



South East England Development Agency

Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010

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About SEEDA

SEEDA is the Government funded agency set up in 1999 responsible for the economic and social development of the South East of England - the driving force of the UK's economy.

The South East is the 22nd largest economy in the world, bigger than several countries including Denmark, Austria, Sweden, South Africa, Singapore and Greece. As home to over eight million people, it is the largest region in the UK - bigger than Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland combined, and covers the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and East and West Sussex.

SEEDA's aim is to create a prosperous, dynamic and inspirational region by helping businesses compete more effectively, training a highly skilled workforce, supporting and enabling our communities, while safeguarding our natural resources and cherishing our rich cultural heritage.

Accountable to Government, SEEDA is a business led organisation, governed by a Board whose Members have wide-ranging experience in industry and commerce, local government, education, trade unionism and voluntary service. We are also subject to National Audit Office inspections.

OUR VISION FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE SOUTH EAST

Our vision for gender equality in the South East is for all residents of the region to be able to maximize their economic potential regardless of their gender.

In line with SEEDA's primary role to support the economy of the South East, the success of this scheme will be measured against the following headline target:

- **A sustained reduction in the median gender pay gap of the South East from a high of 15.9% in 2007 to at least the 2007 national average of 12.6% by 2016.**

The overarching approach of our scheme is to tackle the regional gender pay gap through three main strategies:

- Getting more people into full time work.
- Increasing the real income levels of those currently in work.
- Addressing direct and indirect gender based discrimination

However, this strategy recognises that both men and women experience disadvantage and that discrimination in particular is magnified in both genders when accompanied by additional factors in particular:

- People with additional care roles.
- People from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities
- People with disabilities
- The over 50s
- People living in the most deprived parts of the region (coastal and rural communities and those living in housing in the private rental and social housing sectors)

Therefore our approach to action will be to prioritise support for these groups in the delivery of projects and programmes. In addition, the scheme recognises gender inequality in the labour market is an expression of gender inequality in other parts of society. Therefore, as part of our strategic influencing role we will identify key relationships with other agencies supporting them to address gender inequality

Introduction to Gender Equality

Equality and Diversity is not an issue that anyone can ignore. The UK is in a time of huge demographic social and economic change which requires proactive action to enable our economy to continue to grow.

The UK has a shrinking tax base. By 2014 there will be more people over 65 than under 16 meaning that our ability as a nation to pay for the infrastructure and public services we require throughout our lives will diminish over time. We also know that;

In just seven years.....

Only a third of the workforce will be male and under 45.

In the next 10 years.....

There will be two million more jobs in the UK economy, 80% of which will be filled by women.

The working age population will increase by one million, with ethnic minorities accounting for over half that increase.

Addressing these challenges and creating long-term sustainability will require a fresh approach to employment. Not only do we have to get used to the idea of working later into our lives, but employers must recognise and enable the economic potential of the entire population; removing the physical and social barriers to participation in employment for all.

Indeed, embracing diversity has its own benefits to the economy. Diverse workforces have been proven to be more innovative and therefore more competitive. The mix of perspectives brought about in a diverse business often enables the identification of new markets and opportunities that are not open to businesses with homogenous workforces.

In addition, the increasing impact of globalisation on how and when we work means that the time-bound norms of the nine to five approach to business is becoming less relevant. Businesses now often carry the burden of a 24 hour approach to work. To make this sustainable in the long-term they must adapt their use of communication and travel to be led by customer demands and employee needs through embracing a more flexible approach to work.

This new flexibility brought about by advances in communication and information technology brings about a whole new world of possibility for better integrating personal needs, family life and work. Making the workplace a more equitable and flexible place also increases productivity and helps to retain staff. Employees are more likely to work effectively in an environment where they feel valued, their needs are met and they can take control over their working conditions.

As an Economic Development Agency, Equality and Diversity is therefore our core business. We want to ensure that our own staff are able to reach their potential as our effectiveness as an organisation depends on it. Equally, we want to support all businesses and employers across the

South East to embrace these principles so that our region will become more competitive, our communities stronger and our long term development more sustainable.

The RES and Equality and Diversity

For the first time, the new Regional Economic Strategy, published in 2006 raises the prominence of the importance of Equality and Diversity to the region by including it as a cross cutting theme. At the implementation level the approach to embedding equality and diversity across the RES take on four forms:

Implementing Compliance Measures

Ensuring the region has an appropriate understanding of the baseline of equalities issues, developing targets for action and monitoring progress. This approach also focuses on increasing the level of representation and transparency on equalities issues across decision making in the region and looks to the public sector to lead the private and third sectors by example.

Community Strategies

A recognition that communities are the building blocks of successful economies and the place where discrimination in all its forms is best addressed. This approach will look at the leverage that communities can plan in reducing discrimination from actions as diverse as early years education to enabling community participation and structuring the built environment to support community cohesion.

Work-Infrastructure Strategies

The work infrastructure approach to addressing equalities focuses on addressing the barriers of 'how' work is structured. For example, supporting people to work more flexibly may help more people with caring responsibilities to enter work. This approach will focus strongly on influencing employers and supporting transitions into work.

Business Case Strategies

The South East also has one of the greatest opportunities for developing a business case for promoting equality and diversity. This approach will work with investors and employers to see the competitive advantage that the region can harness if all members of society are given an equal opportunity to participate economically. The focus of the regions economy on strong international links in particular provides an opportunity to link into global communities and harness diverse skills and cultures that will promote our global competitiveness.

What will success look like in the lifetime of the RES?

We hope that in the lifetime of the RES these approaches will enable us to deliver a greater shared understanding of the economic and social opportunities arising through harnessing diversity and promoting Equality. We also wish to see a reduction in discrimination in all spheres of life and increased civic participation from all our communities of geography and interest.

The Gender Pay Gap

The primary indicator of gender inequality within economic participation is the gender pay gap. The concept of a Gender pay gap relates to the disparity in income experienced by those in employment as a result of their gender. The variance in the average pay received by men and women indicates how efficiently the economy is operating in terms of maximizing economic participation. This is known as the median gender pay gap.

It is important to stress that median gender pay differences do not necessarily equate to evidence of direct discrimination in employment (i.e. workers doing the same job for the same length of time and receiving less pay because of their gender.) Rather, the median difference relates to a range of complex and interrelated social and cultural factors that influence how, when and where, men and women work. The Women and Equality Unit list 5 key factors which affect the gender pay gap:

- 1) **Human Capital Differences** i.e. differences in educational levels and work experience. Historical differences in the levels of qualifications held by men and women have contributed to the pay gap. However, women are still more likely than men to have breaks from paid work to care for children and other dependents. These breaks impact on women's level of work experience which in turn impacts on their pay rates.
 - 2) **Part-time working** : the pay gap between men and women's part time hourly earnings and men's full time hourly earnings is particularly large and, because so many people work part time this is a major contributor to the gender pay gap. Some of this gap is due in part to part-time workers having lower levels of qualifications and less work experience. However it is also due in part to part time work being concentrated in less well-paid occupations.
 - 3) **Travel Patterns**: On average, women spend less time commuting than men. This may be because of time constraints due to balancing work and caring responsibilities. This can impact on women's pay in a number of ways: smaller pools of jobs to choose from and/ or lots of women wanting to work in the same location. (i.e. near to where they live) leading to lower wages for those jobs.
 - 4) **Occupational segregation**: Women's employment is highly concentrated in certain occupations (60% of working women choose just 10 occupations) Those occupations which are female dominated are often the lowest paid. In addition, women are still under represented in the higher paid jobs within occupations – the glass ceiling effect.
- Women are still working predominantly in lower paid areas, the 5 “C”s – cleaning, catering, caring, cashiering and clerical work – which is one of the reasons why their full-time pay on average remains 18% less per hour than full-time men, 40% less if they work part-time.
 - Certain occupations are still mainly held by women or men, particularly in skill shortage areas. For example, less than 1% of people in plumbing occupations are women and only 2% of childcare workers are men.

- 5) **Workplace segregation:** at the level of individual workplaces, high concentrations of female employees are associated with relatively low rates of pay. In addition, higher levels of part time working are associated with lower rates of pay, even after other factors are taken into account.

Key Service Exclusion

Enforced or self – exclusion from key public services can also have a gender bias. However, unlike the factors listed under the gender pay gap, the negative impacts are much more equally born across both men and women. Exclusion from health or educational services for example can relate to a number of additional factors such as education levels or inappropriate marketing methods. In addition, many employers may now be conscious of the need to support women to work flexibly but may fall behind on giving equal rights to men with family responsibilities. For example:

- 38% of mothers, 11% of fathers and 18% of carers have either left a job or been unable to take a job due to caring responsibilities.
- Research shows that men are less aware than women of the right to request flexible working and only 12% of eligible fathers have requested the right to work flexibly
- Men's take-up of primary health care services is generally lower than that of women, resulting in later diagnosis of problems, greater risks for their health and greater cost to the health service.

Multiple Equalities Issues

As we have seen in some of the cases above, gender inequality can often be reinforced by overlaying issues of discrimination, exclusion and poor health can increase the degree to which inequality is experienced. For example:

- Young Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black-Caribbean women are 3 to 4 times more likely to take a job at a lower level than the one they are qualified for.
- Mothers of Disabled children are seven times less likely to work than mothers of non-disabled children, mainly because of lack of suitable childcare (Family Trust Fund 2002 and General Household Survey 2002).

Gender Equality Scheme

Our commitment to addressing Gender Equality

SEEDA recognises that gender inequality can have a negative impact on the life chances of individuals and the economic sustainability of the South East Region. SEEDA is committed to identifying and mitigating against gender inequality in all its forms through both its internal and external functions, and will ensure that it gathers comprehensive, qualitative and quantitative data to inform its actions to support gender equality.

Methodology

Our gender Equality Scheme is structured around the following framework:

1. A review of the statistical evidence of the impact of gender equality:
 - In the South East Region – to map out our role as a Regional Economic Development Agency.
 - Within SEEDA itself.
2. A consultation exercise with regional employers, Staff, and public and third sector groups on their experiences of gender equality in the South East region.
3. An assessment of our key policy and procedural frameworks to assess how far they promote the mainstreaming of gender equality.
4. A review of our current activities to promote gender equality, internally and externally to assess where we could make improvements.
5. The development of a prioritised action plan with headline targets.
6. A monitoring framework to enable us to track our progress over the life time of the scheme, supporting us to make improvements wherever possible.

