

Mainstreaming for Sustainable Development



planet – the organisation

planet – The Partnerships Network, is the representative voice of the 38 Partnership companies in Ireland and Pavee Point. A registered co-operative, planet is an independent network, financed entirely by its members.

Through **planet**, partnerships are represented in wider policy-making forums and are continuously informed of relevant policy developments through briefing papers and workshops. This has led to a significant increase in networking, identification of and lobbying on common national policy issues and the exchange of information, both internally and externally

planet functions:

- Identify the key common policy issues affecting Partnerships and progress these forward at relevant forums
- Promote the work of Area-based Partnerships at a local, national and European level through an active communications strategy
- Keep **planet** members informed of relevant developments taking place at both EU and national level
- The work of the network is supported by eight sub-committees involving Partnership board / sub-committee members and Partnership personnel.

Area based Partnership Companies

Partnership Companies were established initially by Government in 1991 under the Programme for Economic & Social Progress (PESP) as a locally based response to long term unemployment and social exclusion. They are modelled on the social partnership structure at a national level with state agencies, social partners, elected representatives and community/ voluntary all making up local boards of management.

The Companies are located, owned and run by the local community in designated disadvantaged areas around the country receiving resources from the Government and the European Union to implement their multi-annual integrated area action plans.

The success of the Partnership approach has been built on the identification of the needs of the most disadvantaged at a local level by all of the stakeholders in social and economic development. The consultation with and participation of local people in creating solutions to problems in their area is vital for the sustainability of local communities and the successful tackling of disadvantage among the target groups.

Ten years on the work of Partnerships has resulted in the provision of new and enhanced services and facilities for the groups and communities most marginalised in Ireland through enterprise, education & training, community and environmental initiatives, while also playing a key role in influencing policy learning and development at the national level. From the period of 1994 - 1999 the small investment (1.5% of the total spending of the Irish Government from 1994 - 1999) has reaped significant returns not only because of the number of people who have been supported via partnerships but because of the impetus it has given to local communities in disadvantaged areas around the country.

Local Level

1991 - 1993: Pilot 12 Area-based Partnership Companies

1994 - 1999: 38 Area-based Partnership Companies

2000 ... : 38 Area-based Partnership Companies

Features of Area-based Partnerships

- Independent local Companies
- Located in designated disadvantaged areas.
- Produce multi-annual Integrated Strategic Action Plans
- Plan implemented across a range of measures:
- Work with identified target groups
- Work on principles of consultation, participation and inclusion.

Achievements in 1994 - 1999

- A total of 13,100 long-term unemployed people set up their own businesses with Partnership assistance.
- 13,500 previously unemployed people were placed in employment. In addition over 10,000 people who availed of Partnership supports left the live register through making job applications on their own behalf.
- Over 17,000 children from disadvantaged backgrounds participated in Partnership funded preventative education projects.
- Over 13,000 adults on low incomes were assisted in participating in education and training actions.
- Partnerships initiated over 1,400 community environment and infrastructure projects in their areas.

CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

Since their establishment in 1991 Area Based Partnership companies have focused on tackling long term unemployment in designated disadvantaged areas. Today, almost ten years later they continue to target specific groups who are experiencing social exclusion and unemployment. In doing so Partnerships are building upon the lessons of the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (OPLURD), taking on a more strategic role in local and regional development as recommended in the most recent OECD Study on Irish Partnerships (Turok). Interestingly in taking this approach Partnerships are now fulfilling the ambition which prompted their establishment as a pilot initiative in 1991 under the PESP Programme - highlighting issues which single agency approaches have failed to address, promoting more effective use of statutory resources, supporting community involvement in the process and informing policy development by the mainstream agencies.

The evolution of this role in recent times is linked to the establishment of **planet**, the Partnership's network. Since 1997 **planet** has been established as a co-operative with offices in Gorey Co. Wexford staffed by a Co-ordinator and since 2000 an Administrator and Communications Officer. The recognition of the value of a network by the Partnership companies and the resources now available through the network allows for the sharing of information, debate and learning to be made available to local, regional, national and international audiences particularly at policy development level.

The 1996 OECD study on Irish Partnerships (Sabel) concluded that partnerships are very innovative but that a more formal mechanism for generalising and disseminating local successes was required, to incorporate suggested changes into functional government. This view has been strongly reinforced by the second OECD Study (2000) and by the External Evaluation of OPLURD (Goodbody's 2000).

Successful pilot initiatives by Partnerships like the Area Allowance Scheme, the Local Employment Service and the Community Employment Development Programme have been mainstreamed on a national level. Around the country many other locally based initiatives have been mainstreamed at a local or regional level. The concept of mainstreaming has become a central theme of Partnership work leading to the development of a **planet** mainstreaming strategy. This strategy has been developed over a long period of consultation and learning from almost ten years of Partnerships in this country.

