

STRATEGIC PLAN
2011 – 2014



Contents

Introduction	3
Context	4
Mission	6
Values	6
Objectives of the Strategic Plan 2011 – 2014	7
The Four Strategies	8
SP1 A strategy for peer support to enhance staff development within equality bodies ...	8
SP2 A strategy for peer support to enhance institutional development of equality bodies	10
SP3 A strategy for contributing to policy formation at European level	12
SP4 A strategy for growth and positioning as a network	14
Monitoring and evaluation	15
Chart of the operational structure	16
Management and operational structure	17
Budget	20
Budget projections 2011 – 2014	21

Introduction

It is my great pleasure to present to you the new Equinet Strategic Plan covering the period 2011-2014, which will guide our work and help shape the future of our European Network of Equality Bodies over the next four years.

The objectives of this Strategic Plan, and more widely the plan overall, build on the success of the previous Equinet Strategic Plan 2007-2010 and is the result of an in-depth survey of Equinet's Members conducted in early 2010. They also take into account the evaluations of Equinet's work over the past three years as well as discussion with key stakeholders in the context of the preparation of the Strategic Plan (including consultation with the European Commission, EU social partner organisations and civil society networks).

This Strategic Plan signals an important step for Equinet – marking a transition from a newly established network to a consolidated and anchored European Network for national Equality Bodies. Since our establishment as a legal entity in 2007, our membership has grown significantly with a larger spread and diversity of equality bodies joining our network, the number and diversity of the staff of member organisations involved in our activities have been on a steady increase and external stakeholders have consistently shown considerable interest in Equinet and its work. To sustain this growth, we need a solid basis that enables us to build on the achievements of previous years and a firm learning and networking platform that is transparent, accountable and inclusive for all its members.

The Equinet Executive Board and Secretariat have put significant efforts to draft a Strategic Plan for 2011-2014 following members' consultation that indeed will secure a solid foundation for the future, a foundation that will ensure the further consolidation and growth of our Equinet network as a continuous and resourceful platform for peer support and capacity building amongst equality bodies across Europe.

This Strategic Plan represents a map and a vision that, following Members' adoption, Equinet and its Executive Board commit to follow and implement over the next four years. The Strategic Plan adopts a comprehensive and complementary approach with clear objectives. It sets an ambitious plan and future for Equinet based on steady growth whilst at the same time maintaining continuity with the previous work and strategic plan of Equinet of the past few years.

The Equinet Strategic Plan 2011-2014 was adopted by equality bodies - members of the network at their Annual General Meeting (AGM) in November 2010. In the light of the preparatory consultation process conducted amongst members and key stakeholders, I am confident that this plan will reflect and meet your needs as a national equality body involved in Equinet. Finally, it is also my hope that it will usefully respond to our needs and responsibilities as a European Network whilst taking into consideration the diversity amongst our member equality bodies.

Mandana Zarrehparvar
Chair of the Executive Board of Equinet (2009-2011)



November 2010

Context

The origins of Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies, lie in an EU funded project* initiated and implemented by equality bodies in seven Member States in 2002. The seven equality bodies developed cooperation around issues of legal interpretation of the EU Equal Treatment Directives and around practices of strategic litigation based on these Directives by equality bodies.

The requirements of the EU Equal Treatment Directives (2000/43/EC, 2004/113/EC and 2006/54/EC) subsequently led to a significant growth in the establishment of equality bodies across all Member States. The Directives required Member States to designate a body on the gender and race grounds to:

- provide independent assistance to victims of discrimination in pursuing their complaints of discrimination;
- conduct independent surveys concerning discrimination; and
- publish independent reports and make recommendations on any issue relating to such discrimination.

Many Member States have gone beyond the requirements of these Directives in establishing equality bodies that cover a broader range of grounds in both employment and the provision of goods and services.

In 2007 Equinet was established as the European Network of Equality Bodies with European Commission funding support. Over the period of its first strategic plan (2007 to 2010), Equinet's membership grew to 33 equality bodies.