The Regional Evidence Base

Demographics

Male Female Ratio

- There are 8.237 million residents in the South East of which 4.028 (48.9%) million are male and 4.209 (51.1%) million are female.

Sexual Orientation

There is currently no reliable data on the profile of the Gay and bisexual community in the South East. Gaining such data is a key part of SEEDAs cross cutting equality actions.

Trans Gender

Similarly there is no reliable data on the trans gender community in the South East. However, we do know from work currently being undertaken with the Trans Community across Europe that the community is growing at a faster rate in the UK than in any other country. Through extrapolating data from European research we also know that the South East has a population of approximately 1000 transgender people. This is the largest regional concentration in the UK. We also know anecdotally that the trans community face significant discrimination in all areas of society. Understanding this discrimination by working closely with the Trans Community in the development and implementation of this scheme is a key priority.

Economic Participation

The South East outperforms national averages for male and female economic participation, however intra regional disparities and significant differences between the genders still exist:

- The economic participation rate for women in the South East is 74% compared to 83.7% for men.
- However, when Gender is compounded with another equalities strand such as disability, we can see that the level of female employment drops to under 60% for women and 63% for men in the region.
- Activity rates of women over the last 30 years have risen dramatically whereas those of men have declined.
- In the South East there are 171,549 households headed by a single parent, 89% of which are headed by a woman. Of those households headed by a single parent, only 23% of female headed households are in full time employment compared to 64.5% of male headed single parent households.
- Almost 45% of employment for women in the region is part time, the reasons for this high level of part time working is often driven by caring responsibilities.

- Working age women with dependent children in the UK are less likely than those without to be in employment: 68% compared with 73% (Spring 2005 figures).
- Only 56% of women with children under 5 are in employment in the UK.
- Conversely, men with dependent children are MORE likely than men without dependent children to be in employment and the age of their children does not effect the rate of participation.

Equal Pay

SEEDA undertook extensive research and consultation on the impact of the gender pay gap in the South East between 2004 and 2007. This research, was undertaken in partnership with the Regional Social Dialogue Forum, the TUC and the University of Greenwich. This research resulted in two pieces of work: "Unlocking the Potential of Women in the South East " (University of Greenwich) and " Close the Gap" (South East Social Dialogue Forum)

The research process included:

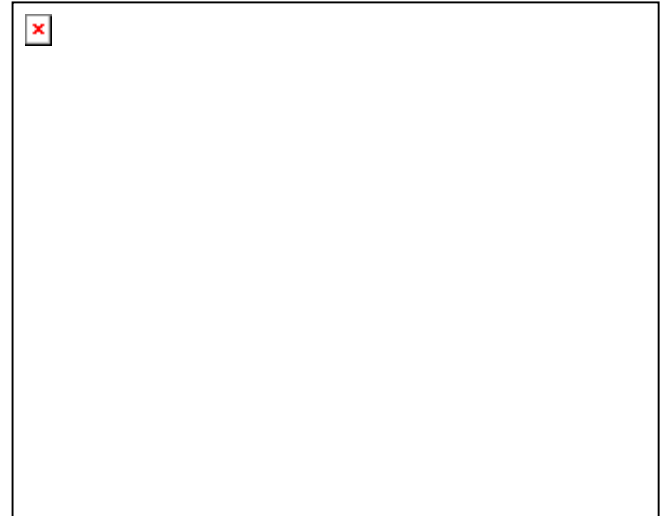
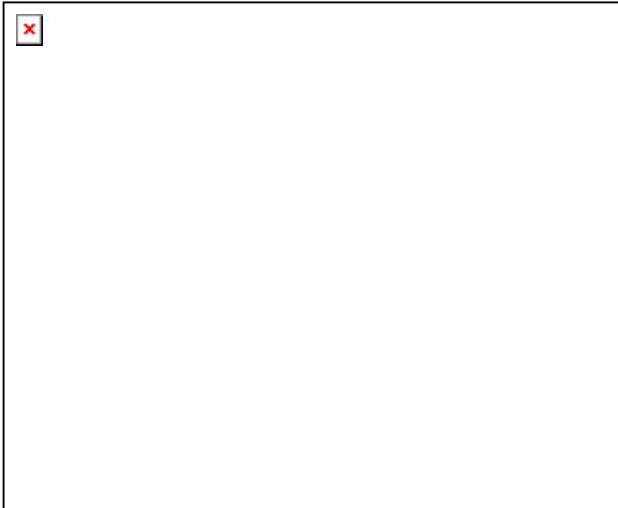
- An assessment of the statistical evidence base of gender inequality in the South east
- Consultation with 454 employers in the region.
- Face to face interviews with women employed in 40 companies in the region. (In each business 1 female HR rep and 2 mainstream employees were interviewed.)

The South East Median Gender Pay Gap

- Between 2006 and 2007 the National average Gender Pay gap reduced to its lowest ever level from 17.4% to a 12.6% difference in the wages received by men and women.
- However the South East has the largest Gender Pay gap with women's average pay being 15.9% less than men in the region.
- The ratio of women's to men's hourly earnings declines from near equality for 16-19 year olds to 67% for 50-54 year olds.
- 78% of all part time workers in the UK are women, with the average national median gender pay gap increasing to 39.1% for part time workers; however the number of male part timers aged 23-59 trebled between 1986 and 2003.
- The widest median gender pay gap in the South East is at the top end of the earnings scale with a 30% difference between the highest paid men and women.
- At the lowest income decile, the most recent data from 2005 shows a median gender pay gap of approximately 10% in the South East.

Occupational Segregation

- People in the South East are more likely to be in managerial and professional occupations. Women also dominate administrative occupations, personal service occupations and elementary occupations.



Built Environment Sector

We do know that nationally women are under represented in a number of key sectors especially science, engineering and the built environment. SEEDA commissioned research into the Built Environment sector in 2007 shows that in an industry with a skills shortage, women and other diverse groups are strongly under represented. For example, on civil engineering courses, only 10-20% of students are women, compared to 53% of the total population.

Members of the Built Environment professions, 2003

Professional Body	Total Membership	Women Members	Women Members as a percentage of total membership
RICS	107,817	11,173	10.36%
ICE	78,641	3,678	4.46%
CIB	37,511	1,181	3.15%
RIBA	28,328	2,858	10.09%
ISE	20,173	950	4.71%
RTPI	17,924	4,714	26.3%

Children's Sector Workforce Research and Action Plan

Detailed research commissioned by SEEDA in 2007, also tells us that in the Children's sector (Early Years, children's social care; youth support and children's workforce trainers in the private, public and third sectors) is made up of 143,000 people in the region. This workforce is dominated by women and is widely accepted as being a very low paid sector. The low pay experienced in the sector has a tendency to influence high turn over and many positions within the region are unfilled.

This has an impact not only on the staff within the sector but also the supply of childcare which is a key determinant of the regions ability to promote economic participation.

Business Ownership

- In the South East, the rate of business ownership by women (as a percentage of total business stock) stands at only 15% compared to 85% for men.
- Nationally, only 3.9% of women surveyed through the annual Global Entrepreneurship Monitor are considering starting a business, compared to 8.1% of men.

Skills Levels

Nationally, the Equalities Review data tells us:

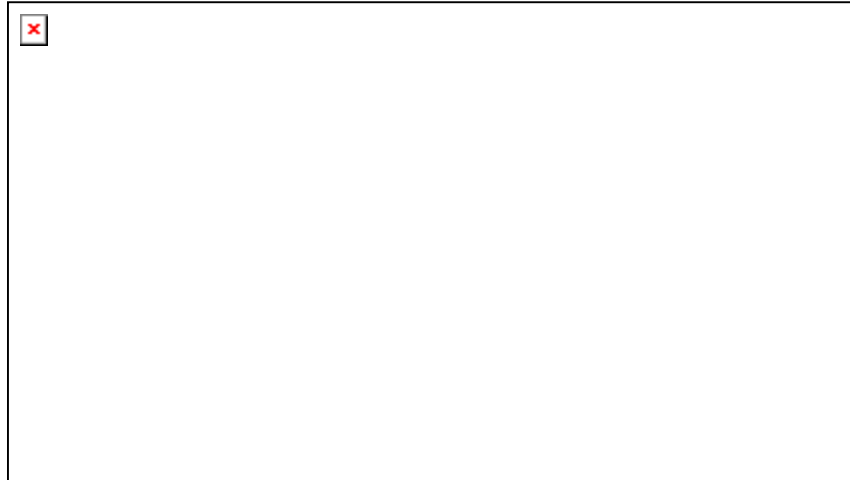
- On the whole girls continue to outperform boys at all levels of education in the UK from key stage 1 to higher education.
- In 2005/ 06 more women than men in the UK were awarded National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ). This was most noticeable at level 3 where 63% of NVQs were awarded to women.
- Universities, Colleges and Admissions Services figures from 2006 show that more women than men were entering full time undergraduate courses, with 54% of new undergraduate students being female and 46% male.

However, When looking at skills levels of the region, which is often an indicator of a persons ability to find and progress within higher paid work, we do however see some key disparities between men and women.



- Whilst the South East shows that in general women in the region have higher levels of level 2 skills than women in the rest of the country, there is still a 3% difference in achievement of men and women in the region.

- However, again we can see below that once gender is joined with ethnicity this disparity is compounded with a drop of over 10% between white and ethnic minority women's participation.



Gender Pay & Employers

Our research into the experiences of women in employment in the region included postal surveys of 454 businesses. This consultation showed us that:

- The vast majority of employers had written equality policies and most of these specifically covered the different equality strands.
- Communication of these policies was primarily through staff handbooks and induction but rarely otherwise.
- Few organisations provided maternity leave above the statutory minima, though maternity pay above the statutory minima was somewhat more common.
- There was very little gender monitoring, for instance in respect of occupational categories, recruitment, selection and promotion.
- The most commonly offered and most commonly used flexible work pattern was part time work, with take up by women far exceeding that of men. Other flexible work patterns, e.g. home working, career breaks, job sharing etc were far less commonly provided.
- Most private sector employers were of the view that a senior position could not be filled by a part timer and found only two examples of reduced working hours at the top of organisations.
- Very few organisations (1 in 20) took practice measures to boost the quantity and / or quality of women's jobs and / or took measures to break down occupational segregation.

