

SZW - Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment

"Selling" innovations

Manual for mainstreaming project results

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Based on a study commissioned by the ministry of SZW.

This manual was put together on the basis of a study carried out by Research voor Beleid, entitled Monitoronderzoek mainstreaming tweede tranche EQUAL [Monitor of mainstreaming in Action 2 of EQUAL]. Research voor Beleid is a division of Panteia. Panteia is the research group comprised of not only Research voor Beleid, but also EIM, IOO, NEA, IPM, Stratus and Consult.

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Foreword

One of the greatest pains to human nature is the pain of a new idea. It... makes you think that after all, your favourite notions may be wrong, your firmest beliefs ill-founded... Naturally, therefore, common men hate a new idea, and are disposed more or less to ill-treat the original man who brings it.

- Walter Bagehot *Physics and Politics* -

How can you “sell” innovations in the area of the labour market? In practice it often proves difficult to convey the methods and products developed and process experience and insights acquired in labour market projects to other parties (or, in other words, to mainstream these components). Developers are often primarily concerned with their own problems and therefore have little concern for disseminating their innovation. Aside from this, recipients often take a critical view of the innovation because of all sorts of internal and external processes. The result of this is that interesting innovations often do not make it into policy or practice and consequently remain stuck at the project level. Mainstreaming is focused on transcending the boundaries of the project by anchoring these innovations in regular activities and regular policy. Much experience with mainstreaming was amassed during the European Union’s Community Initiative EQUAL.

Commissioned by the ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), Research voor Beleid monitored mainstreaming in the context of Action 2 of EQUAL. EQUAL was aimed at projects that promote equal opportunities on the labour market in an innovative manner. The aim of the monitor report was to chart out (the success and failure factors for) the working method and the result of mainstreaming. A manual for mainstreaming was put together on the basis of the study. This manual can be used in a broader context than in connection with EQUAL. The manual is valuable for all innovative projects (on the labour market but also other areas) that strive to mainstream successful and transferable innovations. Both those involved in project organisation and decision-makers in the policy field can benefit from this.

The manual concentrates on the concept and implementation of mainstreaming. The concept of mainstreaming is explained in chapter 1. The manual subsequently discusses the practice of mainstreaming, touching consecutively on preparation (chapter 2), implementation (chapter 3) and after care (chapter 4) for mainstreaming.

The starting point here is always that effective mainstreaming is in no way a process that stands alone, but must rather be an integral component of every innovative project.

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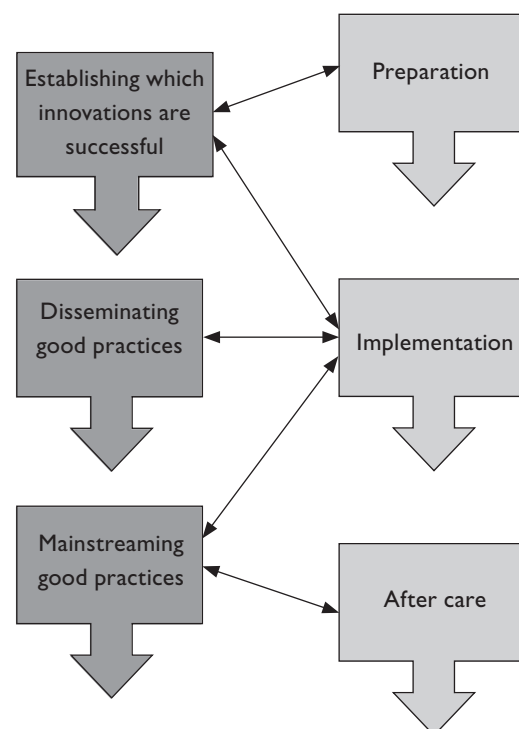
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I What is mainstreaming?

Various definitions of mainstreaming are currently in use. In this manual we define mainstreaming as a process-oriented strategy employed to anchor innovations that have proven successful in regular activities and/or regular policy.