The provisions of the EU Equal Treatment Directives have allowed for a diversity of equality bodies to emerge across the Member States. This includes diversity in:

1. Their functions, which span from equality bodies with a quasi-judicial function to equality bodies that play promotional roles.
2. The grounds they cover, with some equality bodies dealing with a single ground and others dealing with multiple grounds.
3. Their structure, with some equality bodies as stand-alone organisations and others forming part of organisations with a wider remit.
4. Their scale, in terms of staff numbers and of financial resources available to them.
5. Their history, with some equality bodies having been established for many years and other equality bodies of very recent origin.

This diversity enriches Equinet and its Members and contributes to their work. It provides Equinet with opportunities in that the different approaches developed in the context of this diversity of equality bodies offer a fruitful context for peer-learning. This also presents a challenge to Equinet to be relevant to the different needs and situations brought forward by this diversity of equality bodies.

* *Strengthening co-operation between specialised bodies for the implementation of Equal Treatment Legislation, 2002-2007.*

This strategic plan has been developed in a changing policy context at European Union level. This changing policy context includes:

- The endorsement of the Lisbon Treaty and its inclusion of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- The ongoing ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the European Union.
- The process of the European Union joining the Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights.
- The new 'Europe 2020' strategy and the promise of new guidelines for the Open Method of Coordination in the fields of social protection and social inclusion.
- The EU horizontal Equal Treatment Directive proposed in 2008 and currently before the Council.

This policy context offers a new dynamic for the promotion of equality and the fight against discrimination at European Union and Member State level. It broadens the focus for the work of equality bodies and provides additional scope for implementing their mandates. This offers opportunities for, and presents a challenge to, Equinet to enable equality bodies to maximise their potential in a new policy context.

The changing economic and political situation across the European Union provides a very particular context for this strategic plan. Equinet members have reported that the economic crisis has created a more difficult context for their work.

Some equality bodies highlight issues of vulnerability in this context. Their effectiveness can be threatened by reduced resources. Their remits and responsibilities can be widened without additional resources being provided. Their independence can be challenged on the back of political interventions. They can be merged with other institutions that hold a very different remit. This diminishes the capacity of these equality bodies to realise their full potential.

However, this context also offers opportunities to Equinet and equality bodies in that the process of economic recovery will involve significant economic and social change – change that should offer the potential to advance equality and create a society free from discrimination. There is a challenge posed to Equinet and equality bodies to ensure that the potential of the equality body can continue to be fully realised and that experiences of vulnerability are successfully addressed.

Mission

Equinet works to enable equality bodies to achieve and exercise their full potential at Member State level by sustaining and developing a networking between and a platform for equality bodies at European level.

Values

Equinet seeks to work in a manner that:

- Is based on the active participation of the equality bodies that form the network.
- Reflects the needs and interests that are common to equality bodies.
- Takes account of the diversity of equality bodies.
- Is open and transparent.
- Is to a high standard of excellence and professionalism.
- Implements good practices as an employer.
- Mainstreams gender equality and diversity in its work.
- Respects environmental sustainability.

Equinet seeks to develop relationships within its membership based on:

- Trust, mutual support and solidarity.
- A shared ownership and control of the network by the equality bodies that form part of it.

Equinet seeks to engage with its stakeholders in a manner that:

- Reflects the unique and singular position of equality bodies as independent statutory bodies – bodies that are independent of both civil society and of the statutory sector.

Objectives of the Strategic Plan 2011 - 2014

In order to fulfill its mission and guided by its values, Equinet will pursue four objectives over the lifespan of this Strategic Plan:

- A. Enhance the skills and capacities of the staff of the equality bodies.
- B. Enhance the strategic capacity of the equality bodies.
- C. Identify and communicate the learning from the work of national equality bodies.
- D. Enhance the recognition and strategic positioning of Equinet and member equality bodies with all stakeholders at European Union level.

In order to achieve these objectives, Equinet will build upon already acquired experience and implement four interrelated strategies:

- SP1. A strategy for peer support to enhance staff development within Equality Bodies.
- SP2. A strategy for peer support to enhance institutional development of Equality Bodies.
- SP3. A strategy for contributing to policy formation at European Union level.
- SP4. A strategy for growth and positioning as a network.

Whilst working to achieve these objectives, Equinet will mainstream its commitment to gender equality and diversity in all its activities.