- Although occupational segregation was found to some extent in every organisation we visited, most employers regarded this as being linked to occupational choice made at a pre-employment stage.
- Private sector respondents / interviewees were satisfied that they were and equal opportunity employer as they equated equal opportunities with procedural fairness and a like as like approach rather than starting gate equality.
- Most private sector employers had unsystematic and haphazard pay structures and many asked employees not to discuss their pay with colleagues.
- Most private sector employers equated equal pay merely for equal pay for like work.
- Just over a third of employers responding to our survey said they had conducted an Equal Pay Review, but further information revealed that many confused an equal pay review with a pay review.

The key challenge in the South East is to spread greater understanding of the issues surrounding gender equality amongst employers, particularly SMEs, so that employers move beyond procedural fairness and towards a proactive approach to tackling their median gender pay average between men and women.

Lifestyle and Life Chances

In addition to the economic experiences of the two genders we also know from National Data collected through the Equalities review that:

- Men's life expectancy in the UK is approximately 5 years less than women
- Women can expect to live longer, but also endure more years in poor health or disability
- Men in Great Britain are more likely than women to be single, while women are more likely to be widowed or divorced.
- Women are more likely than men to live in a households with no access to a car (22% compared to 16% of men.)
- Men are more likely to exceed recommended limits for alcohol consumption than women.
- Nationally there is a higher rate of smoking amongst men than women, however in the age group 16-19, women are more likely to smoke than men.
- In 2005 43% of men were classified as overweight compared to 32% of women.
- In 2001 a higher proportion of single men than single women were owner occupiers (54 and 40% respectively)
- In 2001 there were 17 times as many men as women in prison.
- In 2001 there were two and a half times as many women as men in residential and nursing homes.
- In 2006, 65% of men and 55% of women had access to the internet.

SEEDA AS AN EMPLOYER

Staff Profile

SEEDA has a total staff population of 368 people, split over three sites, Guildford, Chatham and Hastings. SEEDA's staff is made up of 58% women and 42% men. Non of our staff have currently disclosed a transgender identity.

Occupational Segregation

Our male-female staff ration is 42% male and 58% female However, we can see from the table below that the number of women at senior management level is not proportionate to the overall male – female ratio, with female staff dominating in junior level positions. Interestingly, of the 176 staff that have worked for the organization for longer than 3 years, the majority are women.

SEEDA Staff broken down by gender [Junior management level]	Male-32% Female 68%
SEEDA Staff broken down by gender [officer level]	Male 13% Female 87%
Staffing broken down by gender [Senior management level]	Male 61% Female 39%
% of staff employed for 3 years or more by gender	Male-46%, Female 54% Of all SEEDA staff 47% (176) are long serving

Racial occupational segregation within SEEDA

In addition to gender based occupational segregation, we tried to assess if there were multiple issues of occupational segregation which were compounding the gender split. However, Our current HR core data does not include details of other forms occupational segregation within SEEDA and as such we will take steps to explore this important area as part of our Action plan composites.

EQUAL Pay

As part of the process of developing the Gender Equality Scheme SEEDA undertook an EQUAL pay review, based on the Equal Opportunities Commission five step model. This review showed that:

- Where Gender pay gaps within the same grade exist, these appear to be due to market supplements and variable lengths of service within the grade.
- Although the provision of company cars appears to be based on objective reason, there is an adverse impact on women, who are less likely to have access to a company car. This may be linked to occupational segregation.
- SEEDAs median gender pay differential in 2007 is approximately 35%.

Staff Consultation

In addition to this staff statistical analysis we also undertook more in-depth consultation with 49 staff to gauge their perceptions and experiences of gender equality issues within the Agency. 82% of these respondents were women and 18% were men. This perhaps suggests a prevailing perception that Gender Equality issues primarily relate to women.

Awareness

We discovered that of those staff surveyed, there was a good level of awareness of the wider equalities acts with 80% stating they were aware of the Gender Equality Duty. However, when questioned about their depth of understanding of the implications of the duty for them as individuals or managers, 50% stated that their understanding was poor with only 3% stating that their understanding was very good. This has an implication for us as an agency in terms of proactively addressing gender equality across all our functions. We therefore have prioritised training and awareness raising for all staff in our action plan.

Staff perceptions of the impact of gender on promotion

We also wanted to assess whether our staff perceived that gender played any part in their opportunities for promotion. 16% felt that their gender did have a part to play in their opportunities for progression, given the specific detail of individual cases we have committed to working with these individuals to assess the basis for their perception.

Staff Priorities

Through the consultation process we asked our staff to tell us where we could do better as an organisation to promote and monitor gender equality. The 6 key areas were clearly identified through this process were:

1. Ensuring Equal Pay
2. Increasing awareness of the Equalities Act
3. Improving communication in relation to equalities priorities
4. Improving / developing HR policies and procedures
5. Access to training
6. More flexible working arrangements

We then asked staff to rank their own personal priorities in work. This process clearly showed us that our staff value, at a personal level the ability to balance work and family as being their highest

priority, whether male or female and that they wish to ensure that as an employer we are treating them fairly in respect to Equal Pay.

We then asked our staff to tell us how they would like to be engaged in the ongoing process of monitoring and assessing progress on gender and other equality issues. Of those staff surveyed 49% said they would like to develop issue based focus groups while 44% preferred online consultations.

Mainstreaming Gender Equality

The final stage of our internal assessment was to undertake a review of how far our policy, programme and procedural framework supported the mainstreaming of gender equality into decision making across the agency. This assessment looked at three key areas:

- Human Resources Policy and Procedures
- Project development and management
- Procurement.:

HR: Policy Assessment and Gap Analysis

Our HR policy assessment and gap analysis involved us completing policy assessments which took the form of 2 distinct stages:

1. Base line policy assessment
2. Initial assessment of gender relevance

We then carried out a data and procedural gap analysis details of which were incorporated into our Gender Equality Scheme action plan. We found that the majority of our HR policies needed to be subject to a complete gender impact assessment. We are therefore in the process of redesigning our HR policies to take into account the various equality strands. This process will also enable us to reflect the recent major organizational restructure to the agency. We also aim to fully impact assess all HR policies and processes as part of our action plan.

Our policy assessment also involved us identifying core data captured by our Human Resources department. We were keen to see what data is currently captured as well as ways in which this core data could be used to support both staff development and the strategic planning process.

The core data assessment showed that we have not captured sufficient levels of HR core data. This process has helped us to re-evaluate the types of HR data required to support both staffing logistics and strategic planning within the organisation.

CONSULTATION

The Gender Equality Scheme was developed by the Communities and Culture Team within the Sustainable Prosperity Directorate of SEEDA. In the process of developing our scheme we have consulted with a range of internal and external stakeholders including:

- 1) An extensive staff online consultation on issues of gender equality in the workplace.
- 2) Presentation at SEEDAs Joint Staff Council
- 3) Consultation with representatives of the Regional Social Dialogue forum which includes the regional representatives of Unison and the TUC.
- 4) Consultation with PCS Union representatives within SEEDA.
- 5) Consultation with the regional third sector equalities advisory group which gave a specialist view of the cross cutting equalities issues for consideration.
- 6) Consultation with representatives of the Regional Skills for Productivity Alliance.
- 7) A special consultation workshop with the transgender community.
- 8) We also asked for responses from the regional team of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

We also consulted with a range of specialist teams within SEEDA including:

- 1) Enterprise
- 2) Employability
- 3) Skills
- 4) Human Resources

Consultation Responses

The response to our scheme has been overwhelmingly positive. However, consultees have asked us to consider the following additional issues in the implementation of the activities of the scheme.

- To seek to integrate the principles of the scheme across a policy that covers all elements of equality and discrimination.
- To be bold in the targets that we set for the reduction in the regional gender pay gap.
- To focus on translating some of the public sector best practice for the private sector. SEEDA has a number of key private sector interfaces that could support this process including: Business Link, the Regional and Local Skills for Productivity Alliances and the CBI.
- To seek to tackle gender pay issues on a sector by sector basis; because the specific nature of work in that sector is key to understanding why gender pay differences and occupational segregation persist.
- To use private sector diversity business case champions with the wider private sector.

- To undertake further research into the nature of the gender pay gap in the region, particularly to review the impact of the regions 'Head Office' Status on the persistence of this gap.
- To look at attitudinal and behavioural change as a key to addressing gender inequality.
- To provide a joint up approach to supporting people of any gender who have caring responsibilities.

The Transgender Community

We also held a consultation event with representatives from the transgender community in the South East. The key issues that we were asked to reflect in our gender equality strategies in relation to transgender people were:

- The need to support employers to protect the identity of people who have or are going through the transition process to their correct gender through appropriate data protection measures.
- The need to provide training and awareness for managers in order to help them to support transgender people to stay in employment.
- The need to ensure that transgender people are offered access to wider counseling support to help them to cope with key stress periods in the process of transitioning whilst in employment.
- To educate and support key employers to understand the specific gender equality issues related to the transgender community in a context of wider issues of gender inequality in the workplace. i.e. transgender experiences of occupational segregation.

We have sought to integrate these considerations into our scheme. Going forward we will be reviewing how we integrate all equality strand action plans into a single equality scheme for the Agency.

A list of individual respondees can be found at Appendix 10. Full consultation responses are available on request.

VISION & OBJECTIVES

“Our vision for gender equality in the South East is for all residents of the region to be able to maximize their economic potential regardless of their gender. “

In line with SEEDA’s primary role to support the economy of the South East, the success of this scheme will be measured against the following headline target:

“A sustained reduction in the median gender pay gap of the South East from a high of 15.9% in 2007 to at least the 2007 national average of 12.6% by 2016.”

Our headline target will be achieved through the following key objectives of the scheme:

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase the economic participation rate of women, particularly disabled women, the over 50s, and those from BAME groups.

