernisation Programme in recognition of the need for a radical reform and modernisation of the current welfare system. The fundamental aim of the Programme is to achieve the Government's Vision of "work for those who can and security for those who cannot". The key themes of the Government's reform agenda include "Welfare to Work - promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age who are able to work". Welfare Reform is a major step towards increasing economic activity, reducing the number of workless households, and encouraging more people to take up work. In practical terms the introduction of Welfare Reform has included:

- ◆ **The introduction of New Tax Credits** - Tax Credits have replaced Working Family Tax Credit and Disabled Person Tax Credit and the administration of Tax Credits has been transferred to the Inland Revenue.
- ◆ **Jobs and Benefits** - the introduction of combined Jobs and Benefits offices across NI aims to support

people who can work to do so and to ensure that those who cannot can obtain the security to which they are entitled, thus promoting social inclusion. The move also aims to maximise the contribution of education and training to engage the economically inactive with the labour market. This element of Welfare Reform is being delivered jointly by DEL and SSA with the aim that customers can obtain advice on finding employment and on benefits in a “one stop” shop from both DEL and SSA staff. During 2005 further “Pathways” pilot schemes have been introduced in parts of NI (Magherafelt, Lurgan, Ballymoney, with a view to rolling out across NI). They aim to assist people on Incapacity Benefit move into work through a series of Work Focused Interviews which focus on “capacity to work” rather than “incapacity”.

#### **2.3.4** Other key relevant policies include:

- ◆ The Taskforce on Employability and Long Term Unemployment which analysed the factors which make individuals and groups employable and the obstacles faced by those who are economically inactive. The report of the Taskforce highlights a vision to set in place a long term strategy for employability using new approaches and taking the issue forward in a holistic, coherent and integrated way. The report highlights the role of the EQUAL programme in terms of providing a basis for exploring innovative and radical approaches to tackling the employability of those groups most disadvantaged and acknowledges that EQUAL has the potential to help formulate a framework for the integrated delivery of employment services on a regional and local level.
  
- ◆ Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People (Government Strategy Unit) which sets out policy

recommendations to improve quality of life one of which focuses on employment. It indicates that disabled people should have support to access employment and retain their job. It further indicates that employers need advice and information about disabled people in their workforce.

- ◆ NI Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability which considered the law, policy and provisions which affect people with mental health needs or a learning disability, taking account of relevant legislative and other requirements relating to human rights, discrimination and equality of opportunity. Findings indicated that people with disabilities want the opportunity to work and recommended the model of Supported Employment.

### **2.3.5** In NI there are approximately 201,000 people with disabilities.

- ◆ 35% of people with disabilities are in work compared with 77% of non disabled people
- ◆ 62% of disabled people are economically inactive (16 years+ and not in employment and are not unemployed) compared with 20% non disabled people who are economically inactive.
- ◆ Of the 62% who are economically inactive, 36% want to work. This means that approximately 45,000 people with disabilities, who are currently economically inactive, want to work.

Identified barriers to work include the benefit trap, employers' attitudes, society's attitudes and availability of opportunities which best assist disabled people move into employment.

**2.3.6** In NI mainstream provision to support people with disabilities moving into work is provided through the Disablement Advisory Service within DEL. The Disablement Advisory Service (DAS) provides advice, guidance, training and a placing service for people with disabilities and health issues. It is accessed through a team of Disablement Employment Advisors based in Job Centres throughout NI (now mostly Jobs and Benefits Offices, since the introduction of Welfare Reform and Modernisation - see below). In addition, DAS offers a range of practical and financial support to employers to assist them in recruiting and retaining disabled employees, as well as a professional employment assessment service. Services and programmes offered through the Disablement Advisory Service include:

- ◆ **Employment Assessment and Occupational Psychology Services** - arranged with appropriate professionals by Disablement Employment Advisors to assist in identifying abilities and strengths and how disability/health conditions affect employment, with a view to planning the steps needed to obtain or retain employment
- ◆ **Job Introduction Scheme** - job trial facility which offers both the employer and the disabled job seeker an opportunity to find out if the job and person match. The trial period lasts 6 weeks and employers are supported through a contribution towards employment costs.
- ◆ **Access to Work (NI)** - grant towards approved extra costs that arise if employing a person with a disability - such as communication support at interview, special aids and equipment, adaptations to premises and equipment, support workers, travel to work.

- ◆ **New Deal for Disabled People (voluntary)** - one to one personal advice from DEAs to assist people with disabilities to find and retain paid work. This includes support with jobsearch, pre-employment training, placement (while maintaining benefit), employment subsidy (payable for up to 18 weeks of a 52 week placement), and access to the other DAS services. The voluntary and community sector play a part in helping to deliver New Deal for Disabled people through tendering processes with D.E.L. Organisations involved in delivering the New Deal for Disabled People (New Deal job brokers) include :
  - ACET
  - USEL
  - MENCAP
  - Action Mental Health
  - Network Personnel Ltd.
  - Fermanagh Training Ltd.
  - Omagh New Deal Consortium
  
- ◆ **Employment Support** - providing people with severe disabilities the opportunity to work alongside non disabled people in a range of jobs. The programme has recently been revised (the first revision since its inception in 1982). In the past it focused on the employee's disability, compensating employers for the individual's deficit. It was acknowledged that this had the potential to encourage employers to maximise the subsidy received and thus inhibit an individual's ability to progress (particularly into unsubsidised employment). In line with Government policy and legislation relating to individuals' rights, the revised programme now focuses more on an individual's ability and assisting them to progress into unsubsidised employment. Some lessons learned from the development of the Supported Employment

Model in NI have been incorporated into the revised programme.

The Employment Support programme will be delivered by sponsor organisations (following a tender process). Its overall aim is to provide appropriate support to assist people with disabilities to integrate into the labour market and to assist employers to meet their workforce requirements. Current guidelines indicate that the delivery process will be as follows:

- people with disabilities (as per DDA definition - moderate to severe disabilities) will be referred to DEL Disablement Employment Advisors who, once they have established that no other forms of support are appropriate, will develop an Action Plan with the client and find suitable employment (in conjunction with sponsor organisations)
- Clients will be referred to sponsor organisation who, based on the Action Plan, will assess and provide the support required to obtain and retain work A Development Plan will be prepared and approved by D.E.A. The support will be dependent upon individuals' needs and circumstances and may include use of a
  - Job Coach (who will work with the employee, employers, carers, etc.)
  - mentoring for workplace colleagues
  - on and off the job training
  - payment of a wage subsidy to the employer, etc.

