

Special EU Programmes Body



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Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE
Special EU Skemes Boadie

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

www.seupb.eu

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This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2019 and March 2020

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

- 1 In 2019-20, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

The SEUPB currently manages EU funded cross border Programmes PEACE IV and INTERREG VA (2014-2020) between Northern Ireland, Ireland and Western Scotland. These Programmes commenced funding projects in 2016-17 and are now approaching the end of their life-cycle.

Project applicants in both programmes were required to demonstrate in their business plan how their project would make a contribution towards the horizontal principle of equality, with a focus on equality between men and women and people with disabilities. The applicants received a guide to completing their business plan which included the questions to be addressed under this horizontal principle. The SEUPB also organised seminars to assist potential applicants in designing their projects to meet the requirements of the horizontal principle.

Within the Peace IV Programme Cross border co-operation has been encouraged. In all cases, including those projects implemented on a single jurisdiction basis, the projects have had to demonstrate how they will effectively ensure participation from all communities in their activities. To demonstrate how they would meet these aims, the projects had to show the following in their application:

- To what extent is the project likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group as a result of the proposed project?
- Show that there has been meaningful consultation with key target groups in drawing together the project.

As in previous rounds of funding, equality of participation in the Programme Monitoring Committees for the 2014-2020 PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes was encouraged in accordance with the provisions of the Structural Funds Regulations. In seeking members to these committees SEUPB highlighted to nominating bodies that “the Programme Monitoring Committee should be appointed having due regard for the principles for equality (as stated in Article 7 of Regulation 1303/2013) and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act”.

During the reporting period, a new programme PEACE PLUS (2021-27) was drafted and is now in the advanced stages of preparation and SEUPB is ready to launch a formal consultation on its content. The aim is that the PEACE PLUS Programme will contribute to a more peaceful, prosperous and stable society in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, and will leave a lasting legacy. The programme will achieve this by funding activities that promote

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peace and reconciliation and contribute to cross-border economic and territorial development. It will build upon previous PEACE and INTERREG Programmes.

The SEUPB, as the responsible Body for the development of the PEACE PLUS Programme is required to ensure that equality is promoted within the Programme. In addition, specifically related to Northern Ireland, as a designated public authority under Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the SEUPB has a statutory obligation to promote both equality of opportunity and good relations.

It should be noted that there are specific horizontal principles on equality which are stipulated by the European Commission under EU Programme including PEACE PLUS and applications under the Programme will be assessed against these requirements.

In relation to PEACE PLUS, the Programme Development process is supported by a Programme Development Steering Group (PDSG) comprising of a broad range of representatives and experts which meets on a regular basis to provide guidance and advice to the SEUPB. The PDSG membership includes: Member State officials, economic, social and environmental partners, non-governmental organisations, social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination, government departments; and local government representatives.

Again, as with previous programmes, equality of participation in the Programme Monitoring Committees for PEACE PLUS will be encouraged in accordance with the provisions of the Structural Funds Regulations.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2019-20 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

With regards to community background, action measures were previously developed due to a lower than expected number of applications for job opportunities from applicants from one community background. These action measures were drawn from an Affirmative Action Plan agreed with the Equality Commission and then included as part of the SEUPB Section 75 Inequalities Action Plan. The measures included placing a welcoming statement to attract applications from said community background for vacancies within SEUPB. There were approximately 15 external recruitment exercises which took place during the reporting period 2019-20. Although there remains an under-representation in applicants from the said community background, analysis of the equal opportunities monitoring data shows that the affirmative action programme continues to have a positive impact with sustained increases in the number of applications from this community background for vacancies within SEUPB.

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3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No (go to Q.4) Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

Other *(please specify and give details):*

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

- 4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*
- Yes, organisation wide
 - Yes, some departments/jobs
 - No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
 - No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
 - Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- 5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*
- Yes, organisation wide
 - Yes, some departments/jobs
 - No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
 - No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
 - Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- 6 In the 2019-20 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*
- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
 - Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
 - Yes, in some departments/jobs

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- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2019-20 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2019-20 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

1. New panel members on recruitment panels trained in line with best practice. In addition all recruitment panels have a cross community representation, consist of male and female members and, where feasible, include an independent member from outside the body.
2. Continue to mainstream equality and good relations in the body. Encouraging funding applications from the different section 75 categories. Recruitment advertisements carry a welcome statement to community background who are currently under-represented in the workforce.
3. Monthly monitoring of policies screened throughout the organisation which are then reported on quarterly.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2019-20 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

N/A

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2019-20 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

- All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2019-20 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

A total of 16 separate events were held in each county in the Border Counties of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Given the high population centres based in Derry-Londonderry and Belfast, it was agreed to hold two events in each of these areas. In order to maximise numbers from the general public it was agreed that all events would be held from 6pm-8pm, (with an additional 2pm-4pm session for the Belfast and Derry-Londonderry events). One of the key requisites of venue selection was disability access, along with public transport access for the larger events, held in Belfast and Derry-Londonderry. In promoting the event the SEUPB committed to making all of the consultation materials available in different languages and formats including easy-read, large-print, audio and braille, upon request. Sign language interpretation was also available for all events, upon request. This was requested and provided at a consultation event held in the Guildhall, Derry- Londonderry.