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase the real income levels of people in work but on low incomes.

OBJECTIVE 3: Address occupational segregation in key sectors in the region.

OBJECTIVE 4: Increase the ownership of businesses by women.

OBJECTIVE 5: Address direct and indirect discrimination in the labour market on the basis of gender.

OBJECTIVE 6: Use SEEDAs regional knowledge base and influence to encourage other regional organisations to address gender equality issues in policy areas outside of the remit of a Regional Development Agency but have a link to economic development, for example: Access to health services which support people to enter and stay in employment.

OBJECTIVE 7: Ensure all SEEDA funded projects and programmes support gender equality, through the strategic use of Equality Impact Assessment and the enforcement of the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty through procurement.

OBJECTIVE 8: Understand the nature of the gender pay gap within SEEDA and provide support to all employees to maximise their economic potential.

CURRENT SEEDA ACTIVITIES

Our action plan outlines the detail of how we will achieve the overall reduction in the regional gender pay gap through these objectives. However, we have already made significant progress and outline some key examples of activities we are undertaking already at appendix 5.

Gender Equality Action Plan 2007-2010:

REF	OBJECTIVES	Who	Outcomes	Target Date
OBJECTIVE 1: Increase the economic participation rate of women, particularly disabled women, the over 50s, and those from BAME groups.				
	Work with strategic health authorities and the Regional Health strategy board to understand the gender biased health determinants of low economic participation in the region. Disseminate learning across key regional and sub regional partners.	Culture and Communities Team	Gender Targeted approaches to strategy by SHAs, PCTs and LAAs.	2009
	Provide leadership to the creation of a regional dependent care strategy to support the creation of accessible and affordable care solutions for dependents of any age.	Economic Inclusion & Smart Growth	Increased economic participation	2009
	Support economically inactive people from key target groups to overcome their own tendency to self exclude because of common mental health issues (depression, anxiety etc) by joining up the NHS Access to Psychological Therapies programme with pre-employment support programmes delivered through the Regional Skills for Productivity Alliance members.	Smart Growth	Reduction in self exclusion	2008/09
	Support employers to overcome discriminatory barriers in recruitment practice in employing the long term unemployed, over 50s, ethnic minorities etc through the provision of	Business Link/ CSR programme	More employers willing to	2008/09

	<p>information and resources about legal compliance and best practice and the promotion of the business case for diversity.</p> <p>Gain a better understanding of the benefit based barriers to entry to the workforce in the South East through a dedicated research programme.</p>	Equalities Team	<p>employ currently unemployed groups.</p> <p>Benefit barriers understood and solutions identified with key partners</p>	2009
OBJECTIVE 2: Increase the real income levels of people in work but on low incomes.				
	<p>Develop a regional financial inclusion strategy, addressing the regional infrastructure needed to support women and men on low incomes. Specifically in relation to personal debt and credit, financial planning awareness.</p> <p>Develop a living wage strategy for the region, highlighting the disparity in incomes caused for the working poor by high costs of living in the region. Use this strategy to lobby for benefit freedoms and flexibilities with HM Treasury, and a</p>	<p>SEEDA / Financial Inclusion strategy board</p> <p>SEEDA Economic Inclusion Team</p>	<p>More women able to get out of debt and in to work through accessing information, advice and capital through Community Banking mechanisms</p> <p>More women and men on low incomes able to</p>	<p>Strategy launched Summer 2008 Implementation ongoing 2008-2011.</p> <p>Living wage strategy developed 2008 lobbying</p>

	reassessment of the RDA funding formula (which is based on assessments against a national poverty line that does not account for cost of living)		transition off benefits and into work	with HMT ongoing from 2008.
	<p>Integrate Train to gain into the simplified business support offer, to encourage employer based learning by providing funding and improving the delivery of skills development.</p> <p>The Action for Business Colleges Programme will ensure that training providers and education institutions are capable of delivering skills and training solutions to meet the needs of businesses. Training pools will fund employer-led partnerships to address higher level skills needs within their sector and or supply chain.</p> <p>Co-ordinate the development of improved access to vocational training and work based learning brokerage systems, enabling women to access training for in work progress.</p> <p>Training provision developed in partnership with SEEDA will ensure that it applies the principles of the Leitch and Freud Reviews of Education and Welfare reform and proactively target women onto courses.</p>	Business Support	Employers given greater access to support	Ongoing throughout the lifetime of the RES
OBJECTIVE 3: Address occupational segregation in key sectors in the region.				
	Publish the Built environment sector review and integrate findings into the SE Excellence support package for the sector.	SE Excellence team	Improved understanding of the nature of occupational segregation	2008

	<p>Take forward the recommendations of the regional child workforce research, supporting improved retention of men and women in the childcare profession.</p>	Employability	<p>within the construction industry</p> <p>Improved retention and gender equality in the children's workforce.</p>	2009-10
	<p>Undertake research with sector skills councils and regional sector consortia to understand and address occupational segregation in individual sectors.</p>	Sector skills councils, SEEDA, Regional Consortia	<p>Development of joined up strategy on specific sectors</p>	2009-10
	<p>Build on best practice of Unison and the TUC to develop a regional strategy for disseminating information to the private and third sectors.</p>	Unison, TUC, SEEDA	<p>Improved information and application of best practice in the third and private sectors</p>	2008/09

	Undertake wider research with Unison and the TUC to assess comparative improvements in occupational segregation within key sectors over the last 30 years and build best practice recommendations for other sectors from this research.	Smart Growth	Understanding of why OS improvements have been made in some sectors and not others	2009/10
OBJECTIVE 4: Increase the ownership of businesses by women.				
	Work with Business Link to ensure all publically funded business support is accessible and relevant to women. Evidenced by all providers achieving or working towards Prowess Flagship status.	Womens Enterprise Strategy Board (WESB)	More women accessing business support.	2010
	Capacity build business support providers to be able to reach women from disadvantaged backgrounds, the over 50s, disabled and from ethnic minority communities.	WESB with funding from SEEDA	More women from disadvantaged backgrounds accessing business support	2010
	Improve information about women's ability to access business support by ensuring Business Link disaggregate data.	Business Link (through procurement process with SEEDA)	Information available to improve services to women	Achieved 2007.
	Improve women's access to finance through:			

	<p>Development of women friendly Business Angel Network</p> <p>Creation of women focused Community Development finance products across the entire region for women traditionally excluded from accessing mainstream finance.</p> <p>Deliver women friendly investment readiness programmes</p> <p>Research the benefit transition barriers to starting up a business experienced by women.</p>	<p>Finance South East</p> <p>SEEDA</p> <p>WESB</p> <p>SEEDA Equalities Team</p>	<p>More women accessing Angel Finance</p> <p>More disadvantaged women starting a business and entering economic activity.</p> <p>More women ready to take on commercial finance to start or grow their business.</p> <p>Greater awareness of the barriers, resulting in a strategy to overcome them.</p>	<p>2008/09</p> <p>Achieved 2007.</p> <p>Achieved 2007.</p> <p>2009</p>
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	<p>Improve the provision of flexible childcare in the region for women entrepreneurs through the development and implementation of a regional dependent care strategy</p> <p>Raise awareness of women's enterprise through a dedicated programme of PR including a roadshow, publications and website.</p> <p>Influence the promotion and development of womens enterprise nationally through the chairing of the National Womens Enterprise Taskforce</p>	<p>Equalities & Employability Team</p> <p>WESB</p> <p>SEEDA Chief Exec</p>	<p>Greater number of women able to engage in business as a result of accessing childcare</p> <p>More women aware of opportunities to set up and run businesses</p> <p>National Profile of Womens enterprise raised</p>	<p>2009/10</p> <p>Achieved 2007 and ongoing.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
OBJECTIVE 5: Address direct discrimination in the labour market on the basis of gender.				
	<p>Work with Business Link to develop resources for SMEs that support them to adopt best practice in gender equality. Specifically in relation to flexible working, maternity and paternity benefits, childcare provision and proactive recruitment practices.</p>	<p>Enterprise & Culture & Communities</p>	<p>All employers taking a best practice approach to gender equality</p>	<p>2007-2009</p>

	Support the development of a regional voice for equality and diversity for the third sector in the region that can challenge a wide range of stakeholders to adapt their employment practices.	Culture and Communities	VCs able to communicate the views of diversity groups into regional policy	Transition programme running 2007-2009
	Run workshops on gender equality and the gender pay gap for employers in the region in partnership with the Social Dialogue forum.	Social Dialogue Forum Rep	Employers given support to address gender equality	Autumn – April 2008
	Build the business case for gender equality through the development of best practice case studies in HR practices from employers in the region.	Culture and Communities	Awareness of best practice tools raised with employers	2008-2009
OBJECTIVE 6: Use SEEDAs regional knowledge base and influence to encourage other regional organisations to address gender equality issues in policy areas outside of the remit of a Regional Development Agency but have a link to economic development, for example: Access to health services which support people to enter and stay in employment.				
	Develop a comprehensive understanding of equality and diversity in the region through the development of an online equality data tool that can be used by both SEEDA and its regional partners.	Equality & Research Teams	Greater understanding of the nature of inequality in the region	May 2008

	Ensure that SEEDA gains an holistic view of key services and policy areas in relation to equality through the creation of an expert equalities panel to scrutinize and advise on regional policies and programmes, ensure that there is a dedicated expert on gender inequality.	Equality Team	Expert scrutiny provided in decision making	June 08
OBJECTIVE 7: Ensure all SEEDA funded projects and programmes support gender equality, through the strategic use of Equality Impact Assessment and the enforcement of the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty through procurement.				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an ongoing EIA of the Regional Economic Strategy, its implementation plan and the SEEDA corporate plan, taking full account of gender equality. • All staff to have completed equality impact assessment training. • All directorates to develop a timetable of Equality Impact Assessment for key projects/ programmes and policies. • Workshops to be held to support directorates to set equalities targets for external project/programmes/ policies. • Ensure that qualitative gender monitoring is in place for all contract bidders and that this data is constructively 	<p>Equalities Team led in partnership with Directors Group.</p> <p>HR & Performance Management</p> <p>Executive Directors</p> <p>Performance Management</p> <p>Procurement</p>	<p>Strategic Equalities Framework Developed</p> <p>Equalities understanding translated through all functions of the agency</p>	<p>Outline framework from sub groups June 08</p> <p>March 08</p> <p>June 08</p> <p>September 08</p> <p>September 08</p>