Development Plans will be reviewed after 2 years. (If at this stage progression into unsubsidised employment is not appropriate tapered support will be provided)

- In total there will be 1,000 places including old programmes and new programmes available in NI on the revised Employment Support Programme
  - As a new project, a range of aspects will be monitored by DEL and the programme will be formally evaluated after 3 years.
- ◆ The Work Preparation Programme is a short programme (6-13 weeks) specifically for people with disabilities. It usually provides unpaid work experience placements and personal development activities through a support provider agency. Its main purpose is to assess people's best placement options and help them build skills. This programme is currently piloted in the Targeted Initiatives areas of NI (Report of the Taskforce on Employability and Long Term Unemployment). It is delivered by Disability Action in Derry and Strabane and USEL in North and West Belfast.

**2.3.7** The main Supported Employment Services in NI are provided by the voluntary and community sector, which often involves partnership working with statutory agencies such as DEL and local Health and Social Services Trusts. Supported Employment is mainly funded through a mixture of funding sources including EU funding (ESF - Building Sustainable Prosperity), Peace funding, health and social services trust funding and funding from the Disablement Advisory Service. However many of the criteria for funding programmes do not meet the needs of Supported Employment to provide ongoing support. As E.U. funding decreases the provision of Supported Employment will depend very much on the extent to which it is mainstreamed.

## **3 The SEA Project**

### **3.1 Overall aim and key activities**

**3.1.1** The Supported Employment in Action Project (SEA) is a NI wide project focusing on employment for people with disabilities. The project ultimately aims to identify and communicate gaps in policy and provision to relevant policy makers and Government Departments at local, national and European levels, with a view to ensuring that these are addressed by adopting evidence based best practice relating to Supported Employment. It aims to do this through:

- ◆ reviewing the policies and practices impacting on people with disabilities accessing employment
- ◆ test bedding and examining/researching the Supported Employment model with the involvement of practitioners and beneficiaries
- ◆ undertaking a cost benefit analysis of the Supported Employment model using the Social Return on Investment model
- ◆ exploring policies and practices for people with disabilities, and the Supported Employment model, in other European countries
- ◆ producing a good practice manual
- ◆ disseminating information on findings.
- ◆ using findings to influence policy makers and providers to adopt and promote best practice

- ◆ further explore the model for other socially excluded groups.

## 3.2 Delivery Structures

The key elements of the structure of the SEA project are outlined below:

### 3.2.1 Development Partnership

The SEA Project is being delivered through a Development Partnership which currently involves representation from the Disablement Advisory Service within the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), representation from the Social Security Agency (SSA), representation from the Disability Unit within the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the NI Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE). NIUSE is the Lead Partner on the Development Partnership. It is anticipated that the Development Partnership will also include representation from Supported Employment practitioner organisations and Supported Employment beneficiaries (in early 2006).

- ◆ NIUSE is an umbrella organisation representing organisations and individuals providing vocational training and employment to people with disabilities throughout NI. It is therefore well placed as Lead Partner and its role is to ensure appropriate progress and line manage project staff.
- ◆ The Disablement Advisory Service within DEL is described in more detail in previous sections. The head of the service became involved following approaches made by NIUSE which coincided with DEL's desire to further explore the Supported

Employment model (in response to contacts which DEL had with the voluntary disability sector about employability issues).

- ◆ The Acting Head of Disability, Mental Health and Learning Disability Policy and Legislation within the Disability Unit within DHSSPS became involved following approaches made by NIUSE. The Unit is heavily involved in the Interdepartmental group on Promoting Social Inclusion (which covers employment) and in reviewing/developing a range of strategies relating to disability and is interested in the examination of the Supported Employment model in terms of achieving Government policies and targets relating to inclusion. There have been 2 changes in this post and as a result on the DP.
- ◆ The Assistant Director of Working Age Jobs and Benefits unit within SSA became involved following approaches made by NIUSE (there has since been a personnel change in this post). The SSA is interested in examining the model in line with Government policies relating to moving from benefits into work.

Each of the Departmental representatives perceives the project as an opportunity to research best practice with a view to influencing policy and practice and view their role as one of supporting and advising the project on Government systems and procedures, particularly in relation to what is and is not realistically achievable (given constraints faced by Government). All are keen to learn about best practice through the project, including that identified in other countries.

NIUSE had tried to include Department of Education NI on the Development Partnership, given their role in supporting people with disabilities up until the age of 18 and preparing them for further training and employment. However, they declined the offer to be

involved. Employer's Forum on Disability (NI) were also approached but the deadline for the submission of the Development Partnership Agreement had passed.

In line with EQUAL funding requirements the SEA DP had developed a Partnership Agreement and a Strategic and Delivery Plan outlining its purpose, aims, objectives, activities and costs. The Agreement was developed by NIUSE and circulated to all DP representatives for comment/amendments. This was signed and submitted to PROTEUS by June 30 2005.

The Development Partnership have benefited from support from the Workers Educational Association (WEA NI). DEL and PROTEUS had commissioned facilitation for Development Partnerships from WEA NI. The input was considered very useful and beneficial by SEA DP members and resulted in better understanding of roles and responsibilities within the DP.

### **3.2.2** Project Workplan and Action Plan

**3.2.3** A Project Workplan and a Project Action Plan were developed and outlined the key objectives and associated activities, responsibilities, timeframes and anticipated outputs. The plans are included in the Appendices and outline the following key objectives:

- ◆ Development and facilitation of DP and DP Agreement
- ◆ Establishment and maintenance of sub groups
- ◆ Identification and facilitation of partner member organisations to test bed the Supported Employment

model (10 organisations and 20 beneficiaries), including the development and facilitation of practitioner and beneficiary user groups

- ◆ Establishment of Transnational Partners and Transnational Co-operation Agreement and involvement in all key relevant transnational activity (meetings, visits, etc.)
- ◆ Development of Equal Opportunities and Publicity Strategies
- ◆ Review of policy and practice and identification of gaps in employment policies and practices for people with disabilities
- ◆ Development of Monitoring and Evaluation procedures
- ◆ Exploration of Supported Employment model for other socially disadvantaged groups
- ◆ Production and dissemination of information

### 3.2.4 Transnational Partnership

Under the requirements of EQUAL funding the SEA DP has formed a partnership with Development Partnerships in the Czech Republic, Wales and France. The Transnational Partnership is entitled “Employability United”. Following changes to the original Transnational Partnership (one of the partners, the Netherlands, withdrew), N.I. was nominated to act as Secretariat and as such has taken responsibility for communications and potentially the completion of the transnational evaluation. The aims of the Transnational Partnership are to:

- ◆ examine how other EU countries have mainstreamed Supported Employment
- ◆ explore the use of Supported Employment for other socially excluded groups

In line with EQUAL funding requirements a Transnational Co-operation Agreement has been established.