Mainstreaming is not a process that stands alone: it is inextricably connected with the development of the innovation itself and therefore also demands thorough preparation, planning and budgeting. The process of mainstreaming encompasses three main components¹ :

- **Establishing which innovations are successful** (good practices). Good practices can be defined as innovations that have been proven to work well in practice and that can be applied elsewhere as well (possibly in an adapted form). These can be insights (like proven new knowledge), designs (like workable models) and practices (like project routines).
- **Disseminating good practices**. Dissemination involves carrying out structured activities to raise the awareness of other actors to the results and attainments of innovative projects² . Spreading information about less successful elements/problem points (bad practices) and possible solutions for these can also be useful. This can prevent the same 'mistakes' from being made in the future.
- **Mainstreaming good practices**. While dissemination is concerned with transfer of knowledge and raising awareness, mainstreaming is concerned with actually influencing behaviour. Mainstreaming prompts target groups to act in line with the good practices that have been disseminated (anchoring). Mainstreaming is a gradual process. Firstly it is important to reach the intended target groups. Then it is essential that the intended target groups become familiar with the innovation and next that they take a positive attitude with regard to the innovation. Finally the actual anchoring of the innovation must take place.



Dissemination is an essential component of the mainstreaming process. Both processes are inextricably connected with each other: mainstreaming of good practices is not possible without dissemination.

These main components are worked out in the phases of preparation, implementation and after care.

Levels of mainstreaming

Mainstreaming of innovations can take place on various levels³:

- **Mainstreaming on the project level:** the continuation (and/or implementation in one's own policy) of the successful innovation or a part thereof for the organisation(s) directly involved in the project.
- **Horizontal mainstreaming:** the adoption of the successful innovation (or a part thereof) by similar organisations, which give a structural character to the innovation.
- **Vertical mainstreaming:** the adoption of the successful innovation (or a part thereof) by policymaking agencies and the integration of the innovation in the regular local, regional or national policy.

Each level of mainstreaming calls for a specific approach in terms of how to approach decision-makers, which decision-makers to approach, when to approach decision-makers, what concrete message to convey and what instruments to use.

The following chapters describe the experiences that have been amassed with the implementation of mainstreaming activities during Action 2 of EQUAL. The preparation, implementation and after care of mainstreaming are described consecutively (chapters 2-4). The citations come from the interviews and group talks held with EQUAL project leaders, chairpersons of the supporting National Thematic Networks (NTNs), experts, and the target groups of mainstreaming as part of the study into the mainstreaming of EQUAL projects.

2 Preparation

Successful and effective mainstreaming depends entirely on good preparation. This starts with the policymakers or programmes that finance or subsidise innovative projects: they are responsible for selecting potential innovative projects. In this context they must not only assess the innovation itself, but also the transferability of the project results and the way in which this is organised (in other words, the plan for mainstreaming). The building blocks provided in this manual for “good” mainstreaming can therefore also be used as an evaluation framework for those in charge of assessing projects, but can also serve as a checklist for project organisations (POs) that plan to mainstream their project results.

It is important for a PO to determine its strategy in advance: what are my goals and what do I need to achieve my goals (in terms of organisation, personnel, financial resources and instruments)? There are also a number of contextual factors that can influence the success of mainstreaming which policymakers and POs must take into account during preparation.

2.1 Context of mainstreaming

There are a number of preconditions that can affect the success of mainstreaming. Some of these are factors over which the project organisation (PO) has control, and others are factors outside their sphere of influence. Such external factors include legislation and regulation, policy, the political and social climate and the economic tide.

- The importance of mainstreaming – mainstreaming must not only yield benefits for recipients, but for transmitters as well. A PO must really ask itself why it wants to mainstream its methods, products and/or experiences. There must be a certain financial, commercial, social, organisational and/or personal interest in deciding to mainstream. If there is no interest within the PO, then preconditions must be created outside the PO. Policymakers can play a role in this (programmes, subsidies, etc.).
- The quality of projects – the structure and results of the project itself are important success factors for mainstreaming, if not the most important. If a project is well structured and carried out

(right content and approach in projects; good project results in terms of actual innovativeness, recognisability, practical applicability and transferability), this will make the project suitable for mainstreaming.

“A good product sells itself”

- Favourable timing (including adequate legislation and regulation; adequate policy; favourable political and social climate; favourable economic tide).