This document *Mainstreaming for Sustainable Development* highlights the need for suitable mechanisms to assist in mainstreaming successful processes and actions, and offers recommendations as to how this can be achieved. These mechanisms when agreed will ensure that the innovations of recent years on a local basis will contribute in a sustainable way to mainstream agency work.

As we embark on the implementation of a new National Development Plan we carry with us an increased awareness and commitment to social inclusion. We also bring with us, particularly as Partnership companies a wealth of experience and knowledge of the approaches required to combating long-term unemployment and social exclusion. What we need is a mechanism to ensure that the lessons of the last decade and the resources of the new National Development Plan are not wasted but become part and parcel of the mainstream approach to creating a more equitable society in Ireland.

Pat Leogue
Chairman

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document has arisen out of a need identified by Partnerships and various commentators over the past number of years, to mainstream successful processes and actions. planet undertook to review the issues and explore **what is 'mainstreaming', why do we need to do it and how do we make it happen?** Our view of mainstreaming is embedded in the concept of *sustainable development*, a priority of the Irish Government and Governments world-wide.

Based on the experience of the last few years, innovative local actions piloted by Partnerships are rarely embraced by state agencies at the local level. planet notes that this is due to a number of factors:

- the commitment to mainstreaming at the centre remains weak;
- no formal mechanisms were developed which could facilitate the move from pilot to mainstream;
- there still are no formal structures to facilitate the exchange of learning between local actors and national decision makers; and
- Partnerships are left with the sole responsibility for achieving mainstreaming.

In order to ensure that valuable resources, work and experience that has been invested in local communities over the last number of years is not lost, we need to sustain successful practices into the long-term. **Mainstreaming is a vital element of ensuring sustainability and is about affecting change in the policies, processes and practices of mainstream organisations to meet local need and circumstance.** This change can take place through a number of ways:

Using innovation: local development innovative actions and approaches are incorporated into the budgets and plans of the relevant agency and delivered locally;

Using learning: policy learning extracted from local initiatives contributes to policy making in the wider economy;

Using targeting: the experience of local partnerships act as advocates to re-focus and re-target mainstream programmes more effectively in disadvantaged areas;

Using planning: local partnerships assist in developing participatory planning methods which allows joint planning on local needs and responses between agencies and local actors, particularly those for whom the decision making has a relevance.

It is generally accepted that 'mainstreaming' needs to happen – what has not been resolved is how this is to be achieved. We would hope that at the outset of the implementation of the Local Development Social Inclusion Sub-Programme (00 - 06), a mainstreaming strategy will be agreed with Area-based Partnerships and state agencies working together to counter disadvantage. This would be done with a view to incorporating it into each City and County Strategy Plan due to be ready for 2002. If sustainable development is a priority of the Government, then mainstreaming has to be recognised as a key element which would allow this to be achieved. This commitment has to be supported with resources for both state agencies, their personnel and area-based Partnerships to allow them to engage in the process and mechanisms which facilitates this horizontal and vertical learning. If it does not happen, then the local development movement will have failed to leave any lasting impression on the system it was designed to influence.

This document looks at how mainstreaming is currently happening, what the ideal conditions are for mainstreaming to take place, and outlines recommendations for mechanisms as to how this could be achieved:

- The commitment to mainstreaming at Government level must be explicit and Ministers with responsibility for various Departments should ensure that it is given a priority with related policy adopted by all the statutory agencies. This could be linked into the Strategic Management Framework and subsequently monitored through the performance management system.
- A commitment to mainstreaming must be written into the Regional Programme Complements with guidelines developed as to how this will be achieved. All partners must be required to buy into this process.
- This commitment should be supported through a Central Committee, possibly the Task Force on Local Development, which would take responsibility for ensuring the policy is implemented. Alternatively, the Monitoring Committee for the Regional Operational Programmes could have responsibility for monitoring the progress of the mainstreaming strategy.
- This commitment has to be mirrored at local level by both the State Agencies and the Partnerships by establishing a local agreement where they can implement the planning elements of mainstreaming by jointly consulting, planning, re-focusing and acting on issues that are relevant to both parties in relation to tackling socio-economic exclusion.
- A Mainstreaming Unit be established centrally either in ADM or the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation or planet which would facilitate the flow of information from the region to the centre while also monitoring the development of the process around the country. The role of the Unit is to (a) look at the policy issues arising from the various projects/ processes around the country (b) support and monitor the progression of local framework agreements (c) look at the possibility of mainstreaming successful pilot projects in the future outlining what would need to be done to facilitate this (d) identify blockages in the process that are impeding progress and ensure these are cleared (e) liase with the relevant Departments and officials on issues relevant to them. This unit would require a secretariat which would support and resource the mainstreaming issue.
- A simple template could be developed which would allow partnerships to flag projects or processes that would have mainstreaming potential. This would allow the Unit to be aware of potential project or policy implications and make decisions as regards priority actions and what further steps need to be taken.
- Partnerships should ensure adequate evaluation methodologies so that pilot projects or learning are captured in a form that would be accessible to the Mainstreaming Unit.
- Innovative budget lines should be identified in all Departments or a portion of their budget ring-fenced to allow the agencies locally to support innovative projects and to engage in locally targeted design and delivery of relevant programmes.