The Four Strategies

SP1. A Strategy for Peer Support to Enhance Staff Development within Equality Bodies

1.2 Rationale

The staff members are the key resource of equality bodies. They work at the cutting edge of practice on equality and non-discrimination in a constantly changing political and socio-economical environment. Peer support for staff development intends to give staff members the opportunity to exchange knowledge, good practice and insight into new methods and tools with European peers, helping them reach their full potential at national level.

1.3 Goals

- a. To develop the knowledge, awareness and skills of the staff in equality bodies.
- b. To advance the quality of the work in equality bodies by organizing networking initiatives.

1.4 Activities

1.4.1 Establish and support an Equality Law in Practice working group of staff of member equality bodies.

The purpose of this working group is to share information on; advance understanding of; build skills in and take initiatives in relation to legislative developments; national and international jurisprudence; interpretation of legal provisions and strategic litigation at all levels and areas in the field of equal treatment.

The working group will organise meetings of its members to discuss and exchange information on, and understandings of different legal interpretations in relation to incidents of discrimination, jurisprudence and litigation strategies. Moreover, the group will undertake surveys of, and consultations with, equality bodies as necessary to gather information on the work of individual equality bodies in these areas. The group will publish the outcomes of and learning from its considerations.

The working group will involve staff members of equality bodies who are concerned with legal work and strategy.

1.4.2 Facilitate and strengthen the active communication and exchange of information between member equality bodies and support membership engagement in Equinet activities through the use of communication tools such as e-newsletters, the website and the e-forum.

Communication activities will be deployed to:

- a. foster the sharing of ideas, expertise and information on members' work, issues and practices
- b. explore and develop thinking on key issues and concepts,
- c. provide timely and relevant information to members on legal, policy and funding programme developments at European Union level.
- d. inform members of initiatives being taken by Equinet, by other equality bodies and by institutions at European Union level.
- e. offer an interactive platform to discuss specific issues of concern to members.

1.4.3 Organisation of training events for the staff of equality bodies.

The training events will focus on developing practical skills in the fields of:

- a. supporting, taking and hearing complaints and legal cases.
- b. communication strategies and practices of equality bodies.
- c. promotional strategies and practices of equality bodies to support good practice of employers and service providers in different sectors.

1.4.4 Organisation of an annual legal seminar targeting senior staff and legal experts of equality bodies as well as external stakeholders to explore developments in equal treatment legislation and in national and international jurisprudence in the field of equal treatment.

1.4.5 Develop initiatives to assist and strengthen the work of equality bodies in providing support for good equality practice by policy makers, employers and service providers. This work is important in enabling equality bodies to have a multiplier effect and to maximise the impact of their scarce resources. These initiatives will involve the preparation and publication of guidance on particular good equality practices being promoted by equality bodies and on the approaches developed by equality bodies to support the implementation of such good practices by policy makers, employers or service providers. The guidance will draw from work being carried out by specific equality bodies and will enable a wider application of this work by all equality bodies. The Board will keep under consideration the potential need for a working group to support and drive forward this work if required.

SP2. A Strategy for Peer Support to Enhance Institutional Development of Equality Bodies

2.1 Rationale

Equality bodies are challenged to identify and implement the most effective and strategic mix of their functions to deploy over any given period. This is particularly challenging in contexts of scarce resources and deepening inequalities. Peer support for institutional development intends to reinforce the strategic capacities of equality bodies, helping them reach their full potential at national level.

2.2 Goals

- a. To stimulate and support equality bodies to be strategic in their use of powers and resources.
- b. To support equality bodies to be effective in their work of communicating on issues of equality and discrimination.
- c. To contribute to the development of standards for the establishment and operation of equality bodies.

2.3 Activities

2.3.1 Establish and support a Strategy Development working group of staff of member equality bodies.

The purpose of this working group is to share information on; develop understanding of; build skills in and take initiatives in relation to the development and implementation of strategic approaches by equality bodies to their mandates.

This working group will organise meetings to discuss and exchange information on, and understandings of, strategic approaches to the mandate of equality bodies and to particular functions of equality bodies. The group will undertake surveys of, and consultations with, equality bodies to gather inputs for their work. The group will publish the outcomes of and learning from its considerations.