<p>used to shape service provision and delivery within procurement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carryout further consultation with Tender Bidders in relation to gender equality service improvements • Explore ways in which we can attract tender bids from female led businesses and organizations • Identify contracts for which gender equality is a core requirement and include this in the specification for the contract, using EIAs where necessary. • Include a requirement in every contract that the contractor must comply with the anti-discrimination provisions of the GED. • Where relevant, specify the evidence the contractor may need to provide to demonstrate its compliance with the general or specific duties. • Ensure that gender equality is reflected, and given due weight, in the specification, the criteria for selection and award of the contract, and in the contract conditions, consistent with EC and UK procurement rules. 			September 08
	Procurement		September 08
	Procurement & Supplier Diversity Project team.		September 08
	Project Managers		September 08
	Procurement		September 08
	Procurement		September 08
	Procurement		September 08
Procurement		Ongoing	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure that contractors fully understand any gender equality requirements of the contract. • We will monitor the way the contract is fulfilled in respect of gender equality, where relevant. • We will train all staff involved in procurement work, so that they fully understand the provisions of the SDA and how the gender equality duty is relevant to their work. 	<p>& Contract Managers</p> <p>Procurement and contract managers</p> <p>Procurement and Performance management</p>		<p>Ongoing</p> <p>ongoing</p>
<p>OBJECTIVE 8: Understand the nature of the gender pay gap within SEEDA and provide support to all employees to maximise their economic potential.</p>				
	<p>Gain better understanding of the determinants of the gender pay gap within the organization through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The development of gender issue specific focus groups and online questionnaires. ○ An assessment of occupational segregation within SEEDA. <p>Raise the profile of gender equality issues in the agency through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of the creation of an equalities awards scheme. Ensuring that all policies are developed in consultation with staff and are effectively communicated. 	<p>HR</p>	<p>Median gender Pay gap in the agency reduced. Staff awareness and ability to identify gender equality issues raised.</p>	<p>June 08</p> <p>2009</p>

	<p>Develop a positive action recruitment and progression process to support all groups to progress effectively within the agency</p> <p>Develop a final Equal Pay policy which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Supplements – there is a need to prepare objective, evidence based justification for the market premia in order to check validity and application. • Data Quality – it is essential to review the accuracy and availability/ format of data holding to increase the quality. This will enable SEEDA to inform and monitor pay judgements and decisions as well as facilitating access to key information. • Allowances – Allowances should be separated from basic salary and the grades renamed with market premia. E.g. SMPA property. • Policies – the relevant policies need to be available in one place, and made more accessible for employees to review. • Employee consultation – a formal process of consultation should be developed in order to provide a fully informed position. • Communication Plan – the development of a full 2 way 			<p>April 08</p> <p>April 08</p>
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	<p>communication process for staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure steps are taken to redress any unjustified pay imbalances • Monitor starting salaries by gender <p>Finalise and roll out a flexible working programme across the agency, Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete full evaluation of flexible working pilot • Ensure gender equality is embedded in flexible working programme • Publicize flexible working options • Train managers to implement flexible working systems • Monitor take up of flexible working programme. • Assess experience of women returning from pregnancy leave and address any potential negative experiences. • Undertake more in-depth analysis of the caring responsibilities of staff and develop a joint owned support plan. • Publish and implement the revised Harassment and bullying policy. • Produce guidelines for managers on supporting transgender / transsexual staff. • Monitor changes in staff experiences of gender and other equalities issues through the annual staff survey 			<p>June 2008</p>
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Implementation, Monitoring and Review.

SEEDA recognizes that the Gender Equality Scheme has to be a 'living' policy to be effective, and will therefore keep it constantly under review and regularly monitored. SEEDA will seek to ensure that the Scheme is publicly updated on an annual basis and that all action plans, guidance and standards set out in the scheme are subject to monitoring and assessment.

The key driver to the achievement of the actions contained in this Gender Equality Scheme is the leadership and ownership of the scheme at the highest level. The agency will seek to mainstream equalities considerations through the use of the organizations Equality Impact Assessment process which is outlined at appendix 8.

Leadership will be driven primarily by the SEEDA Board and Chief Executive. SEEDA has created a Board position to lead on all aspects of equality and diversity for the Agency with an Executive Director responsible for Equality and Diversity at the operational level.

The drive for the implementation, monitoring and review of the externally focused aspects of the Gender Equality Scheme will come from RES Cross Cutting Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity which will be formally operational in 2008. Internal focused activities will be driven by the HR director who will have reporting responsibility to the Executive and Non Executive Boards. Both the HR Director and the RES Cross Cutting E&D group will be supported by the Inclusion and Equalities team in the Sustainable Prosperity Directorate.

The board will be updated on key internal and external facing issues through quarterly submissions to the Agency's Board Report. The Scheme itself will be formally reviewed in its entirety at least every two years. This process will include refinement and changes to the scheme to ensure its continued effectiveness and ability to improve the SEEDA's approach as an organisation to Gender Equality.

Responsibility for operational delivery of the Gender Equality Scheme rests across all Divisions of SEEDA. Each Executive Director has responsibility to ensure that their staff has appropriate skills and knowledge of Equality and Diversity policy at the corporate level.

In addition, the action plan of the Gender Equality Scheme will be integrated into the corporate planning cycle of the organization, and will be form part of the divisional reporting cycle. By integrating the plan into the wider Corporate Plan enables divisions to build in resources to address Equality and Diversity at an organizational level.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

SEEDA's DELIVERY MODEL.

SEEDA is arranged around 6 Directorates.

- Strategy
- Global Competitiveness
- Smart Growth
- Sustainable Prosperity
- Infrastructure and Development
- Resources

These Directorates deliver 4 core business areas:

1. **Corporate Functions** - These are the functions of running the 'day to day business' of being a public agency they include:

- Human Resources
- Procurement
- Performance Management Systems
- Corporate Strategy
- Finance

2. **Direct Delivery** - SEEDA delivers a number of projects directly within the region. This means we are responsible for managing the design and implementation stages. This is the smallest proportion of our activity.

3. **Devolved Delivery** - The majority of our work is delivered on our behalf by our partners. Our role here is to identify areas of need through evidence building and partnership based strategy development, to commission partners to deliver and to monitor impact via evaluation and output collection.

4. **Strategic Influencing** - Another significant area of work is our co-ordination and strategic influencing role with the wider Public, Private and Third Sector. Our functions here focus on using our unique position and expertise to communicate and negotiate to achieve our wider policy aims.

SEEDA and the Regional Economic Strategy

As the Regional Development Agency for the South East, SEEDA has a statutory duty to prepare a Regional Economic Strategy (RES). The RES is the guiding document for economic development for the region. SEEDA has a key leadership

role in the implementation of the RES, with the success of the strategy dependent on joint working and partnership across the regions key agencies.

The RES covers three strategic areas of interest:

- **Global Competitiveness**
- **Smart Growth**
- **Sustainable Prosperity**

These three areas of priority are delivered within the context of three cross cutting themes which have to be integrated across the approach to implementation. These themes are:

- Culture, sport and the creative industries
- Equality and Diversity
- Rural Areas

APPENDIX 2

GENDER EQUALITY TERMINOLOGY EXPLAINED

The European Commission defines Gender Equality as the ability to ensure that:

“human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by strict gender roles; that the different behavior, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally considered, valued and favored”.

(European Commission, DG EMPL, One hundred words for equality: A glossary of terms on equality between women and men, 1998, L-2985)

However, to fully understand the implications of gender equality on public policy some key concepts need to be defined:

Sex and Gender

While ‘sex’ refers to the biological state of being male or female, gender refers to the socially defined aspects of being male or female.

Trans Gender: The Gender Equality scheme seeks to provide equality for trans gender people. Trans gender is defined as those people who have the desire to live and be accepted as a member of the opposite sex (men who feel they should have been born a woman and vice versa). Other terms commonly used are Trans man (female to male) and trans woman (male to female). Issues of Trans gender relate to self-identity.

Gender roles

Are those activities that are considered by a given culture to be appropriate to a woman or a man. In most societies, men’s roles are concentrated in the productive and/or community/political spheres, while women bear the major burden of reproductive roles, including household chores and childcare responsibilities.

Gender Mainstreaming

Promoting gender equality implies the desire to ensure, full, equal and representative participation in all aspects of society. It also seeks to support the redistribution of power, decision making and caring equally across men and women. The process of gender mainstreaming in public policy seeks to ensure that gender considerations are built into all stages of planning, design and implementation of public services and activities and supports monitoring and

evaluation of progress towards achieving equality. Gender mainstreaming is the core objective of this scheme.

APPENDIX 3

The Gender Equality duty

The Gender Equality Duty is the last of a suite of 4 statutory duties for the public sector to address single strand equalities issues:

- The Race Equality Duty which came into force in 2002.
- The Age Equality Duty which came into force in October 2006.
- The Disability Duty which came into force in December 2006.
- The Gender Equality Duty which came into force in April 2007.

The four duties sit against a backdrop of refocused effort to address Equalities holistically throughout public policy as outlined in the Equalities Review “Fairness and Freedom for all.” (2007.)

To strengthen the monitoring of implementation of all four duties, the UK will merge all its National Equalities Commissions (Commission for Racial Equality, Disability Rights Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission) into the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. (CEHR) in October 2007. This now places equalities at the heart of Human Rights legislation and public policy.

Under the dictates of the Equalities Act 2006 all public authorities are required to pay due regard to:

- Promoting gender equality
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment when carrying out their functions.

The above is referred to as the General duty. This differs from previous gender related equality legislation in the following ways:

- there is a positive requirement for public authorities to be proactive
- the requirement is to promote equality, not just to avoid discrimination
- Due consideration must be made to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment against transsexual people.

Requirements under the Equalities Act 2006

The Equal Opportunities Commission has recommended that public sector bodies take six steps to meet the Gender Equality Duty. This is known as the specific duty.