### 3.2.5 Subgroups

The SEA project will be establishing 3 subgroups in Action 2. Terms of Reference and roles and responsibilities will be developed. The sub groups and their key roles are as follows:

- ◆ Transnational Sub Group - provides guidance in developing and implementing transnational activities
- ◆ Communications Sub Group - provides guidance in developing and implementing a plan that will effectively allow communication between the SEA Project, NIUSE member organisations, all primary and secondary stakeholders and will also co-ordinate communications with the wider general public
- ◆ Equal Opportunities Sub Group - to implement the EO policy and therefore endorse a culture within the SEA project which values people as individuals and in which factors such as disability, sex, age, race and sexual orientation are harnessed to create a productive working environment.

### 3.2.6 Practitioner Focus Group

By the end of 2005, the SEA project will have identified Supported Employment practitioner organisations which will be involved in the research and test bedding of the Supported Employment model as part of the SEA project. At this stage it is likely that 10-15 organisations will be involved. These will include organisations involved on the NIUSE management committee who are (or are potentially) Supported Employment practitioners operating across a range of:

- ◆ disabilities - physical, mental health, learning disability, hidden
- ◆ sectors - community, voluntary and statutory
- ◆ geographical regions - rural and urban
- ◆ Two additional non-NIUSE member organisations will also be involved to ensure a pan-disability approach (to include sensory disabilities).

Representatives from the practitioner organisations involved in the project will be involved in a Practitioner Focus Group which will meet every six weeks and be facilitated by the Project Facilitator (to ensure they are fully involved in helping achieve SEA aims and objectives). One member of the Practitioner Focus Group will be nominated to sit on the Development Partnership and be expected to contribute to the work conducted by the DP and to ensure a two way communication flow with the Practitioner Focus Group. The aim of the Practitioner Focus Group is to assist with cost benefit analysis of Supported Employment and provide input into strategic development of Supported Employment from a practitioners approach. Main activities will include:

- ◆ collecting information on organisational procedures and processes of SE
- ◆ identifying and debating good practice
- ◆ facilitating ongoing communication between member organisations and the group throughout the project
- ◆ identifying socio-economic barriers that restrict individuals with a disability to access, retain and progress within employment and put forward recommendations at a strategic level
- ◆ contributing to the development of good practice and methodology used within SE
- ◆ disseminating findings and cascading learning from group to member organisations and beyond

### 3.2.7 Beneficiary Focus Group

Each of the practitioner organisations selected to be involved in the SEA project will identify 2 beneficiaries (individuals with a disability) currently accessing Supported Employment. The project beneficiaries will participate in a Beneficiary Focus Group, again facilitated by the Project Facilitator, to ensure that they are fully involved in helping achieve SEA aims and objectives. The Focus Group will meet every six weeks and one member of the Focus Group will be nominated to sit on the Development Partnership and be expected to contribute to the DP work and to ensure a two way communication flow. The main aim of the Beneficiary Focus Group is to assist with the strategic development of Supported Employment from the perspective of people with disabilities. The main activities will include:

- ◆ contributing to the collective voice of people with disabilities at policy level
- ◆ identifying good practice within employment and training practices for people with disabilities, in particular in Supported Employment
- ◆ identifying barriers that people with disabilities encounter when seeking work and put forward recommendations to address these

### 3.2.8 SEA Project Staff

Staff employed by NIUSE, as the lead partner, for the project include:

- ◆ a Project Co-ordinator - responsible for
  - the development and management of all aspects of the SEA Project on behalf of the lead partner NIUSE
  - the management of staff and resources of the project
  - the development and implementation of the aims and objectives of the project, including Transnational Partnership Development.
- ◆ a Project Facilitator - to work closely with organisations delivering Supported Employment programmes, collecting primary research for analysis, establishing and providing support to User Groups comprising of practitioners and beneficiaries and organising/delivering relevant training.
- ◆ a Finance and Monitoring Officer - to set up and maintaining financial control systems in line with E.S.F. funding body operational guidelines, and to

provide accurate accounts of expenditure for the duration of the project

- ◆ a Project Administrator -to provide all secretarial and administrative support to the SEA Project Team.

NIUSE, as Lead Partner on the Development Partnership, provide management support to the SEA project staff.

### **3.2.9 Consultancy Support - Social Return on Investment**

The SEA Project has engaged with experts Lodestar in Social Return on Investment models to assist with the cost benefit analysis of Supported Employment (Lodestar have been commissioned to provide the SROI study). The consultant has worked with the Project Co-ordinator to effectively incorporate this element into the planning of the project and will work with the Co-ordinator and Project Facilitator to ensure that this is incorporated into the research and test bedding elements of delivery.

### **3.2.10 EQUAL Structures**

To date project staff have been involved in all key elements of the EQUAL NI and have sought advice and support from PROTEUS and DEL when necessary and appropriate. Staff have also aimed to follow all key PROTEUS guidelines. At this stage it is quite early to comment on the extent to which support has proved appropriate and useful. However the SEA project members have indicated that it would be useful to establish structured fora which will enable all EQUAL projects to learn from each other. The SEA project also envisage involvement in the National Thematic Network and North South Partnership (more

detailed descriptions of these bodies are included in section 2 above).

### 3.3 Costs

3.3.1 The project finances are outlined in the tables below:

#### Action 1 Costs (October 2004 - June 2005)

	Total
Staff costs	9,018
Beneficiary Costs	0
Other costs	13,125
Transnational	1,756
Total	23,899

#### Action 2 costs (budgeted costs)

	July - Dec 2005	Jan - Dec 2006	Jan - June 2007	Total
Staff costs	45,597	98,277	50,930	194,804
Beneficiary Costs	1,650	3,300	1,650	6,600
Other costs	24,333	34,264	20,507	79,104
Transnational	9,050	25,600	13,900	80,630
Total	80,630	161,441	86,987	329,058

The SEA project is obtaining public match funding of £115,171 from DEL

## **4 Appropriateness of Project/Structures**

### **4.1 Overview**

**4.1.1** This section considers the appropriateness of the project in line with the evaluation objectives suggested by PROTEUS, which have been adopted by the SEA Project, and which incorporate the aims, objectives and principles of the EQUAL funding programme, that is:

- ◆ what the project aims to achieve
- ◆ how the project will achieve its aims
- ◆ how results will be applied outside the DP

### **4.2 What will be achieved?**

**4.2.1** Government policy is increasingly focusing on rights and equalities for people with disabilities and on assisting people with disabilities move from benefits into work. Approximately 124,000 people with disabilities are economically inactive, 45,000 of which wish to move into employment (Labour Market research). A range of mainstream support is provided through the Disablement Advisory Service in DEL. However, although the revised Employment Support programme incorporates some elements of Supported Employment models, Supported Employment is not a practice which is widely or consistently adopted across NI. Some organisations in the voluntary and community sector have obtained funding (mostly European Union) to deliver Supported Employment models but, although this is often recognised as good practice in terms of meeting key policy objectives,

there is no widespread clear picture of what Supported Employment is, what it can achieve, how people can benefit and how best it can be delivered.

