

A programme of ideas for counteracting
discrimination and exclusion in working life



Equal

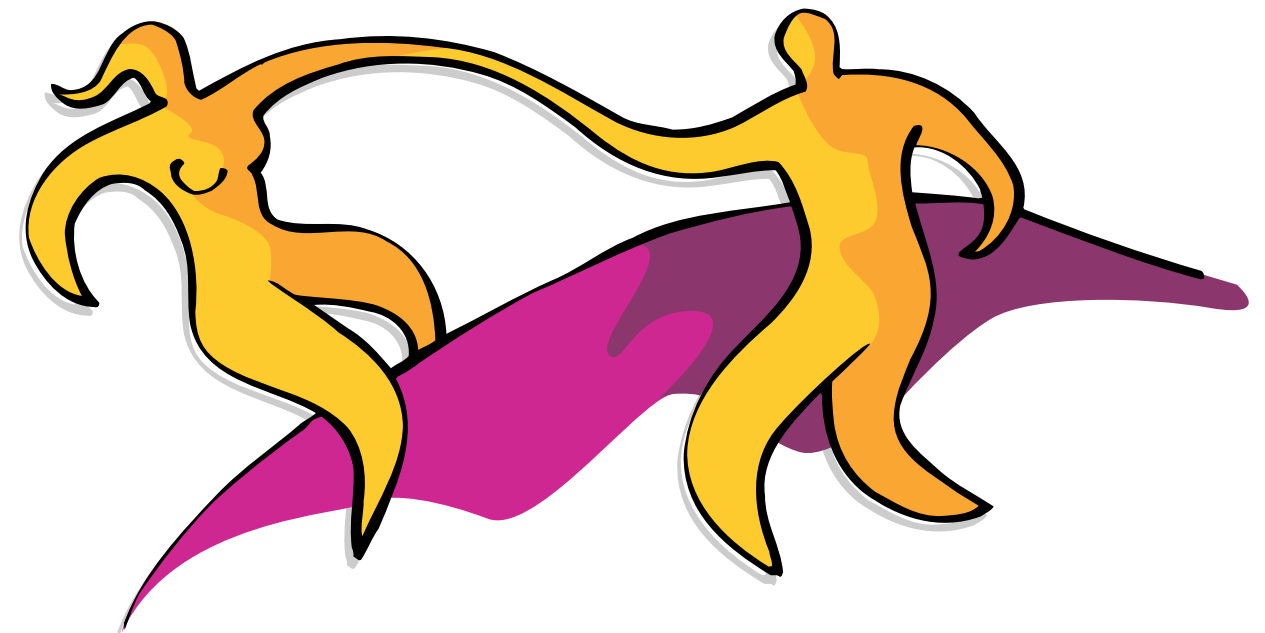
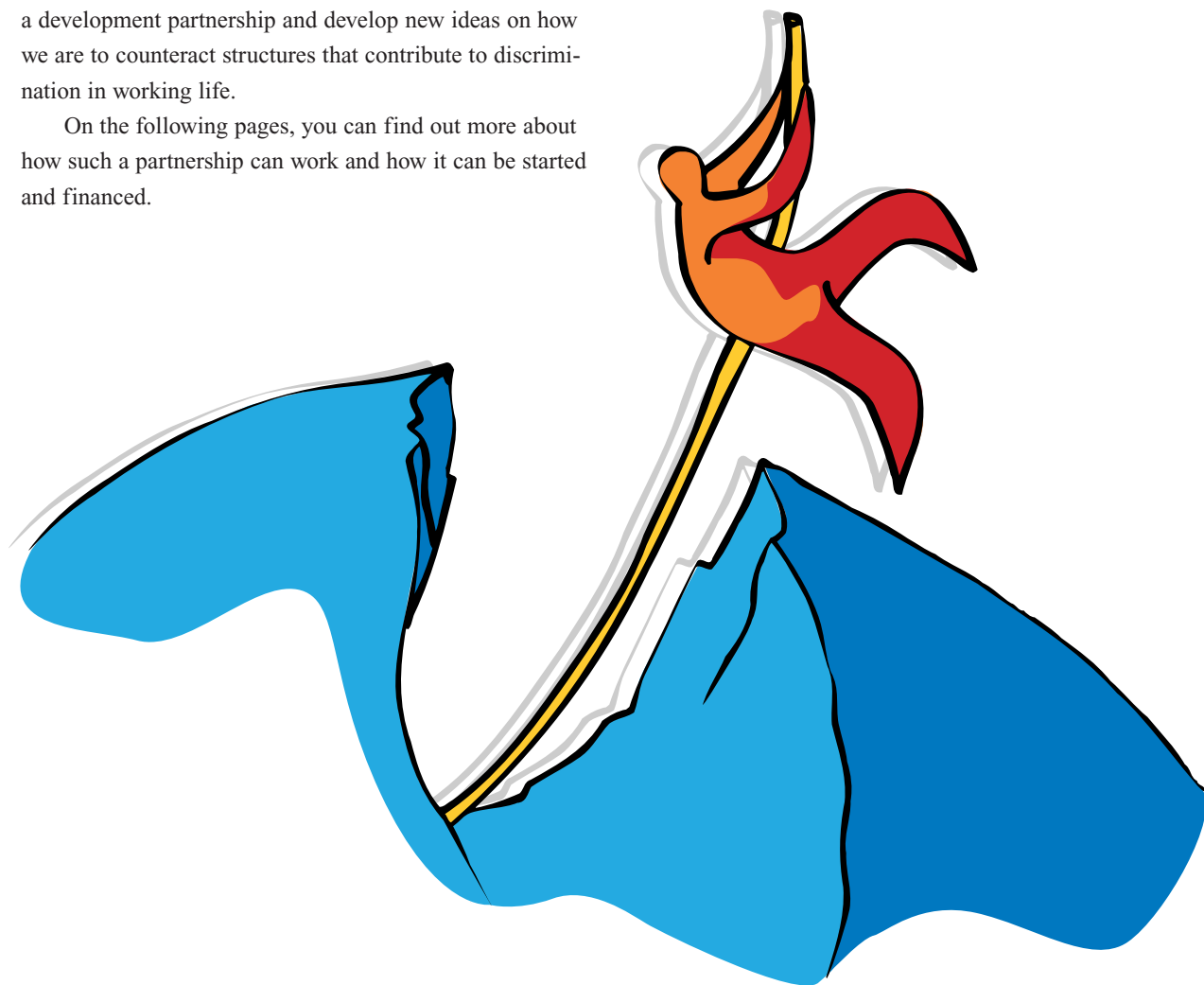
What is Equal?