Step 1: Gather information on how your work affects men and women

Step 2: Consultation with stakeholders

Step 3: Impact assessment of policies and practices relating to both sexes

Step 4: Identify priorities and set gender equality objectives

Step 5: Action planning for objectives

Step 6: Publish Gender Equality Scheme

APPENDIX 4

REGIONAL DIVERSITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Male Female Ratio

- There are 8.237 million residents in the South East of which 4.028 (48.9%) million are male and 4.209 (51.1%) million are female.

Age

- 22% of our population are aged 24 or under. Of which 48.68 % are women and 51.32 % are men.
- 47.6% of our population are aged between 25 and 59. Of which 50.62 % are women and 49.08 % are men.
- 22% of our population are aged over 60. Of which 55.27 % are women and 44.73% are men.

Ethnicity

2001 census data tells us that in the South East:

- 4.9% (approximately 400,000 people) of our population was from non white ethnic origins of which the largest ethnic minority communities were from mixed, Indian and Pakistani backgrounds. These communities also tend to have younger age profiles.

Faith

- The largest affiliation to a religion in the South East is to the Christian Faith at 72.78% of the population.
- 16.5% of the population state they have no religion.
- 1.36% are affiliated to Islam
- 0.47% affiliated to Sikhism
- 0.56%affiliated to Hinduism and;
- 0.24% affiliated to Judaism.

Disability

- 844,000 people of working age in the South East have an impairment.
- Disability rates in the region increase with age, only 9% of adults aged between 16-24 have an impairment compared to 44% of the 50 and over age group.

APPENDIX 5

CURRENT SEEDA ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase the economic participation rate of women, particularly disabled women, the over 50s, and those from BAME groups.

Regional Financial Inclusion Strategy – Over the last three years SEEDA has been developing a range of activities to support access to finance for the regions most deprived communities. In 2008 SEEDA will launch the regions first Financial Inclusion strategy. This strategy will provide a platform for the development of a joined up, regional infrastructure for the delivery of personal and enterprise financial inclusion products and services.

EXODUS – The EXODUS programme is an innovation research project covering the London and South East Prison and Probation service areas. Over the last 3 years it has supported approximately 900 ex-offenders in a process of rehabilitation and re-engagement in employment. The programme supports prisoners on release to overcome discrimination through support in finding housing, overcoming drug and alcohol problems and providing intermediate labour market programmes as a stepping stone to reintegrating into mainstream employment.

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase the real income levels of people in work but on low incomes.

Regional Living Wage Methodology – A key sub component of the financial inclusion strategy is the development of Living Wage standards across the region. This process will enable SEEDA to reassess the definition of those groups living below acceptable income levels by including the variable cost of living rates in the region. This methodology will support SEEDA in lobbying HM Treasury for benefit flexibilities and freedoms, supporting the most economically vulnerable to have a successful transition back into work. The methodology will also be used to champion public sector endorsement of living wage standards for public sector workers, and the passing on of these standards to the private and third sectors through the public procurement process.

Workplace Nurseries Pilots: Childcare costs are one of the biggest barriers for those in poor paid and/ or part time work from improving their living conditions, taking part in more training or taking on full time employment. In 2007 SEEDA worked with two local authorities in the region to obtain Workplace Nurseries pilot funding from the Department of Work and pensions. The pilots are testing the role of employer ownership over the development and running of childcare

facilities. The outcomes of this work will feed into the regional dependent care strategy being developed in 2008/09.

OBJECTIVE 3: Address occupational segregation in key sectors in the region.

Computer Club for Girls (CC4G) is an award winning programme aimed at bringing to life the fun and excitement of a career in technology for 150,000 girls, aged 10-14 in the UK. The programme developed by SEEDA in partnership with e-skills UK initially supported 3500 girls in the South east Region in its pilot phase to engage in the possibility of a career in the IT sector. In 2005 it became a national programme and was rolled out to 3600 schools across the country.

Stimulating Physics and Engineering across the South East - SEEDA, through the regional STEM support centre reporting to SESETAC, is working to identify a small number of key projects of critical mass, which address the need to encourage more students to study strategic shortage subjects. As a start to this, it has announced the contracting of a project which will stimulate more students to take up physics and engineering and provide a valuable CPD resource for primary and secondary schoolteachers, by working with two high profile centres in Canterbury and Winchester.

The project will fund the development of an observatory at the Langton Star Centre in Canterbury as well as equip a planetarium at the INTECH Science Learning Centre in Winchester. These facilities will provide, in collaboration with the regional Science Learning Centre at Southampton and SETNET, CPD for schoolteachers including physics teachers without a recognised subject qualification and outreach to schools which will stimulate an interest in physics and engineering in a wide range of primary and secondary schools.

ESF Research Programme: SEEDAs 2004-2007 European Social Fund Co-finance Implementation plan included a strategic theme on Harnessing Diversity. The programme has undertaken a wide range of research and pilot activities including funding a regional research programme into promoting gender equality in the workplace and supporting disabled and BAME community entrepreneurs.

Children's Workforce Development Research Report -Commissioned by e Children's Workforce Development Council, Government Office South East, the Learning and Skills Council and the South East England Development Agency to enhance the understanding of the issues facing the children's sector workforce in the South East. The report focuses on the early years and children's social care workforces, which are priority areas identified by the government's Children's Workforce Strategy. The research report will feed into the regional dependent care strategy to be developed in 2008/09.

Training Pools Programme - The Training Pools programme will introduce a model that addresses skills gaps for adults at the technical, professional and skilled trades level – NVQ Level 3 and above. It is often within these categories where there is a significant level of continuing replacement, however, young people are disinclined to learn the specific vocational skills required. Therefore upskilling an existing adult workforce is of continuing importance. A Training Pool is a consortia of employers, learning providers, trade bodies and employer organisations (e.g Sector Skills Councils, LSPA) that bid to SEEDA to develop a training programme that will meet their needs which are not currently being met in the region by existing FE/HE or private sector providers. There is an urgent need to address skills shortages at Level 3 and above given such shortages are inhibiting the development of companies in SE region. There is an imperative to address this issue if the SE region is to achieve its aim of developing a high-technology, high-quality, high-skill and high-value economy.

Training Pools will enable:

- Business to strengthen their influence on what support and provision is required and how this is shaped to meet their skills needs
- Business to facilitate collaborations with training providers to develop the most relevant and useful training
- Leverage and support from other sources by working with established sector consortia
- Identification and channelling of funding for training for which existing training provision and funding is not currently available. It will thus complement and supplement rather than duplicate current provision.

South East Skills & Employment for London 2012 – SEEDA, in partnership with the Regional Skills for Productivity Alliance and the South East 2012 Steering group has developed a regional programme to support training and employment in sectors related to London 2012. The programme will be used as stimulus to engaging a wide range of businesses and individuals to engage in training and development programmes. Activities will range from volunteering programmes to business development and start –up.

Built environment professions and diversity – SEEDA has commissioned a research project looking at the skills needs of the region in relation to the Built Environment. It outlines the need to build diversity into the recruitment and retention processes of the built environment sector and forms the first stage of a wider piece of work to increase the level of diversity in the profession in the region and has a specific element relating to the gender profile of the profession.

OBJECTIVE 4: Increase the ownership of businesses by women.

Enterprise Gateway Network – our enterprise gateway network was reconfigured in 2007 to focus primarily on the needs of excluded groups in the

region. This process has included the commissioning of a transformational business support programme. This programme will help enterprise directors to gain the tools to best support women, ethnic minorities, disabled people etc to start up and grow businesses.

Inclusive Finance CIC – Inclusive Finance CIC was established in partnership with SEEDA in 2007 to provide enterprise start-up loans to people excluded from traditional forms of finance. The company operates right across the region and provides start-up loans of up to £20,000 to excluded women, ethnic minorities, older people, disabled people and those living in poverty.

Women's Enterprise Ambassadors Programme – SEEDA operates a Women's enterprise Ambassadors programme that recruits successful female entrepreneurs. The programme provides the opportunity for women from all backgrounds in the region to be inspired by other women that have started up and run businesses.

OBJECTIVE 5: Address direct discrimination in the labour market on the basis of gender.

Business Link Corporate Social Responsibility Programme : SEEDA is currently developing advice and support packages for SMEs relating to best practice in equality and diversity. This includes the delivery of workshops for employers wishing to adopt best practice and ensure legal compliance to the gender equality duty and best practice.

Close the Gap – SEEDA, in partnership with the TUC and Unison, through the regional social dialogue forum, has developed a programme of awareness raising and support for employers across the region in relation to addressing the gender pay gap. The programme, known as Close the Gap is open to any employer from the public, private and third sectors interested in proactively addressing their organisations gender pay gap.

Anti- Discrimination Networks – SEEDA has supported a range of anti-discrimination networks and information programmes in the region, including the South East Disability Information network (SEDIN), Disability Means Business, and the South East Multi Ethnic Development Agency. SEEDA is also a board member of the regional third sector equality network.

OBJECTIVE 6: Use SEEDAs regional knowledge base and influence to encourage other regional organisations to address gender equality issues in social policy areas outside of the remit of a Regional Development Agency.

Regional Data and Analysis - In order to enhance SEEDA's existing efforts to comply with the various Equality Schemes and the emerging Single Equality Act,

we are currently commissioning a comprehensive mapping of socio-economic data for the six core equality groups against their communities of geography and interest. This will enable colleagues in partner agencies (public, private and 3rd sector) to access baseline data on these groups via the Data Hub. As part of this project, we are also seeking to gather as much existing statistical data on the prevalence, geography and economic impact of mental health conditions in the region.

Recognising the complexities associated with this project, SEEDA will also be undertaking a gap analysis into availability of regional data as it affects the equality and diversity target groups (and gaps in mental health data), and recommend what steps need to be taken to plug any gaps and scope the resource implications.

Strategic Influencing -SEEDAs equality and inclusion team currently have a regional seat on a number of strategic policy boards. The role of the equality and inclusion team is to ensure that these regional strategies consider equality and diversity issues in all of their activities. They include:

- The regional mental health and employment strategy.
- The regional health strategy
- The regional homelessness forum
- The regional forum on ageing
- The women's enterprise strategy board
- The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Communities sub group.