- 4.2.2** The NI Union for Supported Employment is an umbrella body for organisations practising and/or working towards delivering Supported Employment. It has identified the EQUAL Programme funding as providing an opportunity through which it can identify and communicate policy and provision gaps relating to Supported Employment to relevant policy makers and Government Departments at local, national and European levels, with a view to ensuring that these are addressed by adopting evidence based best practice. It has involved key Government Departments, at strategic level, on the Development Partnership and each of these representatives is also keen to consider well researched findings relating to the benefits of Supported Employment, with a view to ensuring that policies and practice adopted by them incorporate evidenced based best practice. There has been much research on Supported Employment but not NI specific.
- 4.2.3** The project fits within the wider labour market policy context of NI as it aims to ensure that employment opportunities are spread more equally, that concentrations of unemployment among certain groups in society are reduced and that economic inactivity and welfare dependence are reduced. Furthermore, it targets one of the priority groups of the NI EQUAL programme - people with disabilities. The project also aims to identify and highlight innovative approaches to improving employability through the Supported Employment model. In doing so it is innovative, in that it will engage practitioners and beneficiaries in research and test bedding. Also,

it will bring together the key players at strategic level for the first time.

**4.2.4** NIUSE have indicated the vast social and economic benefits of Supported Employment for individuals with disabilities, their families and carers, employers and for society as a whole.

- ◆ for the Individual - providing them with the benefits gained from being in employment such as earnings, skills, relationships, respect, personal development, equal rights
- ◆ for the family/carers of people with disabilities - reducing caring responsibilities
- ◆ for employers - strengthening the recruitment process, supporting job retention, helping to achieve policy objectives relating to inclusion
- ◆ for society - less dependence on benefits, more people with disposable income, reduction in misperceptions/stereotypes about people with disabilities

**4.2.5** The project aims to demonstrate these benefits and ultimately ensure that they are fully realised by embedding Supported Employment within relevant policies and practices. It aims to do this through:

- ◆ research to identify best policies and practices relating to Supported Employment
- ◆ research to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the Supported Employment Model through identification of social return on investment for supported employment and cost benefit analysis

- ◆ empowerment of Supported Employment practitioners and beneficiaries in terms of identifying and articulating need through:
  - involving them in the research and test bedding of Supported Employment models
  - widespread dissemination of information on evidence based best practice
- ◆ collation and dissemination of evidence of successful Supported Employment approaches which can be used to influence policy and practice
- ◆ clarification of frameworks/structures for influencing policy makers and delivery agents (through DP representatives and practitioner and beneficiary focus groups)

**4.2.6** In the long term it is anticipated that this work will result in the adoption of lessons learned into policy and practice which facilitate:

- ◆ people with disabilities reaching their potential and obtaining their rights within an integrated society and effectively moving into sustainable long term employment
- ◆ good employer practice in terms of recruiting and retaining people with disabilities in their workforce
- ◆ reduced benefit dependency

It is also anticipated that the model can be transferable to other socially excluded groups.

**4.2.7** The activities planned by the SEA project at this stage appear to be very appropriate means of achieving the anticipated outcomes. What is important however, is

that the project has adopted the systems to effectively measure the key inputs and outcomes which can demonstrate that Supported Employment is a cost effective way of assisting people with disabilities move into employment. It is helpful that the DP representatives perceive it as their role to work in partnership with NIUSE as the lead partner of the project in doing this and they need to ensure their ongoing commitment to the project in this way. (The recommendations at the end of this report highlight suggestions relating to what should be measured). It is also worth noting that the SEA project has agreed to use the Rickter Scale (as recommended by PROTEUS) to measure the progress of the practitioner and beneficiary user groups. SEA project staff worked with the Rickter Company to establish and agree how the Scale could be adopted accordingly and this in itself has been acknowledged as an innovative approach which could be adopted elsewhere. The issues which Rickter will focus on measuring the extent to which group members participate, influence, add value, increase in confidence, etc.

### **4.3 How aims will be achieved?**

#### Appropriateness of the Partnership

- 4.3.1** The Development Partnership incorporates high level representation from the Disablement Advisory Service within DEL, from the Disability Unit within DHSSPS, from the Social Security Agency, along with representation from Supported Employment Practitioner organisations, Supported Employment beneficiaries and the NIUSE as the lead partner. The DP membership is entirely appropriate:

- ◆ each of the key Government agencies has a remit for policies and practice relating to equal rights for, and integration of, people with disabilities, assisting people with disabilities gain employment and supporting people with disabilities move from welfare dependency into work where appropriate.
  - DEL - provision of support to assist people obtain and maintain employment (as outlined above)
  - DHSSPS - policies and reviews relating to the needs of people with disabilities, particularly in relation to rights and equality and funding of some key services in NI
  - SSA - implementation of the Welfare Reform and Modernisation Programme “work for those who can and support for those who cannot”, some of which involves partnership working with DEL (assisting people in moving from benefits to work)
  
- ◆ each of the Government agency representatives members work at a level which enables them to best advise on policies, procedures and structures which will impact on the delivery of the SEA Project and upon which the outcomes of the SEA Project might have an impact in the future
  
- ◆ As an umbrella organisation for Supported Employment practitioner organisations the NIUSE is well placed to act as Lead Partner and facilitate effective two way information flow
  
- ◆ Practitioner organisation and beneficiary representatives will be in a position to contribute to the project on behalf of the wider sector and will be supported in doing so through the Practitioner and Beneficiary Focus Groups and SEA Project Facilitator

The project had wanted to involve the Department of Education on the Partnership, as they have

responsibility for the education/training of people with disabilities up until the age of 18. NIUSE believed that DE's participation was important in ensuring that the needs of young people with disabilities were best met, particularly in the area of appropriate transitional planning. However, DE declined.

- 4.3.2** This is the first time that the above Government departments have been jointly involved in a project of this kind. Each of the partnership organisations have indicated that their main reason for involvement is to identify how Supported Employment can support in promoting equality for people with disabilities and assist them to gain and sustain employment. Each Partner sees their role as providing realistic strategic advice and support to the project in helping it achieve its objectives. Ultimately, they acknowledge that they will have a role in considering how evidence based best practice (which has been identified through the project) can be used to ensure the best support is available for people with disabilities. However, those partners from Government Departments have also indicated that there are a range of constraints (particularly financial constraints) which may inhibit the extent to which policy and practice can be adopted and they perceive their role as including that of ensuring that those involved in Supported Employment are aware of these constraints. However, all have indicated that they would be happy to support Supported Employment practitioners in influencing policy and provision where possible if it can demonstrate the desired outcomes cost effectively. The Cost Benefit Analysis (Social Return on Investment) is therefore considered a valuable element to the project.