“The secondary school drop-out rate has been high on the social and political agenda these last few years. That creates a good breeding ground for the mainstreaming of projects that address this topic”

“Influencing companies (aiming to create more willingness to hire young people of ethnic background) is less important in light of the labour market development. Companies are increasingly willing to hire young people. A major problem is the drop out rate and the failure by young people to choose the right study programme. The challenge is rapid detection and effective referral to block or day-release programmes for occupational training which requires cooperation between education the business sector and the government”

“New learning is no longer such a popular notion at the Ministry of OCW [Education Culture and Science]. For instance the ministry has postponed the mandatory competence-based education in intermediate vocational education (MBO) until 2010”

- Adequate room for manoeuvring on the part of project organisations (POs) by:
 - Imposing as few procedural and administrative requirements as possible.
 - No restrictive conditions from co-financers.
 - No restrictive regulations within PO partners in the area of communication.

“Heavy (financial) administrative procedures do not tally with innovation. Innovative projects require more room for manoeuvre”

- Running time of projects – quality can come under pressure in short projects. In long projects attention can wane and the project may become outdated.

“We started the project as early as 2003/2004 in fact. The official start was in 2005 and the end in 2007. In the meantime all of society could well have changed”

“The short running time of the project three years hardly gives you time to address mainstreaming”

“The first year you are busy with planning the project the second year with its implementation and in the third year already you have to mainstream. Experience teaches that it takes several years before actual mainstreaming takes place”

2.2 Objective

An important part of good mainstreaming is formulating in advance concrete and realistic goals for the mainstreaming activities to achieve. The intended target groups for mainstreaming must also be identified.

Systematic approach

- Systematic, structural approach to mainstreaming (step-by-step plan/ timeline for mainstreaming activities).

“After this project I will spend more time considering topics like dissemination and mainstreaming for next requests”

- Awareness of the importance of a long-term strategy.

“Anchoring something new takes a great deal of time and attention. This occurs between the companies. On the one hand we have to conduct our regular activities, on the other undertake the very demanding EQUAL activities (conducting the experiment and satisfying all conditions) and thirdly we have to actually implement the results of the project in regular form, and on top of that also the ‘tell the world about it,’ as we call it. It is just a lot to do”

- It is important to anticipate what will be on the political/administrative agenda in two years’ time (preferably in dialogue with policymakers/decision-makers).
- Good realistic and feasible planning of mainstreaming activities.
- Good balance between planning (‘project discipline’) and flexibility. The plan must not be a straitjacket/blueprint. It is therefore also important to incorporate enough leeway in the plan so that developments/problems/opportunities that arise can be seized upon.

“Having a well thought-out plan is essential for good mainstreaming”
“Influencing policymakers can only partly be determined in advance and we have to seek and find contact ourselves”

Objectives

- Formulating concrete mainstreaming objectives in advance that satisfy SMART criteria (specific; measurable; acceptable, realistic; timely).
- Link the objectives directly to the budget: what do I need (in terms of time and money) in order to achieve my objectives?

Intended target groups

- Clearly define the intended target groups in advance. This should preferably take place on the basis of strategic preliminary research / stakeholder analysis of the most important decision-makers.
- Focus mainstreaming on all organisational levels within the intended target groups (administration/board – policy/management – implementation).

2.3 Providing organisational form

Once the aim of mainstreaming has been set, the important thing is to determine what resources are needed to achieve this goal. This supposes strategic choices in the area of providing the organisational form of the PO, the intended message, the instruments to be used, as well as reserving the necessary financial and human resources.

Organisational form of POs

Good experience with working in development partnerships has been amassed within the EQUAL programme. Experience teaches that including relevant partners in the project organisation makes it easier to realise project objectives on the one hand and mainstream the project results on the other, since in many cases the target groups for mainstreaming are also included in the partnership.

In setting up a development partnership, the following points must be taken into account.

- Broad, mixed, representative composition of POs, but be careful not to allow them to be too large. Seek a balance between as broad as possible a mix while maintaining the manageability and workability of the PO. Where necessary divide into organisational sections (like work groups alongside the steering group, possibly centring on certain topics).