The working group will involve staff members of equality bodies who are concerned with planning and strategy development.

2.3.2 Establish and support a Communication Strategies and Practices working group of staff of member equality bodies.

The purpose of this working group is to share information on; enhance strategic capacity in and take initiatives in relation to the development of effective communication strategies and practices of equality bodies.

The working group will organise meetings and facilitate communication between its members, gather information from equality bodies about their communication strategies and activities and publish and disseminate the outcomes of and learning from its considerations.

The working group will involve staff members of equality bodies who are concerned with communication strategies and activities.

2.3.4 Establish and support specific ad-hoc member networking initiatives on issues of shared concern.

The purpose of this networking is to enable participants to share information on, advance understanding of, build skills in and take initiatives in relation to specific issues of shared concern or to specific target groups experiencing discrimination.

The networking will involve meetings of relevant staff to explore and debate practice in relation to the particular issue under consideration. The networking will involve survey work of, and consultation with, equality bodies on the issue and good practice publications as necessary.

This networking will have a particular focus on specific issues such as the work of equality bodies with Roma and Traveller people and with Trans people and other issues of current relevance.

2.3.5 Explore initiatives to support more effective responses at Member State level regarding the challenges of under-reporting of incidents of discrimination. This will include an engagement with relevant European stakeholders and institutions on this issue.

2.3.6 Explore the development of standards for the establishment and operation of equality bodies and support action by the European Commission in this area.

2.3.7 Explore the interface between equality and human rights and the strategies that link these two areas.

SP3. A Strategy for Contributing to Policy Formation at European Union Level

3.1 Rationale

The unique nature and mandate of equality bodies offers a body of work that holds valuable lessons to inform policy making and programme development at European Union and Member State levels. Equinet holds the potential and has the capacity to identify this learning and to communicate it at a European Union level.

3.2 Goals

- a. To extract the learning from the work and experience of equality bodies at Member State level.
- b. To analyse this learning and experience.
- c. To track policy developments at European Union level.
- d. To make available this analysis of learning and experience from equality bodies in a timely and appropriate manner to the European Commission, and to relevant European and international institutions and stakeholders.

3.3 Activities

3.3.1 Establish and support a Policy Formation working group of staff of member equality bodies.

The purpose of this working group is to prepare perspectives on current policy developments at European level. These perspectives will be based on the experience and work of equality bodies implementing equal treatment legislation at Member State level.

The primary focus for the working group will be policy development by the European Commission in the field of equality and non-discrimination. The working group will also focus on policy proposals of the European Commission that could usefully include a significant equality and non-discrimination dimension.

The secondary focus for the working group will be barriers identified by equality bodies to the effective implementation of equal treatment legislation and their mandate. The working group will track the experience of equality bodies in implementing the legislation so as to identify any such barriers. This will enable the preparation of perspectives that contribute to policy formation so as to enhance the impact of the equal treatment legislation. Such perspectives will further contribute to the ability of equality bodies to address and surmount these barriers.

This working group will organise meetings of its members to discuss and exchange information on, and understandings of, policy developments at European Union level and the learning from the work of the equality bodies relevant to these developments. The working group will track the work programme of the European Commission to identify areas that could be assisted by an equality body perspective. This will enable a timely contribution that is designed to inform the policy thinking which shapes the policy as it is being prepared. The group will undertake surveys of, and consultations with, equality bodies to gather inputs for their work. The group will publish the outcomes of and learning from its considerations. The group will host roundtable events to support dialogue in relation to its outputs.

The working group will involve staff members of equality bodies concerned with policy development work.

3.3.2 Promote data collection by equality bodies at member state level that will enable monitoring of patterns and trends of discrimination.

3.3.3 Stimulate the dissemination by national equality bodies of Equinet policy formation perspectives to national authorities at Member State level.

3.3.4 Commission, conduct and publish studies on matters relating to equality, non-discrimination and the establishment and work of equality bodies that are of common interest and relevance to the members and other equality stakeholders.

SP4 A Strategy for Growth and Positioning as a Network

4.1 Rationale

The status and standing of equality bodies can be an important factor in their effectiveness and impact. This recognition needs to be developed and sustained at Member State and European Union levels. Equinet stands well placed to contribute to this status and standing at European Union level. In turn Equinet itself needs to hold a status and standing at European Union level if it is to make its full contribution to enabling equality bodies to achieve and exercise their full potential at Member State level.