- 4.3.3** The Government agency representatives on the DP have indicated a high level of satisfaction with NIUSE

as the Lead Partner and with the SEA Project staff. They have been very well informed of developments and activities. They have cited discussions on Supported Employment and site visits to Supported Employer practitioners (which are actually Action 2 activities) as very enlightening in terms of increasing their understanding of the issues and on what the project is aiming to achieve. Due to the level at which each of the partners work within each of their own organisations it is difficult for them to become overly involved in operational issues. They appear to be happier to advise and monitor and have no concerns about delivery due to NIUSE's ability to manage a very capable and experienced project team. However, project staff have expressed some concerns about the DP members becoming too distant if they do not attend quarterly meetings/events (attendance at meetings has been variable and only one member attended the Partnership training delivered by WEA, which had been organised with support from PROTEUS). The other concern is that of staff changes within Government agencies and the impacts which this might have on the DP. So far there has already been one staff change within the SSA and 2 within the DHSSPS since the DP Agreement was submitted on 30 June 2005, although this has not had a negative impact.

**4.3.4** The way the project will be delivered, in Action 2, also ensures that other aspects of the EQUAL principles are addressed:

- ◆ **Empowerment.** Practitioner and Beneficiary Focus Groups will be established at the start of 2006 and one representative of each will be nominated to sit on the Development Partnership. It was originally anticipated that there would be 10 such organisations involved, however, it is now likely that 15 will be involved to ensure good representation from NIUSE membership and to pan-disability coverage. Terms of Reference and contracts outlining key roles and responsibilities will be agreed. Throughout the course of the project the Focus Groups will meet every 6 weeks and the Project Facilitator will work with each of groups to assist them in developing capacity to deliver their elements of the project and ensure its aims and objectives are obtained. This element of the project ensures that, not only are the needs/views of practitioners and beneficiaries incorporated into the research and test bedding, but also that there will be an effective two way information flow between policy makers, delivery agents and beneficiaries. During the course of the project, the progress of each of the groups will be measured using the Rickter scale (as agreed with PROTEUS).
  
- ◆ **Transnationality.** Following changes in the Transnational Partnership the SEA Project took on the role of Secretariat. This will involve responsibility for communication between Transnational partners at a partnership level. A Transnational Co-operation Agreement has been established and the SEA project will host the first transnational visit. (Visits will be rotated among partners). It is anticipated that all partners will work towards disseminating information on best practice in terms of policy/provision for Supported Employment and each will host study visits

to facilitate learning. The extent to which this occurs and the added value of the transnational element will be examined through the separate evaluation of the Transnational Partnership which the French partners will be responsible for.

#### **4.4 How will results be applied?**

**4.4.1** In line with EQUAL principles and evaluation guidelines the extent to which the project is likely to result in mainstreaming and transferability will be examined. However, both the NI EQUAL programme as a whole and the SEA project have acknowledged the need to first and foremost define mainstreaming. There has been quite some debate and discussion about this issue within EQUAL N.I., within EQUAL projects (through PROTEUS) and within the SEA Development Partnership and project staff. Acceptable definitions focus on mainstreaming as the concept of incorporating evidence based best practice into policy development and service provision (within resource constraints).

**4.4.2** The SEA project aims to examine how the Supported Employment model can cost effectively address barriers faced by people with disabilities in terms of their obtaining and maintaining employment. (These barriers may range from personal barriers such as the difficulties in travelling to work to structural barriers such as the benefits trap). Ultimately therefore mainstreaming as a result of this project might range from tweaking elements of existing provision to incorporating lessons learned from evidence based best practice, to widespread lobbying about structural issues which require a lot more effort to change.

**4.4.3** Within the SEA project the Development Partnership members were approached with the view that ultimately they would be in a position to influence policy and provision relating to equality for people with disabilities and assisting people with disabilities obtain and maintain employment. If the activities of the SEA project highlighted positive benefits associated with Supported Employment then Development Partnership members could either effectively lobby (particularly in the case of the soon to be established practitioner and beneficiary representatives and associated Focus groups) and influence policy and provision to incorporate the lessons learned. As noted above, the representatives from each Government Department are well placed to do this in so far as they can. All are interested in the findings of the project and willing to provide realistic advice in terms of what is or is not possible and what it is or is not appropriate in terms of activities, outcomes, monitoring, measuring and ultimately mainstreaming. All have been very frank about what are realistic mainstreaming expectations. All DP representatives are willing to provide information to the project which can help monitor and evaluate its effectiveness where possible

**4.4.4** Although it is anticipated that the project will highlight a range of soft outcomes in terms of how the Supported Employment model impacts on practitioners and beneficiaries, as well as hard outcomes in terms of people with disabilities moving into long term sustainable “real work” the DP recognises the necessity of demonstrating value for money and savings to the economy. Given budgetary constraints they have strongly highlighted the message that, unless the approach can demonstrate at least a neutral return on investment (along with the soft outcomes) or prove more cost effective than existing provision, it is unlikely that aspects of

Supported Employment will be adopted within, or added to, existing provision. DEL's incorporation of some aspects of Supported Employment models into the revised Employment Support programme has indicated that they are willing to incorporate good practice into delivery models where this is available. Lessons learned from the SEA project are therefore likely to be of great interest.

- 4.4.5** In Action 2, the practitioner and beneficiary focus groups which will be facilitated by SEA project staff and will also provide a forum where evidence based best practice can be discussed and disseminated. This should serve a dual purpose of enabling practitioners and beneficiaries to influence service providers at a local level and effectively lobby at a more strategic level. However, this should be managed to ensure that such lobbying is both unified and informed. The fact that such information will also be disseminated to NIUSE members should ensure that a wide range of organisations and individuals will ultimately benefit.
- 4.4.6** In addition SEA project will use the EQUAL structures such as National Thematic Networks to disseminate and acquire information.
- 4.4.7** One of the aims of the project is to consider the extent to which the model can be transferred to other socially disadvantaged groups. This will be considered throughout the research and through the Transnational links. PROTEUS is also holding a mainstreaming event for all funded EQUAL projects in early 2006.