By means of the European Social Fund, the Svenska ESF-Rådet (the Swedish European Social Fund Council) manages the Equal programme. It provides financial support to collaborations, so-called development partnerships, that work to combat discrimination and exclusion in working life.

The overall objective of Equal in Sweden is to promote working life without discrimination and inequality which is characterised by diversity. Each individual's skills and capacity for development are to be made use of to the full, regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or disability.

Equal requires a new way of thinking. Through Equal, organisations and other players can apply for funds to run a development partnership and develop new ideas on how we are to counteract structures that contribute to discrimination in working life.

On the following pages, you can find out more about how such a partnership can work and how it can be started and financed.



Development partnership

The basis of all work in the Equal programme is Development partnership in which several partners are to work together and to develop ideas, work methods and methods within the scope of a common theme. In this way, the development partnership comprises a dynamic organisation where participants share the practical and financial responsibility for the collaboration. Partners can be public administration bodies, NGOs and companies.

Collaboration equals strength

A development partnership must solve complicated tasks in different areas, for example through methods development, knowledge development and research. This often requires great effort, and the aim of development partnership is to increase the momentum for change through the participation of players from various sectors of society. The respective players contribute with their specific skills and experience. Together, they create added value that can contribute to new, innovative solutions.

International collaboration

Each development partnership must have established collaboration with a development partnership in at least one other EU country.

Collaboration with other countries strengthens the entire Equal programme by broadening participants' horizons, creating shortcuts to solutions that have already been

tested in other countries and making it easier for the solutions that have arisen to be disseminated in the future.

Working geographically or sectorally

A development partnership can be constructed in different ways. It can be based around a local authority area, an urban district or another geographical area. It can also be oriented towards a certain sector, branch or problem area.

Forming a development partnership

When forming a development partnership, the following steps should be taken into account:

Initially

- Identify the area.
- Put together the idea and produce a sketch of the operation including players, the operation itself and potential for dissemination.
- Work out a budget for the initial work and an estimated cost for implementation.

At a later stage, supplement with

- a cooperation agreement and division of roles within the partnership
- an analysis and description of the area of activity relevant to the partnership
- put together a jointly drafted strategy for the development partnership
- a detailed work programme
- a financing plan with information on co-financing and budget
- a transnational work plan

Equal's five theme areas

Equal supports development partnership through ideas that can identify and remove structures that discriminate and exclude in working life. This may be a question of laws, rules, routines or general attitudes. On a European level, Equal consists of nine thematic areas. Equal in Sweden has chosen five of these based on the situation on the Swedish labour market.