“Seek good partners and make smart combinations”

- Link up with existing ‘infrastructure’ like local, regional, national (administrative) networks.

“Experience teaches that strong embedding in an existing infrastructure makes it easy to spread and implement the results”

- Include the following in POs:
 - Intended target groups.
 - If there is integral chain approach, all links of the chain.
 - Knowledge/research institutions in order to foster a systematic approach and assist in measuring effects and reporting.

“By involving intended target groups in the project organisation, the success of mainstreaming is actually built in from the beginning already”

- Involve parties that are motivated and willing to play an active role (‘problem owners’) in the POs.

“Involving organisations in an innovative project simply for show often has an adverse effect. It takes a great deal of time and energy and does not add much to the result”

“It is important in a project to know who the ‘show stoppers’ and ‘key players’ are within an organisation: who usually prevents progress and why, and who can you employ to organise that progress”

- Creating adequate support within the PO by:
 - Removing cultural differences between PO partners.
 - Having one shared interest.
 - Creating commitment.
 - Making agreements on ownership rights and on the division of labour if it should come to actual anchoring.

“Building good cooperation between the chain partners requires a lot of time and is not so obvious to everyone. The usual working method at organisations is strongly inwardly focused. There are also significant cultural differences that need to be bridged.”

“The organisational structure of the project has proved to be of essential importance to successful implementation of mainstreaming”

- Involve the right representatives of involved parties in POs. This could be people with knowledge of the topic and/or contacts with other relevant networks.
- During the preparation phase, build up a network of relationships that extends beyond the immediate PO partners; during implementation expand this network.
- ‘Coincidence’ of projects – more than one project per PO leads to gains in efficiency, cross-pollination and synergy.

“You share things more easily and you keep each other on your toes”

Supporting networks

Policymakers and POs can opt to create one or more supporting networks (SNs). These SNs can support the projects in their mainstreaming activities and contribute directly to the vertical mainstreaming of innovations. Points to pay attention to in this are:

- Early involvement of SNs.
- Systematic, structural approach to mainstreaming by SNs (step-by-step plan/ timeline for mainstreaming activities).
- Broad, mixed, representative composition of SNs.
- Seek balance between as broad a mix as possible while maintaining manageability and workability of SNs (if necessary divide into organisational sections, possibly centred on certain topics).
- Include in SN:
 - Policy ambassadors (bridge function with The Hague).
 - Knowledge / research institutions.
 - The right people in SNs (knowledge of affairs, contacts with other relevant networks and such).
- The one-on-one linking of an SN member to a project. This contributes – theoretically anyway – to closer contacts with the POs.
- Ensure the members of supporting networks (SNs) also get something out of the activities they undertake ('give and take'). In addition to financial compensation they should also get something substantive from it.
- Using an external adviser in the SNs contributes to effectiveness and efficiency of the functioning of SNs.

Intended message

- Identification of good and bad practices:
 - Uniform approach to identifying good and bad practices (if there are several projects).
 - Good inventory of instruments to be able to measure/compare the results (effectiveness) and the costs and benefits (efficiency) of projects and thus be able to identify good and bad practices⁴.
- Positive undertone of message. Put the emphasis more on the benefit the project will yield rather than the problems for which a solution is being sought.
- Transparent and realistic message:
 - Announce not only good practices but also bad practices (growing pains, obstacles, pitfalls, mistakes, missed opportunities) and possible solutions (learn from 'mistakes'; bad news gets around faster than 'good news').
 - Be realistic about the transferability of innovation.

“No one believes you if you say that everything is fantastic”

“Good practices must prove themselves a number of times before they have an effect. Bad practices are accepted as truth more quickly and get around faster than good practices”

Intended instruments

- Good, well-considered mix of instruments / communication channels. Use a combination of various active instruments (like one-on-one contacts, project visits, meetings, etc.) and passive instruments (like websites, newsletters, etc.). Active instruments should be the priority here (to 'personalise' the process). Passive instruments are necessary as supplementary means / support.