4.2 Goals

- a. To sustain the network and its members.
- b. To support its planned growth.
- c. To address the diversity of the membership in a relevant manner.
- d. To enhance the external legitimacy of the network.

4.3 Activities

4.3.1 Maintain an up-to-date mapping of equality bodies across the Member States, candidate countries and other relevant jurisdictions. This will have a particular focus on their diversity of functions, structures, and mandates.

4.3.2 Encourage different forms of networking between the members, such as:

- a. A networking of equality bodies that share specific functions or focus.
- b. A bilateral networking or staff exchange process between equality bodies for mutual support.

4.3.3 Maintain an appropriate level of communication and relevant relationship with the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the social partners and civil society organisations at European level.

4.3.4 Promote the recognition of equality bodies and their work at European Union and Member State level. Take steps to support equality bodies that find their independence or effectiveness threatened.

4.3.5 Maintain and further strengthen the financial stability of the Network and its Secretariat by identifying and securing new or additional sources of funding.

Monitoring and evaluation

In order to ensure the full implementation of this Strategic Plan, Equinet will closely monitor its activities and collect information about how the impact of these activities are perceived by its Members and by other stakeholders.

An Outputs Summary Chart will be developed and inserted in the Work Plan for each year covered by this Strategic Plan (2011 to 2014). The chart will be a comprehensive list of expected activities and outputs for the year. The Executive Board and Secretariat will use and follow this chart to ensure that the full work plan for the year has been implemented.

This quantitative approach will be complemented by a qualitative survey of how these activities and the work of Equinet in general and their impact is perceived by member organisations and the staff participating in them.

Furthermore, internal monitoring and evaluation of Equinet activities will draw upon the qualitative and quantitative data that is collected and submitted at the end of each year to the PROGRESS Programme Committee as part of the annual PROGRESS report to the European Commission.

Equinet will be collecting qualitative data on its activities throughout the year using the following tools:

1. Evaluation surveys of participants at the end of each Equinet training and seminar and at the Annual General Meeting
2. Annual external evaluation of Equinet work
3. External evaluation of the Strategic Plan at the end of strategic planning period.