planet has an ongoing role within its own network of looking at wider policy issues through its sub-committees, identifying blockages on the Partnership side that may be hindering the mainstreaming process and feeding through to the Mainstreaming Unit on these issues, among other forums.

1. SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

This document has arisen out of a need identified by Partnerships and various commentators over the past number of years, to mainstream successful processes and actions. planet undertook to review the issues and explore **what is 'mainstreaming', why do we need to do it and how do we make it happen?**

Our frame of reference with regard to this document is very specific. Firstly, we believe that 'mainstreaming' is not the most accurate term to describe the process or the outcome of this strategy as it is open to varying perceptions. We should be looking at the mainstreaming issue in the context of 'sustainability' which can be directly linked to the Governments Agenda 21 policy. It is through this lens that this paper is written. Secondly, we are examining sustainability with respect to tackling socio-economic development within the work of Area-based Partnerships. Thirdly, we have significantly altered the perception which exists around responsibility for mainstreaming, illustrated by the 'push-pull' effect. In the past, the responsibility for mainstreaming has always rested with Partnerships, their role being to 'push' information up the line. However, little attention has ever been given to the 'pull' agents and their responsibility in proactively pulling information up the line. All these issues are explored within the body of the document.

Over the last number of years, various local development initiatives have been launched both in Ireland and other members States. These initiatives have channelled funding and support to local community based groups so they can identify and address their own local needs in an innovative manner. With the winding up of the last planning period ('94 - '99), the future reduction in EU monetary support and the reform of the local authority system in Ireland the issue of mainstreaming actions, learning, processes and analysis arising from these local development initiatives has become increasingly prominent. This is particularly pertinent as we move into the next planning phase (2000 - 2006).

Area-based Partnerships have meagre budgets compared to those of mainstream state agencies. This limited funding is only a drop in the ocean given the myriad of issues facing the disadvantaged communities in which they operate. What these budgets do allow is the opportunity to innovate, to pilot new initiatives, to integrate new ways of working, to lever additional resources all with a view to redirecting, retargeting and influencing both the design, planning and spending of mainstream budgets and national policy. The theory is that the state should learn from local experience and incorporate this new knowledge into its overall work programme and organisation - the Partnerships sow the seed and the mainstream agencies sustain the growth by using their resources.

The Area-based Partnerships under Sub-Programme 2 of the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (OPLURD, 1994 - 1999) had a particular role to play in relation to mainstreaming. Area-based Partnerships have piloted dozens of innovative local actions around early school leaving, increasing job opportunities and building stronger local groups. These local actions, when taken together, represent a rich tapestry of potentially ground breaking initiatives which can inform and enhance national policy making. However, the Programme was never just about co-ordinating more effective service delivery or about launching innovative responses to identified needs. It was also

about influencing national policy and piloting a new way of working at the local, regional and national level. One of the eight outcomes identified in Local Development Programme ('94 - '99) was to:

'improve co-ordination and evaluation at local level of mainstream programmes and policies and to ensure their effective delivery to the long-term unemployed and the socially excluded and from this experience to contribute to the national policy making process'.

This ambitious goal of the LDP has required Partnerships to go beyond their local area to achieve their operational goals. This dual focus of addressing the needs of disadvantaged areas and the influencing of national policy has led to a number of difficulties as noted by a number of commentators:

'The central government's mechanisms for systematically monitoring local developments with an eye to identifying projects worthy of general application appear, at least for the moment, inadequate ... The Irish state has been better at allowing innovation than at learning from its protagonists about how to generalise local successes and incorporate changes they suggest into the organisation of the functional administration', OECD, 1996¹.

'The failure to put an adequate system in place at the early stages of the Operational Programme has inhibited the mainstreaming potential and policy influencing capacity of the programme and has consequently undermined its strategic potential' ESF Evaluation Unit, 1999, pg. 227².

"(Partnerships) are therefore in a strong position to advise on national policy developments in relation to the long-term unemployed. Now, as the current programme draws to a close, it is vital that mechanisms are in place to fully capture the learning experience of Partnerships and to influence future national policy in this area', Goodbody Economic Consultants, 1999, pg. 101³.