- Adequate supporting resources for mainstreaming. (A ‘toolbox’ including a manual for mainstreaming, formats for describing products / methods and such).

Intended financial and human resources

- Make sufficient financial resources available for mainstreaming. Take into account both the subsidy request (by POs) and the granting (by subsidy awardees).

“Mainstreaming ends up requiring much more time and effort than is calculated in advance. The project manager and employees also spend indirectly quite a lot of labour hours on mainstreaming”.

“We will increase the amount requested as a subsidy for the next project”

- Clear agreements on the division of labour and responsibilities among PO partners in the area of mainstreaming (involve all PO partners in mainstreaming).
- Clear steering of the PO’s mainstreaming activities (coordination in the hands of one, at most two PO partners).
- Ensure good project management with sufficient relevant experience and contacts. In addition project managers should be able to convey their enthusiasm and conviction in their own project to the policy field. Where necessary hire in an external project leader.
- A side benefit of an external project leader is his/her independent position. The project leader is consequently better able to broach taboos on the one hand, and he/she can play a mediating role where necessary on the other.

“Because of my independent position, I feel less pressure to avoid taboos as a project leader”

- Ensure sufficient human resources for mainstreaming by POs, both quantitatively and qualitatively (possibly create separate project organisation/bureau). Where necessary hire in external expertise for some of the concrete mainstreaming activities.

“If you have someone who knows how to convey the message, you are assured of success”

3 Implementation

Once the preparation phase is completed, the strategy that has been developed can be implemented. Four strategic steps are important in this phase. In the first place it is crucial to determine who the specific recipients of the mainstreaming activities are. This results in a selection of key figures. Thought must also be put into the moment at which decision-makers are approached: timing and planning must be well thought through. The content is also important: what message do you want to convey to which decision-makers? Finally a choice must be made with regard to the form of communication. This decision focuses on the instruments used to approach decision-makers.

3.1 Recipients

“Approaching the right people is an important success factor in mainstreaming”

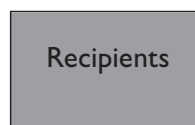
In order to get an innovation anchored in regular activities and/or in regular policy, it is of crucial importance to approach the right people. After the target groups have been defined in the preparation stage, it is now important to determine which specific persons within these target groups should be approached.

- It is important to search for key people within the organisation who have enough influence to put processes of change into motion.

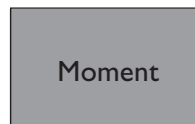
“It is important to determine who the real decision-makers are in an organisation. At some schools it is actually the teachers who push decisions through. In a case like that it is useful to approach them rather than the administration”

- Regular and systematic contacts with all relevant parties:
 - Meet regularly with all PO partners and supporting networks.
 - PO should approach intended target groups regularly and intensively.
 - Maintain good contacts with the media throughout the project.
 - Where possible PO should present itself to the outside world as one unit (as a united front).
- If you have no personal point of entry at an organisation, it is recommended that you use other organisations to establish the first contact: the U-turn construction.
- Approach all layers in an organisation: administration/board-policy/management-implementation. Partly depending on the specific situation, make a choice between top-down approach, bottom-up approach or a combination of both.

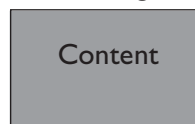
GOAL AND INPUT



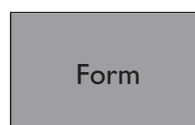
Key figures



Timing



Message



Instruments

“You have to start the revolution from the inside out”

versus

“If the director of a school or the alderman isn’t interested or doesn’t get it, then it won’t happen” and “With innovations you cannot escape a top-down approach. At the lower levels people prefer the old ways. You have to push change through, otherwise it won’t work”

- In vertical mainstreaming, preferably first approach (or inform or sound out) officials, only later address MPs or council members.
- If officials do not prove receptive to mainstreaming, pressure can be exerted in an indirect manner via politicians (by means of parliamentary questions or a letter to the minister/alderman).