## **5 Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

- 5.1.1** The Supported Employment model fits well with key legislation and policies relating to the promotion of equal rights and inclusion for people with disabilities and assisting them in obtaining and maintaining employment. In NI there are approximately 45,000 people with disabilities who want to work. Although acknowledged as a useful mechanism to provide employment for people with disabilities, Supported Employment has not been delivered in a widespread and consistent manner across NI. The NIUSE recognised the opportunity to review and examine the Supported Employment model through the funding available under the EQUAL programme. A proposal was developed and key representatives from the relevant Government departments were approached to be involved in the Development Partnership.
- 5.1.2** The SEA project is a NI wide project which aims to identify and communicate gaps in policy and provision to relevant policy makers and Government Departments at local, national and European levels with a view to ensuring that these are addressed by adopting evidence based best practice relating to Supported Employment. It aims to do this through aims which are detailed in Sections 1.1.2 and 3.1.
- 5.1.3** Not only does the project aim to address key issues for people with disabilities in terms of supporting them to obtain their full potential and participate in the labour market, it also fits with the wider labour market policies of ensuring that employment opportunities are spread more equally, that concentrations of

unemployment among certain groups in society are reduced and that economic inactivity and welfare dependence are reduced. Its structure and delivery mechanisms ensure participation of those involved in policy making (through appropriate representation at DP level), and participation of those involved in delivering and benefiting from Supported Employment models (through the Practitioner and Beneficiary Focus groups). SEA project staff have the skills and expertise necessary to ensure effective project delivery and to provide support to all project participants. NIUSE is well placed as Lead Partner and its links with most of the main organisations involved in Supported Employment (through NIUSE membership) will help ensure appropriate dissemination of findings. The project is also keen to learn from EU partners in France, Wales and the Czech Republic.

#### 5.1.4 The project meets the EQUAL principles

- ◆ **Partnership** - the whole ethos of the programme focuses on partnership between relevant organisations in NI at strategic level (the DP) and at operational level (focus groups) and partnership with other countries in Europe (Transnational Co-operation Agreement).
- ◆ **Innovation** - the SEA project seeks to identify what is happening in N.I. and elsewhere with a view to learning from good practice and incorporating learning into existing/new approaches rather than doing something innovative for the sake of innovation. What is innovative however, is the fact that this is the first time that the key Government Department representatives have been brought together to jointly work on a project aiming to assist people with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment

by identifying the barriers they face and examining how best to overcome them. While the establishment of the project is therefore innovative, tackling structural factors rather than the more commonly addressed personal factors could also be considered innovative.

- ◆ **Equal Opportunities** - the whole project focuses on equal opportunities. The project has developed an Equal Opportunities policy as part of the DP Agreement.
- ◆ **Transnational Co-operation** - The SEA Project is the Secretariat for the Transnational Partnership and has been heavily involved in the establishment of the Transnational Co-operation Agreement.
- ◆ **Mainstreaming** - the whole purpose of the project is to identify good practice relating to Supported Employment with a view to encouraging mainstreaming and influencing policies and strategies. There will be much discussion and debate about the definition of mainstreaming. This will prove useful for some DP members. Ultimately it will focus on incorporating evidence based best practice into policies and provision (taking into consideration resource implications). Mainstreaming could range from tweaking existing provision to lobbying in relation to wider structural issues. The DP members have indicated that they see their role as ensuring that the project remains realistic in terms of what can and cannot be “mainstreamed” and also to ensure that the project measures the appropriate inputs, outcomes and impacts to be able to demonstrate the benefits of Supported Employment with an emphasis on the cost:benefit elements, especially given the financial constraints which Government departments face and competition for resources. The SEA project has included cost benefit analysis within the project and has engaged appropriate professionals to work

with them on this element. NIUSE and project staff are also keen to ensure that key elements of good practice (particularly in relation to the soft outcomes) are incorporated into mainstream provision where possible

- ◆ **Empowerment** - the project focuses on empowering practitioner organisations and beneficiaries and this will be facilitated through the Focus Groups and DP and support provided by the Project Facilitator.

**5.1.5** In the long term it is anticipated that this work will result in the adoption of lessons learned into policy and practice, and to mainstream Supported Employment, which in turn will result in:

- ◆ people with disabilities reaching their potential and obtaining their rights within an integrated society and effectively moving into sustainable long term employment with ongoing support
- ◆ good employer practice in terms of recruiting and retaining people with disabilities in their workforce
- ◆ reduced benefit dependency

It is also anticipated that the model can be adapted and transferred to other socially excluded groups.

**5.1.6** The activities and structure of project are appropriate in terms of achieving the anticipated outcomes. What is most important however, is that the project has adopted systems to effectively measure the key inputs and outcomes which can measure whether Supported Employment is a cost effective way of supporting people with disabilities in realising their full potential and rights and move into employment.

## 5.2 Recommendations

### 5.2.1 The Evaluation

5.2.2 As Action 2 commences it would seem appropriate to highlight how the project should be evaluated externally.

5.2.3 Ultimately the project is aiming to demonstrate the effectiveness of Supported Employment in relation to people with disabilities accessing and staying in work, with a view to ensuring the model is mainstreamed when possible and where appropriate. To do this it aims to:

- ◆ increase understanding and awareness of how the barriers faced by people with disabilities impact on them in terms of accessing and staying in employment
- ◆ demonstrate the effectiveness (including the cost effectiveness) of Supported Employment
- ◆ raise awareness of Supported Employment and its benefits within the disability sector and at a strategic policy level; and with organisations representing the interests of other disadvantaged groups
- ◆ empower people with disabilities and those working within the disability sector to interface effectively with key strategic bodies to ensure Supported Employment is adopted where appropriate
- ◆ develop structures and partnerships
  - through which the benefits of Supported Employment can be highlighted and promoted

- which can be used to influence policy and provision

**5.2.4** In assessing the extent to which the project has met its key aims it is recommended that the following be measured and monitored (in no particular order of importance):

### **Inputs**

- ◆ time/resources dedicated to the SEA project, by:
  - project staff
  - DP members
  - focus group participants and their organisations
  - others involved in delivery such as researchers, consultants, translators, etc.
  - other relevant organisations
- ◆ costs associated with the delivery of the SEA project

*This includes a breakdown in terms of the amount of time and resources and costs which are dedicated to*

- *project activity*
- *the Transnational element*
- *fulfilling the requirements of the EQUAL programme*

### **Outputs**

- ◆ project documentation
  - mainstreaming strategy and associated activities
  - communications strategy
  - other briefing papers, publications, reports, etc.