Employability

Development partnership in this theme area is to contribute to facilitating entrance and re-entrance to a labour market that should be open to all. Examples of development areas:

- The transition from school to working life.
- Corporate social responsibility.
- Alternative routes to employment.
- New ways to labour.

Entrepreneurship

Give everyone the opportunity to start a business by providing them with the tools necessary. It can also involve identifying and exploiting new opportunities for creating jobs in cities and rural areas. Examples of development areas:

- Self-employment.
- New sources of regular work.

Adaptability

Promotion of lifelong learning and development of routines that counteract “outsider” status at work and thereby encourage recruitment and retention of people who have been subjected to discrimination and unequal treatment on the labour market. Examples of development areas:

- Diversity in working life.
- Compensatory guidance for employees.
- Guidance and career planning for lifelong learning.

Equal opportunities for women and men

Development partnership that contributes to reducing differences between the sexes and segregation on the labour market. Examples of development areas:

- Initiatives for broadening the choices of profession made by women and men.

- Mapping and analysis from an equality perspective of new branches with new forms of work and cultures.
- Initiatives for an integrated equality perspective on the labour market and in working life.

Asylum seekers

Development partnership that contributes to the development of ways to integrate asylum seekers and provide them with the opportunity of so normal a life as possible while waiting for a decision on asylum.

Examples of development areas:

- Support for meaningful residence in Sweden while waiting for a decision.
- Support for successful integration if a residence permit is granted.
- Support for successful readjustment to the asylum seeker's home country if a residence permit is not granted.

Main areas of focus 2004

From 8 March until 30 June 2004 interested parties are invited to send in applications for new Equal projects. The following areas within Equal's theme areas will be prioritised during the selection process:

1. *School – working life*: alternative and supplementary ways to influence structures that prevent the transition from school to working life.
2. *Opportunities for older people*: the ability of the labour market and working life to allow older people to continue working as long as they want to, and opportunities to return to working life.
3. *Poor health related to discrimination*: models and work methods to influence structures and attitudes that exclude, discriminate and can lead to poor health.
4. *Gender segregation*: exploitation of established methods and development of new ones to impact on experiences of how gender segregation can be reduced on the labour market.
5. *Asylum seekers*:
 - A coherent process for integration and return.
 - More efficient collaboration between authorities and voluntary organisations.
 - Increased knowledge of the asylum seeker's situation, gender perspective.



Application and selection process

How to apply:

A number of players/interested parties identify a problem area/development area – an area in which something needs to be changed and improved within the scope of Equal. These players are to produce and agree on a strategy for how to work to find solutions to the problem and develop the activity/operation. The interested parties form the basis of the development partnership.

These players/interested parties (at least two from different sectors of society) are to send in an application to the Swedish European Social Fund Council (Svenska ESF-Rådet) by 30 June 2004 at the latest.

The application must be well structured and contain:

- The name of the partner who is initiating the development partnership and a plan of how the partnership will be built on further.

- An analysis of the area of activity in which the operation/subproject will be run.
- A plan of the operation/subprojects to be run.
- A plan of how evaluation of the operation will be carried out.
- A plan of how dissemination and influence will be implemented.
- Budget and cost estimate.

A budget for the start-up phase, i.e. the period in which the partnership is being formed, the operation/subproject planned in detail, transnational work planned, evaluation of the operation designed, budget and financing planned in detail and built up and a cost estimate for the activity being run.

- *A gender and diversity perspective must be apparent in all sections of the application.*

The three phases

Establishment

November 1 2004 applicants will be notified of which development partnerships have been chosen.

These will receive a maximum of SEK 500,000 for the establishment phase, i.e. for planning the operation in detail, entering into an agreement on forming a development partnership and entering into an agreement with transnational partners. These documents are to be submitted as soon as possible and by 30 April 2005 at the latest. The Swedish European Social Fund Council will make decisions on a continuous basis on whether the operation is to continue and how it is to be implemented.

Implementation

Here, work is implemented in the various subprojects.

The operation is monitored and evaluated. Experiences and results are disseminated. All players are responsible for implementation. A coordinator is employed to coordinate the work. The transnational collaboration is to be seen as an area of great potential for work in development partnership. Here, there is an opportunity to actively exchange experiences, compare methods and routines, etc. Implementation of the development partnerships' action plans may cover a period of time of approximately three years.