“There is an (informal) user’s manual at the ministry as well. You must submit a request a certain amount of time in advance, for example, and you must invite two cabinet members at the same time. Influential people want to be approached in a certain way. Policy officials are very familiar with how this works. That is why it was important to have a policy official in the NTN”

“It is better to have the state secretary approach Parliament with a report than have MPs approach the state secretary with a question. You use politics when you find no opening with officials and /or local leaders”

3.2 Moment

“Only use a horn if you’ve got something fundamental to say”

The mainstreaming activities must be well planned and well timed. In practice it emerges that you only get a limited number of chances to bring the innovation to the attention of the actual decision-makers. It is therefore important to be sparing and effective with these opportunities. This supposes a certain flexibility: in reality not everything goes as planned. It is important to go public ‘at the right moment’, which cannot always be planned well in advance. This leaves undiminished that mainstreaming deserves constant attention, even from the very beginning of the project.

- Mainstreaming as a continuous process:
 - Continuous mainstreaming, but with phase differences (increase intensity as project progresses).
 - Approach intended target groups at an early stage. Create involvement from the very beginning and foster commitment to the project from the target groups. In doing so you create a breeding ground for actual mainstreaming.

“You actually start on it when you conceive of the project”
“Don’t tell your whole story in one go, but continue to pursue”
“Keep knocking, otherwise they won’t answer”

“The very act of involving employees in the beginning of the process is a success factor for mainstreaming. This enables them to contribute elements (like competencies of participants, cooperation and information needed by them) and they commit to the project”

“Mainstreaming is a long process, especially when it comes to government. Ministries are often clumsy, not very effective instruments”

- Only go public when there are (well supported) concrete (partial) results to report.

“It is easier to approach people now that the products are ready. In the past we noticed from people’s reaction that they found our story very interesting, but also somewhat theoretical”

- Do publish visible (partial) results (‘quick wins’) as quickly as possible.
- Join up with current affairs. Identify and grab hold of (unexpected) opportunities and possibilities. Be sparing with the rare moments that you share with actual decision-makers.
- Connect with what is going on in politics: is the topic to which the innovation relates ‘in’? If this is not the case, it is sometimes better to wait until a better moment comes up.
- Where possible connect with decision moments at the intended target groups for the mainstreaming:
 - Long-term budget cycle.
 - Annual budget cycle and planning.
 - ‘Personnel cycle’ (don’t lobby someone who is about to retire).
- Connect with events already being organised by others (for example education fairs, company open days, municipal open days). This lowers the threshold and prevents ‘overkill’.
- Safeguard against the simultaneous occurrence of separate similar activities for the same intended target groups (thins out the effect).
- Take into account ‘seasonal influences’:
 - There is no point in planning a great many mainstreaming activities (meetings and such) in the summer.
 - It is sometimes useful to release ‘hints’ in the summer (wait for the quiet summer season to get extensive news about project published).
 - Religious holidays.
- Organising a ‘mid-term’ conference instead of (or in addition to) a closing conference could be considered. This generates publicity and offers a good entrance for timely mainstreaming. A condition is however that there must be concrete project results to present.

“Don’t use too much of a blunderbuss approach. Mainstreaming is a process of seeing opportunities and taking them”

“In Action 1 we deliberately decided to mainstream at the end of the period. In Action 2, however, we opted to do this during the project (in the form of expert meetings and lunch meetings). Experience teaches that when the projects are completed there is no time left for mainstreaming. This is the disadvantage of the short running time of EQUAL”

- Since the economy has a major influence on labour market policy, it is sometimes useful to work counter-cyclically: during good times prepare for bad times and vice versa.

3.3 Message

“Every target group requires a specific message, which must always reason from the perspective of the relevant target group”

Decision-makers’ receptiveness to mainstreaming is largely determined by the way in which the substance of the innovation is presented. A well thought-out approach to what is communicated and what is not, where to put the emphasis, and how the message can best be conveyed continues to be an important success factor for effective mainstreaming. The message must therefore be precisely attuned to the motivations and needs of the various target groups for the mainstreaming.

- Create a ‘sense of urgency’. The target groups must be clearly convinced of the problem for which the innovation provides a solution. During the beginning of the mainstreaming process focus on the (common) problem.
- Take into account the perception and sensitivities of the intended target groups:
 - Avoid ‘navel staring.’ Connect with the perception and needs of the intended target groups.
 - Recipients of vertical mainstreaming are especially interested in the existence of a social problem; administrating institutions are interested in the practical feasibility of implementation; and commercial organisations are interested in the financial benefits of the innovation and their social responsibility and reputation.