12 In the 2019-20 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other *(please specify)*:

PART A

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

The screening process of the new programme PEACE PLUS began during this reporting period but is ongoing and the outcome has not yet been published. This will be done as part of the formal consultation process which has yet to take place. SEUPB have engaged the services of John Kremer to assist with the screening of the Programme.

15 Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year *(as recorded in screening reports)*:

1

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2019-20:

0	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
0	Consultations for an EQIA alone.

PART A

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2019-20 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

No examples were identified during the 2019-20 reporting year that have shown changes to differential/adverse impacts.

- 23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

Ongoing equality monitoring of the Peace IV and INTERREG VA Programmes has continued throughout the lifetime of the programmes. Equal opportunities monitoring of job applicants and appointees for SEUPB job vacancies, which helps to inform the impact of the Affirmative Action plan, is ongoing.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2019-20, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

N/A

- 25** Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Newly appointed Bullying and Harassment Officers received training alongside existing Bullying & Harassment Officers in May 2019.

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2019-20, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

N/A

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2019-20?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The next review of SEUPB's Equality Scheme is due in 2021.

29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? (*please provide details*)

Over 2020/21, SEUPB's Disability Action Plan was reviewed, a draft put out for public consultation and a final plan for the period 2020-2025 was adopted in December 2020. The outcome and details will be reported in the Annual Progress Report 2020/21.

The PEACE PLUS Programme (2021-2027) will go out for formal public consultation during the next reporting period. As part of PEACE PLUS, there will be a requirement for equality to be considered as a horizontal principle within the Programme as part of the assessment process for projects further down the line, and this requirement will be reported on in future Equality Progress Reports.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2020-21) reporting period? (*please tick any that apply*)

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same

PART A

Other (please state):

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:

2

Fully achieved

3

Partially achieved

0

Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	SEUPB has limited opportunity to directly encourage disabled people to apply for/participate in public life positions other than becoming an employee of the Body. However when seeking volunteers for SEUPB's Programme Monitoring Committees/Steering Committees and Independent Review Panels the Body will encourage other agencies who forward these individuals, to promote the participation of disabled people in public life.	Higher participation of disabled people in public life.	Disability issues are mainstreamed and therefore are considered at all stages of the decision-making processes. This is ongoing.
Regional ^{iv}			
Local ^v			

PART B

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	<p>When hosting internal or external events ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations, hand outs and promotional materials are easily readable; <p>Signage is clear;</p>	Any location used by SEUPB will undergo an accessibility inspection	Any issues identified will be rectified before proceeding with the event or alternative locations will be sought.
2			

PART B

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others**’ to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1			
2			

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Provide specialist training for all staff and external panel members involved in recruitment and selection panels on their disability duties.	Numbers of panel members who receive specialist training	Ensures panel members have an up-to-date knowledge of disability issues and an understanding of current legislation	Is an ongoing process as and when recruitment exercises occur.

PART B

2	SEUPB will not discriminate on the grounds of disability when providing opportunities for training and will make any reasonable adjustments necessary to facilitate the training of disable employees.	Data will be collected relating to the uptake of training and other benefits of determine the level of participation by disabled employees.	Ensures that the body is aware of employees' needs and acts upon them appropriately.	Data collection is an ongoing process for training plan
3	Work with funded projects to promote positive images of people with disabilities.	Number of photographs/images of people with disabilities in both SEUPB and projects, corporate publications, on social media and on websites.	Encourages people with disabilities to participate in project activities. Such imagery also removes pre-conceived perceptions of the capabilities of people with disabilities.	Ongoing training being provided by Communications Manager.

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1		
2		

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

Progress against targets are discussed at Management Team meetings and issues are reported through to quarterly Senior Management Meetings. This allows for implementation to be discussed and any risks to be identified, recorded and addressed.

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(b) Quantitative

Monitoring arrangements are ongoing for collecting equality data from projects. Equality monitoring of applicants and appointees to SEUPB continue to be monitored across all Section 75 categories.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

No

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

PART B

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

Over 2020/21, SEUPB's Disability Action Plan was reviewed, a draft put out for public consultation and a final plan for the period 2020-2025 was adopted in December 2020. The outcome and details will be reported in the Annual Progress Report 2020/21.

ⁱ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

ⁱⁱⁱ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

^{iv} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

^v **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.