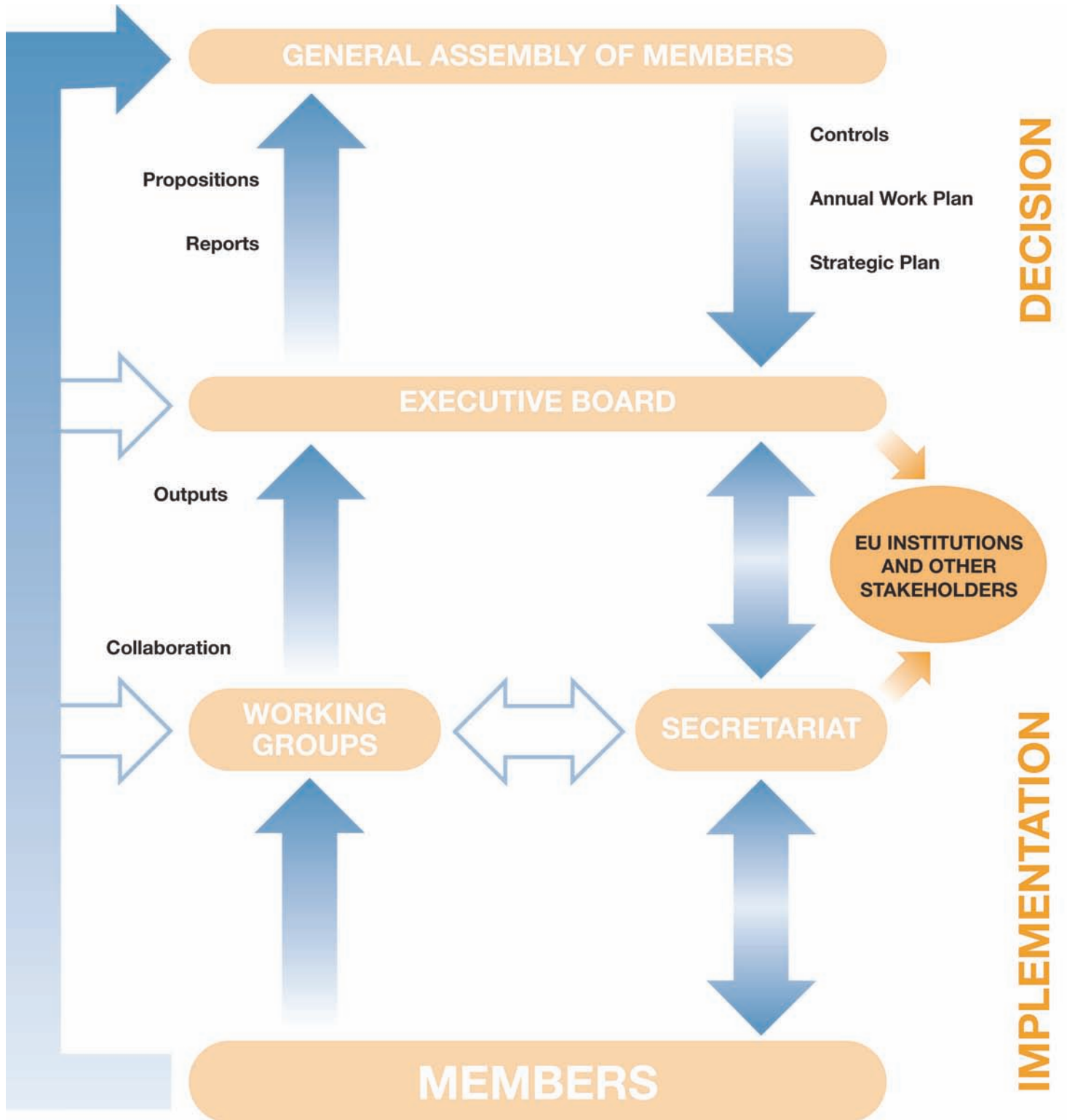
Equinet will also look into elaborating a permanent online Equinet Activity Survey System on its website to allow members to report their assessment of Equinet activities throughout the year at their own convenience.

The impact of Equinet activities will be of particular focus for the external evaluation and will be assessed in relation to indicators such as:

- Number of members of staff of equality bodies who report that they have learned something useful for their work from Equinet activities.
- Number of members of staff of equality bodies who report that they have used their learning from Equinet activities in their daily work.
- Number of member bodies who express satisfaction with the events organised by Equinet.
- Number of member bodies who express satisfaction with the publications of Equinet.

These indicators will provide a useful picture of the quality and relevance of Equinet's added-value and will help assessing the impact of Equinet on its members.

The Executive Board and Secretariat will also monitor that gender equality and diversity are mainstreamed within all activities and that Equinet operations respect the commitment to environmental sustainability.



Management and operational structure

Equinet has been established as an independent legal entity (international not-for-profit Association [INFPA or AISBL]) under Belgian law since June 2007.

An integrated operational structure (see chart on previous page) has been put in place to enable Equinet to fulfil its mission.

The General Assembly of Members

The General Assembly of Members is Equinet's highest decision-making body. It gathers at least once a year for an Annual General Meeting (AGM) to discuss, decide and vote on issues pertaining to the network's mission and objectives and its general strategic management. The General Assembly has to approve the Strategic Plans, the Annual Work Plans and Annual Budgets before they can be implemented through the Executive Board, the Secretariat and the members.

Strategic Plan: defines the general strategies and objectives to be pursued by the network over a period of four years in order to fulfil its mission. The strategy is prepared by the Board with the assistance of the Secretariat and on the basis of consultation with members and external stakeholders.

Annual Work Plan: details the work of the different Equinet structures for the year to come within the framework of the Strategic Plan. The Annual Work Plan is prepared by the Board with assistance of the Secretariat.

Annual Budget: sets out the income and expenditure of Equinet for the year ahead and identifies the financial allocation for the different activities to be implemented during the year. The Annual Budget is prepared by the Board with the assistance of the Secretariat.

The Statutes of the Equinet Constitution ensure that Members are in full control of the general direction and the main strategic decisions concerning the network via the General Assembly.