In some cases, such as the 2012 sub group , the equalities team also provided strategic support to the Equality Impact Assessment process.

OBJECTIVE 7: Ensure all SEEDA funded projects and programmes support gender equality, through the strategic use of Equality Impact Assessment and the enforcement of the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty through procurement.

Equality Impact Assessment

SEEDAs role as a commissioner of projects and programmes puts it in a unique position to influence the design of regional programmes in a positive way. Over the last two years, integrated the principles of equality impact assessment and monitoring throughout our project development process. This includes:

- An initial equality impact assessment (EIA) checklist process at the outset of project development.
- A review of the initial EIA recommendations by the Equalities team before the project is approved.

- A more in depth EIA process for projects that are identified as having the potential for negative impacts on groups identified within equality legislation.
- Equalities training for project managers, to assist their advisory roles to devolved delivery partners.
- Equalities guidelines within wider evaluation procedures for project and programmes.

Strategically, SEEDAs Equality Impact Assessment flows from the Equality Impact Assessment of the Regional Economic Strategy. This has led onto the creation of a strategic, ongoing EIA process which is cascaded through the individual Target Action Plans of the RES implementation plan and for SEEDA, through an EIA of the Corporate Plan.

This approach encourages target leads and directorates to ensure that policy and programmes have been fully Equality Impact Assessed at each stage, with an ongoing requirement of those staff responsible for the implementation of Corporate Plan Objectives to ensure that Equality considerations are built into programme design.

In 2007 we also established a project approval process which requires the Equalities team to sign off project managers screening assessments when requesting approval for funding for projects in the region. The assessment recommendations of the equalities team are a condition of funding approval and staff are required to turn around recommendations within a month.

Procurement

We recognise that the procurement process is integral to Gender Equality. Procurement is an important gateway for many businesses and individuals who can assist us in the delivery of small and large scale projects and activities which constitute a large part of our core business activities.

The development of the GES enabled us to evaluate the way we currently monitor gender equality as part of the procurement process. There is considerable scope for us to introduce new and meaningful gender monitoring which can be used to aid both the marketing of large and small scale tenders and aid the strategic planning process in relation to procurement activities.

We do not currently monitor the diversity of contract bidders and therefore will ensure that new systems are put in place to capture key data. This will help us to identify and address any gender imbalances .We aim to improve access and tender opportunities for women led private business and service providers. This in turn will encourage supplier diversity and create new growth gateways for up and coming businesses who will also be able to bring fresh ideas and concepts along with flair and vision.

Our commitment to gender equality will also see us exploring and introducing new gender equality criteria for tender bidders to ensure that we work with businesses and organisations that can demonstrate their commitment to Equality and Diversity.

SEEDA will be developing a regional framework for work for encouraging and promoting Supplier Diversity in the South East that adheres to the aspirations set out in the Regional Economic Strategy and the needs of our diverse communities. Using regional evidence, the Supplier Diversity framework will seek to ensure private and public sector procurement managers adopt fair and transparent procurement practices and in doing so, broaden their supply chain activities and generate new forms of wealth creation for under-represented groups.

OBJECTIVE 8: Reducing the median gender pay gap of SEEDA employees from 30% to at least 20% by 2010.

Flexible working – In 2006 SEEDA operated a flexible working pilot in the sustainable prosperity directorate. The pilot proved to be extremely successful and is currently being rolled out to all staff over 2007-2008.

Appendix 6

Research / Data sources

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Appendix 7

Glossary of terms

Affordable Housing: subsidised housing at below market prices or rents for those households who cannot afford market housing. Usually managed by a registered social landlord, generally a housing association

Asian: refers to people who self define as being Asian, East African Asian, British Asian or originate from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal or China.

Bisexual: a man or woman who is emotionally, physically and/or sexually attracted to both men and women.

Black: is an inclusive term that refers to all ethnic groups who have a common experience of discrimination on the basis of their skin colour. It also includes those who self-define as black. In relation to statistical data collection, such as the census, black has been more narrowly defined to refer to people who self define as any of the black or black British categories which are: African, Caribbean, or black other.

Disability: the Disability Discrimination Act defines disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities’. However, disabled people’s organisations prefer a social approach, which defines disability as ‘the loss or limitation of opportunities that prevent people who have impairments from taking part in the life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers’.

Disabled person: (people) a disabled person is someone who has an impairment, experiences externally exposed barriers and self-identifies as a disabled person.

Diversity: the differences in the values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnic backgrounds, sexuality, skills, knowledge and life experiences of each individual in any group of people. This term refers to differences between people and is used to highlight individual need. It can be used inappropriately as an alternative to equal opportunities. It avoids reference to discrimination and the impact that power imbalances have on different communities.

Equalities: used as a short hand term to refer to all work addressing issues of discrimination and disadvantage, particularly as it relates to race equality, disability, gender, sexuality, faith and age.

Equality: the vision or aim of creating a society (or aspects of society) where power and quality of life is shared equally and both individuals and groups are able to live their lives free from discrimination and oppression.

Equal Opportunities: the development of practices that promote the possibility of fair and equal chances for all to develop their full potential in all aspects of life and the removal of barriers of discrimination and oppression experienced by certain groups.

Ethnicity: an individual's identification with a group sharing any or all of the following: nationality, lifestyles, religion, customs and language.

Gay: this term is used when referring to gay men or women. The word 'homosexual' is clinical in origin (implying a condition or illness) and is usually viewed as an offensive term by gay people. The word 'gay' is normally attributed to men. However at times it can be used as an all-encompassing term for gay men, lesbians, and bisexual people.

Gay man: a man who is emotionally, physically and/or sexually attracted to men.

Gender: a concept that refers to the social differences between women and men that have been learned, are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. The term is often used to differentiate from 'sex' which refers to biological differences.

Homophobia: is fear or dislike of an individual or group of individuals because they are perceived not to conform to what is viewed as normal masculine or feminine behaviour. The term has come to refer particularly to fear and hatred of homosexuals and homosexuality.

Lesbian: a woman who is emotionally, physically and/or sexually attracted to women. Not all women are comfortable with the term lesbian and some choose to identify as either gay or a gay woman.

Minority ethnic people: this term is widely used as a general term to refer to people who belong to an ethnic group numerically smaller than the predominant white group in the UK. This includes groups distinguished by their skin colour, as well as others, such as Irish, Turkish, Cypriot, Jewish and traveling people [travellers/Romany].

Regeneration of an area includes, securing that land and buildings are brought into effective use; contributing to, or encouraging, economic development; creating an attractive and safe environment; preventing crime or reducing the fear of crime; providing or improving housing or social and recreational facilities, for the purpose of encouraging people to live or work in the area or of benefiting

people who live there; providing employment for local people; providing or improving training, educational facilities or health services for local people; assisting local people to make use of opportunities for education, training or employment; benefiting local people who have special needs because of disability or because of their sex or the racial group to which they belong.

Regional Development Agencies: these are Non-Departmental Public Bodies, sponsored by Central Government Departments, for the development of each of the UK's regions. They are particularly involved in site acquisitions towards securing the development, growth and regeneration of areas which are intense in Brownfield land and / or require large-scale remediation, such as in the Thames Gateway

Regional Economic Strategy: it is the Framework within which every Regional Development Agency (RDA) works. This Strategy is produced every three to four years in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and defines the region's priorities and targets for the work of all the partners in its delivery – public, private and voluntary

Sexuality: sexuality is a person's emotional, physical and/or sexual attraction, and the expression of that attraction. It is not a choice that people make; rather sexuality is something that people are born with. Sexuality refers to both gay and heterosexual (or 'straight') people.

Social Inclusion: the position from where someone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society. It aims to remove barriers for people or for areas that experience a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, poor health and family background.

Trans people: people who have the desire to live and be accepted as a member of the opposite sex (men who feel they should have been born a woman and vice versa). Other terms commonly used are Trans man (female to male) and trans woman (male to female). Issues of Trans gender relate to self-identity.

SME's – small to medium sized enterprises

In general, statistical definitions of an SME use one or more of three defining measurements; the number of employees; turnover and the size of the balance sheet.

Or

A stipulation of the European Regional Development Fund Grant is that potential beneficiaries are, amongst other things a Small to Medium Sized Enterprise. SME's are companies that employ less than 250 people, have a turn over of less than €50 million (or a balance sheet total of less than €43 million), and not more than 25% owned by a non-SME.

Abbreviations

ABC	Asian Business Council
BAME	Black, Asian and minority ethnic
BME:	Black and minority ethnic
CEHR	Commission for Equality and Human Rights
CIOB	Chartered Institute of Building
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
EQIA	Equality Impact Assessment
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
ESF	European Social Fund
FEW	Funding Enterprising Women
EU	European Union
GES	Gender Equality Scheme
GOR	Government Office Regions
GOSE	Government Office for the South East
HR	Human Resources
JIVE	Joining Policy, Joining Practice
JC+	Job Centre Plus
LIDP	Local Infrastructure Development Plan
PFI	Private Finance Institute
PROWESS	Promoting Women's Enterprise Support
RAISE	Regional Action and Involvement South East
RCIS	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
SDA	Sex Discrimination Act
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency
SEMEDA	South East Multi-Ethnic Development Agency
SECT sectors	Science, Engineering, Construction and Technology (SECT)
SET	Science Engineering and Technology

TEK	Technology Enterprise Kent
UKRC	UK Resource Centre for Women
WAMT	Women and Manual Trades
VCO	Voluntary or Community Organisation

Appendix 8

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

SEEDA'S Equality Impact Assessment process has three levels of assessment:

1. • **Initial Assessment/Screening**
2. • **Partial EIA**
3. • **Full EIA**

The reason for the three levels is that the complexity and diversity of SEEDA's functions means that a full assessment may not be necessary in every case, nor may it be appropriate to conduct a full assessment initially. Using the three levels enables a reasonable, practical and manageable approach to the process of EIA throughout the agencies functions.

6.8 It must be remembered that which ever level is undertaken, it must be **proportionate** to the likely impact of the item under consideration. The more **substantial** the impact on the community the more in-depth the EIA will be.