- Equal Opportunities strategy
- ◆ the number of practitioner organisations and beneficiaries involved in a project which assists these key stakeholders to better understand Supported Employment, learn from each other, adopt Supported Employment, promote Supported Employment and influence others about Supported Employment. This includes consideration of:
  - type of practitioner organisation involved, job title of representative involved, etc.
  - beneficiary background - age, disability experiences, skills/qualifications, employment history, other relevant personal circumstances, etc.
- ◆ the collation of research findings which identify the impacts of the barriers faced by people with disabilities in terms of accessing and staying in employment, e.g.
  - the impacts of structural barriers such as
    - policy and legislation
    - the application of policy and legislation
    - the availability and accessibility of support
    - the benefits trap
  - the impacts of social barriers such as
    - the attitudes of employers, service providers, people with disabilities themselves, society as a whole
  - the impacts of personal barriers such as
    - how skills/knowledge relate to employer needs
    - knowledge of support available
    - issues relating to disability

- other personal issues/circumstances
- ◆ the collation of research findings which help improve understanding of Supported Employment, which can demonstrate how the Supported Employment model can effectively address barriers to employment (including cost effectiveness) and which can ultimately be used to influence policy makers and service providers. Research findings are likely to demonstrate:
  - the extent to which Supported Employment supports people move into employment (including the type of employment gained)
  - the extent to which Supported Employment supports people stay in work (including length of time beneficiaries stay in employment)
  - the extent to which Supported Employment addresses the attitudes of employers, people with disabilities, etc.
  - the extent to which Supported Employment supports people with disabilities develop the skills required by employers (practical/vocational and personal skills)
  - the extent to which Supported Employment helps address other issues faced by people with disabilities which affect their ability to access and stay in work (e.g. confidence and self esteem, social isolation, knowledge of support available and ability to access it, etc.)
  - the extent to which Supported Employment helps address other barriers identified through the research element of the SEA project
  - other benefits of Supported Employment such as:
    - impacts on family life
    - development of relationships/friendships

- better recruitment and retention by employers
  - inclusive workforce
  - higher levels of productivity
  - more people moving off benefits
  - higher levels of disposable income, etc.
- ◆ the collation of research findings which highlight the costs and benefits associated with Supported Employment (with comparisons) - examined through the Social Return on Investment element of the project
  - ◆ the dissemination of research and project findings to inform key stakeholders about Supported Employment and its benefits:
    - people with disabilities,
    - disability support sector (Government departments and agencies, community and voluntary sector)
    - employability support sector (Government departments and agencies, community and voluntary sector)
    - service providers and commissioners (Government departments and agencies, voluntary and community sector)
    - policy makers (Government departments and agencies)
    - Trade Unions and employer organisations
  - ◆ the collation of examples of partnership working in terms of working towards achieving project aims:
    - at DP level
    - at Transnational Partnership level
    - within and between beneficiary and practitioner groups

- with other key stakeholders
- ◆ the development of structures and partnerships through which:
  - knowledge/findings in relation to Supported Employment can be shared within the disability employment sector and other key stakeholders
  - service providers and policy makers can be influenced
- ◆ the identification of lessons learned from Transnational partners in relation to:
  - the effectiveness of Supported Employment for other socially disadvantaged groups
  - the resource requirements and costs associated with Supported Employment
  - raising awareness of Supported Employment
  - how to empower people with disabilities and organisations providing Supported Employment
  - how to influence service providers and policy makers
- ◆ the transfer of the model to other marginalised groups/sectors such as women returners, asylum seekers, migrant workers, black and minority ethnic people, “status zero” young people, travellers, ex-prisoners

### Outcomes

- ◆ Key stakeholders (people with disabilities, disability support sector, employability support sector, service providers and commissioners, policy makers) will be more aware of:
  - how barriers faced by people with disabilities impact on their gaining and sustaining employment

- the costs and benefits associated with Supported Employment
- ◆ People with disabilities and those providing Supported Employment will be able to better interface with and influence service providers and policy makers
- ◆ Policy makers and service providers will consider adopting Supported Employment models based on evidence based research findings
- ◆ Service provision and or policy will have changed as a result of the SEA project
- ◆ the Supported Employment model will be transferred to other marginalised groups/sectors such as women returners, asylum seekers, ethnic minorities, status zero, travellers, ex-prisoners

**5.2.5** The evaluation will also consider the effectiveness of the following in terms of achieving the above aims:

- ◆ management and administrative processes
- ◆ appropriateness and quality of research
- ◆ appropriateness of targeting and methods used for dissemination of findings
- ◆ effectiveness of focus groups - beneficiaries and organisations involved in providing Supported Employment
- ◆ partnership working
- ◆ Transnational elements
- ◆ appropriate adoption of findings and lessons learned

**5.2.6** All those involved in project delivery will have a role in keeping records to demonstrate the inputs, outputs and outcomes above. The external evaluator will use these records to assess the extent to which the project has obtained its objectives in addition to undertaking consultation with key stakeholders. Some of the outcomes may be realised during the course of the project, and some will be realised beyond the life of the project. This will be taken into consideration during the evaluation.

**5.2.7** The Development Partnership

**5.2.8** Project staff recognise the position of DP members, but have expressed some concern at maintaining participation levels by DP members at key events and meetings. It must be recognised that those involved in the Development Partnership are working at a senior level in their organisations and inevitably busy. Perhaps their most important role in the project relates to advice, guidance, providing information for research and monitoring and assisting project staff to obtain and access appropriate contacts within each Department. These priority roles will best be achieved if members' time is utilised effectively. To this end, it is recommended that DP members should be asked to prioritise attendance at quarterly meetings. Briefing information and updates for DP members should be kept concise and relevant to their role and, unless essential, should not incorporate detailed operational details. By best utilising this valuable time, members should feel able to commit to areas where their input is essential.

## 6 Appendices

### 6.1 EQUAL Projects - Round 2

Cresco Trust - Key Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assist integration into employment for those that are hard to employ,</li> <li>- Enhance progression of those in low paid employment without skills to develop their potential/integrate</li> <li>- Engage employers who have the capacity to offer employment</li> </ul>
Disability Action - Diversity Works Project	Examine the different forms of discrimination relating to men, women, black, ethnic minority communities, people with disabilities, young people, old people, and carers and the lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgendered community
Fermanagh College - South West Learning Partnership	Examine ways of facilitating access and overcoming barriers to employment for those who are homebound, in particular those with caring responsibilities and the disabled
NIACRO - Reach Out Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effect labour market entry of those with a history of custody</li> <li>- To impact on mainstream policy</li> <li>- To influence policy makers in the targeting of resources</li> </ul>
North Belfast Partnership Board - Employability Access Programme	Pilot and evaluate how human resource policy and practices in local health trusts and local government can be developed to increase access to jobs, within these sectors, for people who are furthest from the labour market
NIUSE - Supported Employment in Action project	Aims to address the barriers faced by people with disabilities by bringing together a partnership of key stakeholders and policy makers to strategically review existing social and economic policies and practices relating to people with disabilities