The Executive Board

The General Assembly delegates the management of the network to an Executive Board. The Board is constituted of nine Members who are staff representatives of equality bodies (member organisations). Board Members are elected for a mandate of two years (renewable twice) by the General Assembly.

The Board meets on a regular basis to guide and support the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Annual Work Plans voted by the General Assembly. The Board has a particular focus on the effective, appropriate and strategic use of the resources available to the network. It is responsible for managing and sustaining the appropriate and necessary relationships of Equinet with its various stakeholders and for the representation of Equinet with external stakeholders.

A Chairperson and a Treasurer are appointed by the Members of the new Board when they meet for the first time.

As appropriate the Board can seek the advice of and/or appoint external expert(s) as advisor(s) to the Board for a defined period of time within the lifespan of the Board to assist the Board and Equinet in achieving the objectives and the mission of the network.

The Executive Board reports to the General Assembly at least once a year during the Annual General Meeting. It submits strategic and operational proposals, the Strategic Plans, the Annual Work Plans and the annual budgets. It guides and supports the Secretariat in implementing these plans, budgets and other propositions once approved by the General Assembly. It will approve the work programmes and outputs of the working groups. It will seek to maximise the impact of all Equinet outputs. It is also responsible for maintaining and further enhancing the financial health of the Network.

Chairperson: decides on the agenda of the Board meetings prepared by the Secretariat and leads the discussions of the Board Members at these meetings. The Chairperson liaises with the Executive Director of the Secretariat on an ongoing basis between Board meetings in relation to the work of the Secretariat. The Chairperson leads the engagement of Equinet with its external stakeholders.

Treasurer: monitors the financial systems of Equinet, the daily use of its financial resources and supports the preparation of annual financial reports on the incomes and expenditures of the network.

Board Members: attend regular Board meetings and manage the development and operation of the network through their deliberations at these meetings. Board Members work with the Chairperson to develop proposals for the General Assembly in relation to strategic plans, annual work plans, annual budgets and operational matters. Board Members can also represent the network to external stakeholders.

Board Advisor(s): assist Board Members and Chairperson in their deliberations and provide expert advice on matters of concern to the Board. Such a person(s) is appointed as necessary by the Board for a specific length of time or for the whole duration of the mandate of that Board.

The Equinet Secretariat

The Secretariat facilitates the implementation of Equinet's Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plan. This work is developed on the basis of proposals made by the Secretariat to the Board. Once these proposals have been discussed and agreed by the Board they are implemented by the Secretariat. This work is then evaluated by the Board on the back of reports from the Secretariat.

The Secretariat is a professionally staffed structure that has been set up in Brussels. It is currently constituted of an Executive Director, a Policy Officer, a Communications Officer and an Administration & Finance Officer. The Executive Director heads the work of the Secretariat and reports to the Executive Board. The Secretariat also manages the recruitment for a regular traineeship scheme upon approval from the Board.

The Secretariat encourages, ensures and facilitates the exchange of expertise and information across the network, notably through the use of modern means of communication such as a user-friendly website, e-newsletters and other electronic means.

The Secretariat is responsible for coordinating and supporting the work of the working groups along with their Moderators. It is responsible for the final production of the annual outputs from the working groups and their dissemination to members and other stakeholders.

The Secretariat is responsible for the organisation of trainings and seminars foreseen in the Annual Work Plan.

The Secretariat is responsible for the implementation of initiatives foreseen in the Annual Work Plan. This can involve commissioning outside experts, supporting work done by member bodies and direct implementation by members of the Secretariat. The Secretariat also acts as the point of contact for EU institutions and other stakeholders.

The Working Groups

The Working Groups play a key role in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plans of Equinet. The brief for each working group is set out in this Strategic Plan. The working groups are made up of staff drawn from the member bodies of Equinet.

The effective operation of the working groups is the responsibility of the moderator and working group participants, supported by the Secretariat. The activities to be implemented by the working groups are detailed in the Annual Work Plan of Equinet.

Moderators of the working groups in cooperation with the Secretariat propose an annual work plan to the Board. This plan will specify objectives, activities, timelines, budgets and outputs for the working group. This is discussed and developed as necessary by the Board and presented for approval by the Annual General Meeting as part of the Annual Work Plan of Equinet.