6.9 The Initial Assessment or screening

6.9.1 This will play a valuable role in new project, policy or function formulation, or when considering changes to an existing project, policy or function and will be carried out in all cases. It is effectively a tool for deciding whether or not the project, policy or function needs a more in depth analysis. The main difference between the initial assessment/screening and a partial EIA is that it is based on what information we already have/what we already know in relation to the policy and will identify where more information is needed.

6.9.2 Before embarking on an EIA, it is important to determine the aims of the project, policy or function. From this point it is possible to determine the EIA's terms of reference and whether a partial or full assessment is necessary.

6.9.3 On those occasions where one or more public authorities share responsibility for a project, policy or function then necessary arrangements will be put in place and they should then co-operate in carrying out an EIA.

6.9.4 Where SEEDA has an involvement in the service delivery of a project, policy or function which is set elsewhere it will not be appropriate to disregard this involvement. As an EIA proceeds it may become apparent that certain activities are associated. Where this is the case then it may be appropriate to link the EIA's of these activities.

6.9.5 The proposed holistic EIA initial assessment proforma is included at Annex 1.

6.10 The Partial Impact Assessment

6.10.1 A Partial Impact Assessment will build on an Initial Assessment, will outline risks and benefits, and will include the advice of experts and interested groups.

6.10.2 The Partial Impact Assessment is very similar to the Initial Assessment of a policy and will be undertaken if the Initial Assessment points to the possibility of unjustifiable differential impact on relevant groups. The Partial Impact Assessment will build on the Initial Assessment and explore the risks and benefits of the project, policy or function taking into account the advice of experts or interested groups.

6.10.3 The Partial Impact Assessment will have to clearly state the risks associated with the project, policy or function in relation to differential impact and weigh these against the benefits that the activities may have.

6.10.4 The partial EIA will invariably be used when there is not much information available on the topic in question and it is felt that more information obtained through informal consultation with relevant groups/experts will lead to a more informed decision about the project, policy or function. This type of assessment will also be of use when much of the activity is outside the control of SEEDA and information needs to be obtained from the other interested parties concerned with the project, policy or function. Should the Partial Impact Assessment point to a real concern about the activities in terms of differential impact which is echoed by the views of the experts/relevant groups, then it will be necessary to undertake a Full EIA.

6.10.5 Inevitably due to the Partial EIA being more involved than the Initial EIA, the information in the Partial EIA should be more comprehensive than that given in the Initial EIA.

6.11 THE FULL EIA

6.11.1 The Full EIA is a natural progression from the Partial EIA and will be undertaken if, after the Partial EIA, there are still real concerns about the project, policy or function in terms of differential/adverse impact which is echoed by the views of the experts/relevant groups.

6.11.2 The full EIA will build on the analysis of the Partial EIA but will be expanded in light of formal consultation, further research and data

collection and further analysis. It will also state clear recommendations as to what changes or amendments have occurred to the project, policy or function in light of the EIA.

6.11.3 A full EIA should be undertaken in eight key stages which are listed below:

1. Identify the aims of the project, policy or function and how it is to be implemented (see section 2.)
2. Consideration of relevant data and research (see section 5)
3. Assessment of impacts (see section 6)
4. Consideration of measures (see section 7)
5. Formal consultation on the actual impact of existing projects, policies or functions and the likely impact of proposed activities (see section 8)
6. Make a decision in the light of data, possible alternatives and consultation (see section 9)
7. Monitoring for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring (see section 10).
8. Publication of results of the Equality Impact Assessments (see section 11)

APPENDIX 9

SEEDAs Complaints Procedure

Complaints and Comments Policy

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) is always interested in the views of businesses and members of the public about our initiatives and how we develop and manage them. We shall listen carefully to any views that are put forward and if problems are identified we shall take remedial action.

What is a complaint?

A complaint for the purposes of this policy is one that relates to:

Any expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided by an SEEDA staff member or person or body acting on behalf of the Agency, and can be verbal or written.

It does not include:

- Dissatisfaction with general Government
- Third party dissatisfaction with a person or organisation applying for SEEDA funding or contract;
- Dissatisfaction about Board Members - the Agency has a separate Code of Conduct for Board Members;
- Complaints that are currently the subject of legal proceedings

Anyone can make a complaint about:

- The quality of service provided
- You were given the wrong information
- You encountered a delay in receiving information
- You were treated unfairly

Complaints can be made in a number of ways:

- By email
- By phone
- In writing
- By filling in a complaint form which can be:
 - downloaded from our website
 - collected from our Reception desk

You may wish to try to resolve the matter immediately by telephone. Please contact the person you have been dealing with at SEEDA. They will try and sort out your enquiry promptly, and do their best to put things right.

If you have a comment or complaint about our telephone/reception service because you feel that a member of staff has been unhelpful or discourteous, you

can ask to speak to the Facilities Manager. The Facilities Manager will listen to what you have to say and take any appropriate action, as necessary.

SEEDA's Service Commitment

We are committed to providing high standards of service to everyone we deal with. Complaints as well as feedback and suggestions for improvement are welcomed as they help us to review our service performance and identify where it can be improved.

We aim to provide a complaints service that is:

- easy to use
- keeps you informed about the progress of your complaint
- lets you know the outcome of your complaint and the reasons for it
- deals with complaints as quickly and effectively as possible
- helps us learn from complaints to improve our practice

We will monitor and analyse complaints as part of our review of service performance and will regularly review the effectiveness of our complaints procedure to ensure that it remains relevant, credible and robust in its operation.

We also need to listen when people say things are going well or make suggestions about the way we deliver services. Monitoring this information will highlight any problem areas as well as showing areas of good practice.

Persistent and/or vexatious complaint are becoming an increasing problem for public sector bodies and difficulties in handling such complaints can place strain on time and resources and can be stressful for staff who have to deal with these complex and challenging issues. In order to counter this, SEEDA has introduced a policy that deals with persistent or vexatious complaints.

Complaints about Partnerships

If the complaint is about a Partnership e.g. a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Partnership you should contact the Partnership Board in the first instance. They should deal with the complaint in accordance with their complaints procedure. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome you should contact the Accountable Body, which is usually the Local Authority for the area in which the Partnership is situated. SEEDA will only get involved as a last resort, where a very serious complaint/allegation has been made; or where you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint to the accountable body. SEEDA's role will be to mediate between the parties to resolve the complaint.

Stage 1 – Informal

In the first instance, complaints about our services should be dealt with by the SEEDA member of staff who had been dealing with you. Most complaints can be resolved at this early stage.

Complaints can be received via telephone, fax, post, or e-mail.

Our policy is that we aim to acknowledge complaints **within 3-5 working days** and we will aim to resolve the complaint **within 10 working days** from the date of receiving a Stage 1 complaint.

If you remain dissatisfied at the end of the first stage, you can write to the contact person given in the letter you receive. You will have **10 working days** in which to do this, outlining why you are dissatisfied and what outcome you would like to have.

Stage 2 – Formal

If it is not appropriate to contact the staff member direct as referred to in stage 1, or if you are not satisfied with the stage 1 response, you should write or speak to the Head of Communications, at the address below, who will refer the complaint for investigation to a Director responsible for that service or staff member. As with the first stage, you will be kept informed of the progress of your complaint. SEEDA aims to complete this second stage within **10 working days** of receipt of your dissatisfaction with Stage 1.

Head of Communications
SEEDA
Cross Lanes
Guildford
Surrey
GU1 1YA
info@seeda.co.uk

Performance Targets

We aim to acknowledge complaints within **3-5 working days**. We will provide a full response within **20 working days** of receipt unless further investigation is required, in which case we will advise you of the reasons for a delay and provide an alternative timescale for a full response.

Stage 3 – Chief Executive Review

If you are still dissatisfied with the response, you can have your complaint referred to the **Chief Executive** of SEEDA by writing to the address below.

Chief Executive
SEEDA
Cross Lanes
Guildford
Surrey
GU1 1YA
info@seeda.co.uk

Procedure for Dealing with Vexatious or Persistent Complaints

SEEDA has introduced Information guidelines to allow staff to be able to make an informed decision on how to assess whether complaints are vexatious or persistent based on the application of relevant criteria.

A vexatious complaint falls into the category of a complaint that has been thoroughly investigated and in such cases the complainant will have received a full and detailed response, but not withstanding that, will remain dissatisfied despite lengthy correspondence and contact from staff within the Agency.

The vexatious or persistent complaint may be referred to the relevant Executive Director, who will then decide how best to deal with the issue.

Where can I get help if I am still not satisfied?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of our Stage 3 review, you are entitled to refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Local Government Ombudsman
10th Floor, Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP
Phone: 020 7217 4620
Fax: 020 7217 4621
Email: enquiries.london@lgo.org.uk

You can obtain advice from the Ombudsman's office before making your complaint via the Local Government Ombudsman Adviceline, which is open between: 9.00am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday, on: 0845 602 1983 or you can visit the website: www.lgo.org.uk

Your personal information

If you use our complaints procedure, you are agreeing that we can use any personal information you send us for purposes connected with your complaint. We may also disclose your personal information to other individuals and organisations if we are legally required or permitted to do so under the Data Protection Act 1998 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Equal opportunities monitoring

We may use complaints about discrimination to review our policies and procedures to ensure that we offer equality of opportunity and treatment to people of different racial or ethnic origins.

We will monitor the ethnicity of complaints to enable us to ensure that we promote and maintain this commitment. All information will be treated as confidential.

Comments and suggestions

We welcome comments and suggestions as these can help us improve our services. Please send any comments or suggestions to the following address using the Complaints and Comments form.

SEEDA
Cross Lanes Guildford
Surrey
GU1 1YA
info@seeda.co.uk

Appendix 10

Consultation Responses

Consultation responses were esponses were received from:

Phil Wood - Unison

John Ball - SERTUC

Simon Golden - SEEDA's PCS Union Representative

The Transgender Community

Allan McColgan - Job Centre Plus

Sacha Rose & Nabil Mustapha – RAISE

SEEDA's Joint Staff Council

Jean Mitchell – Chair of Oxfordshire Economic Partnership.

Adam Limbrey – University for Industry

Keith Slater – Employer Representative – Regional Skills for Productivity Alliance

Rosemary French – Business Link