Dissemination – influence

Work with dissemination and influence is fundamental within Equal. Dissemination and influence can be seen as a continuous and active process during partnership activities, partly as a way of passing on positive experiences, methods and ways of working. Equal should influence:

- policy and development of ideas in the policy areas concerned, structures, institutions and values in society that have an influence on participation in working life, etc.
 - formal and informal processes, ways of working and networks connected with working life
 - companies', authorities' and organisations' strategies, productivity and growth
 - the situation of individuals and groups in working life, etc.
- This is achieved by developing and documenting knowledge, working with the media, participating in social debate, arranging conferences and seminars, etc.

To reinforce opportunities for influence, development partnerships must be brought together in thematic groups. There are special funds for this work. Thematic groups will also work at European level.

The selection process

Special selection criteria have been developed by the Monitoring Committee which consists of representatives of organisations and authorities in Sweden. The Monitoring Committee is to follow and monitor the implementation of Equal in Sweden. The selection criteria and explanations of these can be found in the Swedish Programme Complement for Equal and in the application documents on the Swedish European Social Fund Council's website.

Selection criteria

1. Relevance criteria

Equality

Diversity

Accessibility

Transnationality

Relevance criteria that clarify the areas of activity within which the respective applicants wish to work. The relevance criteria are primarily equality, diversity, accessibility and transnationality, and they can be applied in the various fields of application. A minimum requirement for an application being subject to a continued, more detailed evaluation is that there is a solid concept and a good description of how the concept could be realised.

2. Quality criteria

Innovative

Dissemination and mainstreaming

Development partnership – structure and participation

Project group/coordinator's skills

Follow-up and evaluation

Budget and co-financing

Quality criteria have partly to do with skills, networks and the development potential of the respective development partnerships and partly with dissemination and effect criteria including evaluation and self-assessment.

An application must take all these criteria into account.

The selection within Equal takes place in a coherent, two-part process. The first part applies, as previously mentioned, to the selection of applications that have been granted funds to develop their partnerships, draw up more detailed work plans and build up transnational collabora-

tions (Establishment phase). This selection will be made between July 1 and October 30, 2004.

The second part is a final decision on whether the chosen applicants have succeeded in forming their development partnerships and fulfilling the requirements as far as plans, documents etc. are concerned for transition to the implementation section of Equal. During the establishment phase, the Swedish European Social Fund Council will provide support and guidance in various forms.

The Swedish European Social Fund Council will decide on which applications are to be accepted after consultation with the Monitoring Committee and an evaluation group. By April 30, 2005 at the latest, the agreement on forming a development partnership and a transnational cooperation agreement must have been submitted to the Swedish European Social Fund Council.

The agreement on development partnership must contain a common strategy, primarily:

- an analysis of the situation as far as discrimination, inequality and exclusion is concerned within the area in which the project is to be run
- an extensive operational plan with aims and priorities and the projects to be implemented. Budget for the operation
- a description of how the development partnership is to be

directed and how tasks, responsibility and authority is to be divided, as well as how financial support is to be administered

- a plan of action for follow-up and evaluation of the partnership and project
- a plan of action for dissemination, influence and feedback of knowledge and experience. The plan is to contain an analysis of the groups to be influenced
- a commitment to participate in dissemination and influence on both national and European level. Special funds are provided for this phase
- a plan of action for implementing an integrated equality, diversity and accessibility perspective.

The transnational cooperation agreement is to contain:

- a plan of action and accompanying budget
- a description of the roles of the transnational cooperation partners and what methods and forms for decisions are to be used to implement the joint plan of action
- a description of how follow-up and evaluation of the joint operation are to be implemented.

Based on these documents, the Swedish European Social Fund Council assesses whether the development partnership is qualified to proceed to the implementation section.



Budget and schedule

Budget

- Budget for establishment and implementation of Equal round II in Sweden is SEK 230 million.
- The number of applications to be granted support is estimated to be around 25.
- A maximum of SEK 500,000 will be granted for the establishment phase.
- The establishment phase will be financed entirely with funds from the European Social Fund.
- The budget for the implementation phase is to be co-financed by at least 50 per cent.

Schedule

- Announcement March 8, 2004
- Closing date for applications June 30, 2004
- Selection decision October 30, 2004
- Start of establishment phase November 1, 2004
- The operational phase can begin as soon as the necessary documents have been received and approved by the Swedish European Social Fund Council. The closing date for receipt of these documents is April 30, 2005.



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