The Executive Board, Secretariat and working group moderators ensure that the work plans identify and exploit possible synergies between working groups and that any duplication or incoherence is avoided.

The Secretariat reports on a regular basis to the Executive Board on the activities and overall progress of the working groups. The Secretariat communicates any decisions of the Executive Board made on the basis of these reports to the moderators.

Moderator: leads and guides the activities of the working group. The moderator is a member of staff of one of the member bodies and is appointed by the Board with the agreement of that member body; except for the Policy Formation Working Group where the moderator will be a member of the Board. The moderator has the appropriate skills to lead the group and to engage effectively with the issues that fall within the brief of the working group.

Working Group Members (Participants): Individual with the appropriate skills and knowledge to shape and implement the activities of a working group. Member equality bodies have the discretion to appoint suitable participants to contribute as active members of a given working group.

Members

Member organisations or members: are statutory based equality bodies established on the basis and fulfilling the requirements of the EU equal treatment Directives to promote equality and combat discrimination on some or all of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) Article 19 grounds. They delegate representatives to the Annual General Meeting who constitute the General Assembly of Members, entitled to vote on items pertaining to the general and strategic management of the network. Members pay an annual membership fee that constitutes part of the Equinet funding and enjoy rights and duties as defined in the Equinet Statutes.

Observers: Any organisation applying for Equinet Membership, after review and acceptance of its application by the Board can be an Observer for the time between the submission of the application and the AGM, where the General Assembly of Members will vote on the ratification of their membership.

If it deems it to be in the interest of Equinet, the Board can also decide to invite relevant organisations in the field of promoting equality and non-discrimination as observers of Equinet activities.

Budget

Equinet's annual budget is currently funded by its members and by the PROGRESS Programme of the European Commission.

Members

Members' contribution comes in the form of funds and time commitments. This provides the necessary co-funding for the EU PROGRESS grant.

Funds: Each member is expected to pay its annual membership fee at the beginning of each year. The minimum amount of the membership fee for a particular member organisation is established based on the annual operating budget of this member organisation. The amount of the fee is established by the Annual General Meeting on the foot of a proposal from the Executive Board.

Time: Each member is expected to commit a certain number of working days of its staff to Equinet activities and work. This time dedicated to Equinet is monetised (based on the actual daily cost of staff members for their respective organisation) and included in the budget.

The PROGRESS Programme of the European Commission

Equinet is currently receiving funds from the European Commission in the framework of the PROGRESS Programme (the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity).

The PROGRESS Programme requires that a certain part of the organisations' budgets be funded from other sources. This part is required to grow by at least one percent each year.

Funded organisations are required to satisfactorily report twice a year on the technical (content) and financial aspects (respect of the Programme's financial rules) of their work.



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Budget projections 2011-2014*

EQUINET Budget 2011 - 2014		Strategic Plan Period <i>(all figures in 000s)</i>					Evolution (2011 = 100)				
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2011	2012	2013	2014
Income	Funding Commission	500	550	550	575	575	600	100	104.5	104.5	109.1
	Membership fees and other income	29	50	55	66	75	85	100	120.0	136.4	154.5
	Membership commitments	117	119	137	139	144	150	100	101.5	105.1	109.5
Total Income		646	719	742	780	794	835	100	105.1	107.0	112.5
Expenditures	Salaries	277	257**	292	298	304	311	100	102.1	104.1	106.5
	Running of the office	65	90**	68	69	71	72	100	102.0	104.0	106.1
	Activities	304	372	382	413	419	452	100	108.1	109.7	118.3
Total Expenditures		646	719	742	780	794	835	100	105.1	107.0	112.5
Balance		0	0	0	0	0	0				
Co-Financing % from EC		77%	76%	75%	74%	73%	72%				

*All figures given in Euros (€)

** The increase in salaries in 2011 results from the return of the Executive Director to a full year employment after her maternity leave in 2010. The decrease in 2011 of the running of the office comes from the cost of the Strategic Consultant in 2010 (replacement of the Executive Director during her maternity leave) being transferred back to the salary of the Executive Director in 2011.