“You do have to place the products / methods in a policy-based framework (and partly in a political framework). Otherwise it remains disconnected from the context. You also have to assess very accurately what the recipient party is working on”

“The innovation must to a certain degree be covered by the policy objectives of an organisation. So determine in advance the position of the innovation in the policy field and do not go against the grain of policy, but rather try to join up with it”

- Deal carefully with sensitive topics when going public. Sometimes veiled communication is necessary to achieve the goal.

“Everyone has to deal with the labour market and therefore has certain ideas about how the labour market works. This must be taken into account when mainstreaming in labour market policy: often it is firstly a question of getting rid of prejudices and presumptions”

- Don't only take, also give. Make it clear that not only your own interest is at stake but that the innovation also has something to offer the target group.
- Do not put too much emphasis on your own success. Psychologically it is smart to let others (the intended target groups) share in the success of the project, so that they feel they co-own the innovation.
- Therefore give meetings with the target group the character of a discussion and avoid one-sided presentations.

“If you invite school leaders for a special meeting on cultural diversity, they often become defensive. That is why we opted for a different approach. We now say that a number of topics that could influence those in leadership positions will be discussed, one of which is cultural diversity”

“You must take into account the political agenda of decision-makers. Decision-makers on the administrative level have an interest in exposure. Let the alderman cut the ribbon”

- Clarity and proper proportionality of message:
 - Simplicity and appeal. Give concrete examples of the products/methods developed and indicate their advantages in a well supported manner.
 - Avoid 'overkill'. Make choices and set priorities in what you are conveying. It is important not to want to convey everything in detail, but to focus on a number of key points with the highest market-oriented value. Too much detailed information clouds the message.
 - It is important not to seal the case shut (not a blueprint, but a framework). This increases the transferability of the innovation, but also has a psychological effect. Decision-makers can consequently still put their own mark on the innovation, giving them the opportunity to achieve a measure of honour in their own organisation.

“In der Beschränkung zeigt sich der Meister” [less is more]

“You must respect the dignity of decision-makers and give them the feeling that they can still influence the method or product. In this way they can also gain some honour in their own organisation”

- Support the results achieved:
 - Measure the effect (zero, interim and end measurement), with a control group perhaps, as integral component of the project.

- Where possible quantify effects.
- Chart out the costs and benefits (efficiency) of the project.
- ‘Fine tune’ the message:
 - Attune the content of the message to the implementation phase of the project. At the start of the project, the objectives and structure are central; during the implementation of the project, progress and interim /partial results are central; and at the end of the project, the final results are central.
 - The content and form (vocabulary, style and size) of the message must be attuned to the perception, culture and language of the specific intended target group and the various layers within it.
 - Attune the content and form of the message to the specific instrument / communication channel. A website must for example contain simple and accessible information, while a final report must include more depth / underpinning.

“Make yourself visible in a way familiar to the other party”

- Packaging of the message:
 - Recognisability. It is important to have a memorable project name and slogan (recognisable own logo and house style).
 - Physical packaging. It is important to give the message a neat and attractive form. This packaging must not be too luxurious / glossy, however.
 - Visualise the message. In addition to letters and numbers, consider using photos and videos in the presentation.

“The packaging of the message must be attractive, but not too glossy either. That can give the impression that money is being wasted”

3.4 Form

“Use as broad an inventory of instruments as possible. If people have heard something via three channels, it must be true”

It is important to bring the innovation into the spotlight using the right means. This requires a good, well considered mix of instruments and communication channels. In practice, active instruments (one-on-one contacts, project visits, meetings, etc.) are better than passive instruments (websites, brochures, newsletters, etc.). Passive instruments are needed for support however. The exact combination of instruments differs per target group and must therefore be attuned closely to the target group.