Orchardville Society - Employment for Autism Project	Bring together key stakeholders to work alongside people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder to develop a programme of support and training to enable them to tackle the specific barriers they face in accessing employment
Simon Community - Engage project	Link with key sectors to examine how the employment needs of the homeless people can be best addressed and to develop a sustainable model of est practice for promoting pathways to employment and social inclusion of homeless people
Action for Real Change - Promoting Opportunities for Inclusion in Social Care Employment (POISE)	Explore staff recruitment and retention issues in the care sector in NI focusing initially on the North Down and Ards, North and West Belfast areas with a view to mainstreaming its findings throughout NI
Aspire Micro Loans - Women in Rural Areas and Investment in Self Employment (WRAISE)	Develop an innovative methodology for supporting women in rural areas to start and run their own businesses successfully, using Credit Unions as a base to form peer support groups which will empower women to access mentoring, training and finance for flexible self employment and help to combat attitudes that inhibit their entry into the progress within self employment
Belfast City Council - Women Into Non-traditional Sectors (WINS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake research to identify means to combat attitudes that inhibit women's entry into and progression within partner organisations</li> <li>- Provide an empowerment programme for 40 women as a means of developing employability</li> <li>- provide and employment taster for 40 women (results will help support the integration of women into non traditional</li> </ul>

	<p>employment through adoption of new working practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Influence policy at local, national and European level through the dissemination of results</li> </ul>
Gingerbread NI - Possibilities Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the obstacles which inhibit lone parent entry into the labour market and lead to economic inactivity</li> <li>- Review current interventions aimed at improving lone parents access to employment and enhancing employability</li> <li>- Identify gaps in provision &amp; make recommendations for the development of appropriate responses</li> <li>- Demonstrate ways in which existing interventions can become more effective through additionality, mainstreaming and interagency work</li> <li>- Highlight existing models of good practice and pilot an innovative model of community based intervention which can be replicated</li> <li>- Disseminate and recommend the replication and mainstreaming of effective policy and practice domestically, transitionally and on a cross border basis</li> </ul>
Triax Taskforce - Helios Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To develop a review of training practice and the barriers women experience attempting entry into non traditional trades</li> <li>- to devise and awareness programme for construction trades tutors involved in training women</li> <li>- to work with DEL to review government policies regarding apprenticeship workplace requirements</li> </ul>

## **6.2 Action 1- Work Plan**

### **6.3 Action 2 - Action Plan**

OBJECTIVES	KEY ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
o1 To support and maintain SEA Project Development Partnership	o2 Quarterly meetings o3 Regularly monitor and review of aims and objectives (Action Plan)	o4 NIUSE	o5 Ongoing	o1 Cohesive and productive working partnership o1 Aims and objective of the project achieved
o6 To establish and maintain D.P. sub-groups (Communication, Equal Opportunities and Transnational)	o7 Quarterly meetings o8 Draft terms of reference for sub-groups o9 Identify Partners and Chairpersons o10 Feedback from sub-groups Chairperson to D.P. at quarterly meetings	o11 All Partners	o12 Ongoing	o2 Achieve sub-group aims and objectives
o13 To test-bed the model of Supported Employment as a possible mainstream model of employment for people with disabilities	o14 Identify 10 organisations and 20 beneficiaries to participate in the cost-benefit analysis o15 Collection of data for research (cost-benefit analysis) o16 To provide training on Supported Employment to practitioners	o17 NIUSE	o18 Months 1-3  o19 Months 3-24  o20 Months 1- 24	o3 Empowerment of Beneficiaries (people with disabilities and Practitioners) to participate in Cost Benefit Analysis of SE o4 Statistical Evidence to support the Cost Benefit of the SE model. o5 High quality Supported Employment training packages

OBJECTIVES	KEY ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
<p>o21 To develop and maintain Transnational Co-operation</p>	<p>o22 Organise and host transnational meetings and exchange visits (6 visits)</p> <p>o1 Benchmark policies and practices on employment opportunities for people with disabilities and other socially disadvantaged groups</p>	<p>o23 NIUSE/Transnational Sub-Group</p>	<p>o24 Months 1-24</p>	<p>o6 Exchange of knowledge and skills</p> <p>o7 Best practice in employment opportunities for people with disabilities</p>
<p>o8 To establish and develop beneficiaries (individuals and practitioners) user groups</p>	<p>o25 Establish and provide ongoing support to beneficiaries user groups</p>	<p>o26 NIUSE</p>	<p>o27 Months 1-24</p>	<p>o28 Empowerment of people with disabilities and practitioners to influence all aspects of the projects</p>
<p>o29 To strategically review and identify gaps in employment policies and practices for people with disabilities</p>	<p>o30 Research current employment policies and practices</p> <p>o31 Collate information</p> <p>o32 Produce briefing documents</p>	<p>o33 All Partners</p>	<p>o34 Months 1-6</p>	<p>o9 A comprehensive overview on Employment Policies and Practices on employment</p> <p>o10 Identified gaps in provision</p> <p>o11 Models of best practice in Supported Employment</p>

OBJECTIVES	KEY ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
<p>o35 To monitor and evaluate the D.P. activities and outcomes</p>	<p>o36 Establish mechanism for internal monitoring and evaluating</p> <p>o37 Recruit an external evaluator for the life time of the project</p>	<p>o38 NIUSE / Equal Opportunities Sub-Group</p>	<p>o39 Months 1-3</p> <p>o40 Months 1-24</p>	<p>o12 Core monitoring and evaluation methods in compliance with Equal Guidelines</p> <p>o13 Appoint external Evaluator</p>
<p>o41 To explore the model of Supported Employment for other social disadvantaged groups</p>	<p>o42 Identify other social disadvantaged groups and common issues regarding accessing and staying in employment</p> <p>o43 Engage with organisations representing other social disadvantaged groups</p> <p>o44 Benchmarking with other EU countries</p>	<p>o45 All Partners</p>	<p>o46 Months 1-24</p>	<p>o14 Potential mainstreaming the model of Supported Employment for other social disadvantaged groups</p>
<p>o47 To produce and disseminate information</p>	<p>o48 Develop a Communication Strategy</p> <p>o49 Circulate information on a regular and timely basis</p> <p>o50 Ensure information is available in accessible formats</p>	<p>o51 NIUSE / Communication Sub-Group</p>	<p>o52 Months 1-3</p> <p>o53 Ongoing</p> <p>o54 Ongoing</p>	<p>o15 Communications Strategy implemented</p> <p>o16 Key stakeholders informed of the outcomes of the project</p> <p>o17 Information accessible to all key stakeholders</p>

OBJECTIVES	KEY ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
o55 To support and develop SEA Project staff and financial resources	o56 Induction of Project Staff (Facilitator, Finance and Monitoring Officer and Project Administrator) o57 Staff supervision and support o58 Financial resources monitored and reviewed	o59 NIUSE  o60 NIUSE	o61 Months 1-3 o62 Ongoing  o63 Ongoing	o18 Project staff inducted o19 Implementation of the project o20 Financial resources in line with agreed budget



*Williamson Consulting, 244 Kingsway, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 9AE*  
*Tel: (028) 9062 5511 Fax: (028) 9062 3635*  
*E mail: [info@williamsonconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@williamsonconsulting.co.uk)*