- As the project progresses, the emphasis shifts from more passive to more active instruments.
- Sharpen the focus in mainstreaming activities as the project progresses (from a ‘blunderbuss approach’ to ‘sharp shooting’). In addition to large meetings, also plan smaller meetings and discussions. Personal one-on-one contacts and lobbying activities (particularly in a more informal setting) are ultimately an indispensable part of actual mainstreaming.

“We have acquired good experience with organising small-scale meetings with decision-makers in the field. An informal setting makes it possible to talk openly about a topic and share the experiences we’ve gained with the EQUAL projects”

- Choose the presenter for personal communication strategically: an enthusiastic person who can convey the message well and has the necessary authority. The level of the presenter must match the level of the recipient (have a director speak with a DG and a project employee with an administrator).
- In addition to PO members and members of support networks, key figures (prominent people) and (former) project participants can also be used as ambassadors in the mainstreaming process.

“One-on-one contacts are indispensable for actual mainstreaming”

- Individual, personal approach to decision-makers (differentiation, flexibility and a certain degree of exclusivity). The ‘human factor’ plays a crucial role in mainstreaming. Entering personal relationships with the target group is extremely effective.

“Contact arises through mutual interest. Like each other, be interested in each other. You must then investigate what gets people enthusiastic. Match the message to that

- Points of attention for specific instruments:
 - Websites: important points are findability (central portal), interactive possibilities (forum) and keeping information updated.
 - Newsletters: It is important that the content connects with the perception and needs of the recipients (start with the recipient of the message, be careful not to ‘navel stare’).
 - Meetings, conferences, workshops, etc.: A direct (personal or telephone) invitation yields a much better response than a general mailing.
 - Invite similar participants to conferences. In this way the message can be well attuned to the target groups.
 - Although the media is a powerful instrument for creating social support, POs must be cautious about using the media. Media can run away with one’s story and in doing so create a negative image (twist facts).

“Old news on websites is fatal”

“Newsletters are not always read carefully. Organisations are deluged with them”

“We no longer believe in conferences. The message often gets lost”

4 In conclusion: after care

“It is extremely unfortunate that the project is ending just now that we are starting to see success with the mainstreaming. We need more time to really anchor the innovation”

The end of a project does not necessarily mean that the process of mainstreaming has been completed. On the contrary: experience teaches that mainstreaming usually just really gets going when the project approaches its end. The running time of a project is often too short to fully secure the developed innovation in policy. This makes a certain degree of after care necessary. POs can take on this duty themselves by assigning the responsibility for mainstreaming the developed innovation to one of the PO members (or another existing organisation) after the conclusion of the project period. These organisations must have a certain financial, commercial, social, organisational and/or personal interest in the mainstreaming.

“Whether mainstreaming occurs or not often depends on people who are enthusiastic about their product and are happy to invest time in spreading the innovation”

“POs can learn a great deal from commercial parties who have to sell their product. Mainstreaming is built in to the organisation’s objective”

“It is good that projects receive subsidies for mainstreaming their products. Without these funds mainstreaming efforts would not get the attention they deserve”

On the other hand, policymakers can use financial and policy incentives to stimulate POs to take after care into consideration. Another possibility is that policymakers themselves may play an active role in mainstreaming (on the one hand as recipient of mainstreaming, but on the other hand by facilitating supporting structures like SNs). It is also important to ensure that experience gained with innovative projects is recorded and made accessible to a broader audience (like a product database for innovative approaches)⁵.

1 Where intended target groups are mentioned below, these are – unless otherwise noted – the intended target groups of the mainstreaming.

2 EQUAL list of terms (www.agentschapszw.nl).

3 The EQUAL programme also distinguishes the terms transnational mainstreaming and gender mainstreaming. Neither of these forms of mainstreaming is included in this manual. For more information about these terms and the results of the study we refer you to the final report *Monitoronderzoek mainstreaming tweede tranche EQUAL* [Monitor of mainstreaming in Action 2 of EQUAL] (www.agentschapszw.nl).

4 A cost-benefit analysis can be carried out using the ‘SEO tool’ developed at the request of the ministry of SZW (see: www.agentschap.szw.nl).

5 The ministry of SZW has plans to develop a product database for innovative approaches (www.agentschapszw.nl).