Based on the experience of the last few years, innovative local actions piloted by Partnerships are rarely embraced by state agencies at the local level. planet notes that this is due to a number of factors:

- the commitment to mainstreaming at the centre remains weak;
- no formal mechanisms were developed which could facilitate the move from pilot to mainstream;
- there still are no formal structures to facilitate the exchange of learning between local actors and national decision makers; and
- Partnerships are left with the sole responsibility for achieving mainstreaming.

The realisation of the potential of mainstreaming leading to sustainable development is of the utmost importance at this time. In this growing economy, it is widely recognised that social exclusion and disadvantage remains a deep-seated problem. Communities and certain sectors of society, who have experienced generations of neglect, are

¹ SABLE, C. 'Ireland: Local Partnerships and Social Innovation', (1996), OECD.

² 'ESF & the Local Urban & Rural Development Operational Programme', (April, 1999), ESF Evaluation Unit, Dublin.

³ 'A Report on the Impact of the Local Urban and Rural Development Programme on Long-Term Unemployment' (December, 1999), Goodbody Economic Consultants, Dublin.

struggling with issues borne out of this cumulative disadvantage. These multi-faceted problems need localised, integrated, and sustained support and planning in order to redress this imbalance.

The proposed Regional Social Inclusion Sub-Programme(s) (2000-2006) to be implemented across the two new regions has a number of elements to it, including three measures which the area-based Partnerships will be directly involved in, namely Community Development, Services to the Unemployed and Community Based Youth Initiatives – Reducing Educational Disadvantage. It is important however, that we do not lose the integrated, local, targeted, area-based approach to socio-economic development. One of the objectives of Partnerships in the new Programme is to: “add value to the effective delivery of mainstream policies and programmes through the provision of linkage and co-ordination as they effect the long-term unemployed and the socially excluded and to put in place mechanisms to ensure local initiatives inform and strengthen policy development.” So while the three measures of direct concern to Partnerships are vital, there are other measures, sub-programmes, Operational Programmes which will need to be harnessed on an area basis to give impetus and meaning to an ‘integrated strategy’. **The opportunity and flexibility has to be there for the linking and communicating of planning and learning across all agencies and organisations.**

planet believes that more action is needed to move the ‘mainstreaming’ debate from rhetoric to reality. We need to ensure that (a) resources are better targeted leading to more effective spend (b) there is greater flexibility in the administration of mainstream supports and programmes with a particular focus on the local dimension and (c) that a poverty and equality focus is inserted into decision making about policy, provision, design and budget allocation within the state sector. It is generally accepted that it needs to happen – what has not been resolved is how this is to be achieved.

2. DEFINING MAINSTREAMING

In the context of local development, mainstreaming is a dynamic two-way process involving interaction between agents at a local/regional/national level leading to sustainable development. planet see it as a vital element of ensuring sustainability and is about *affecting change* in the policies, processes and practices of mainstream organisations to meet local need and circumstance. This change can take place through a number of ways:

Using innovation: local development innovative actions and approaches are incorporated into the budgets and plans of the relevant agency and delivered locally;

Using learning: policy learning extracted from local initiatives contributes to policy making in the wider economy;

Using targeting: the experience of local partnerships act as advocates to re-focus and re-target mainstream programmes more effectively in disadvantaged areas;

Using planning: local partnerships assist in developing participatory planning methods which allows joint planning on local needs and responses between agencies and local actors, particularly those for whom the decision making has a relevance.

3. HOW MAINSTREAMING IS CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE

To date, 'mainstreaming' has taken place on an adhoc, informal basis, relying on access to key individuals in the respective Departments and subsequently, engaging that individuals interest and support. Arising from a case studies on Mainstreaming⁴ undertaken by Partnerships, a number of common factors can be identified that have allowed the process to happen in the current environment:

- Partnerships have to identify a real need or gap and implement a strategy in order to address this deficiency.
- This pilot strategy must be evaluated which is crucial in order to sell the concept.
- A lead Department or organisation must be identified to lead the process and that Department must be committed to the ideal.
- The Partnership board must be supportive of the process or project and the lead State agency representative in the company must have links within the identified Department and be prepared to use these links.
- The Company must have access to relevant Department personnel. The successful transfer of policy and practice is often down to identifying an individual in the policy making process who is in a position to initiate reform from within.
- A relevant budget line from which the project might be funded long-term must be identified.

This is the strategy employed by Partnerships to date in relation to mainstreaming and some with more success than others. However, this relates to only the learning elements of mainstreaming as laid out above and not the planning elements. In order for mainstreaming to happen, both elements must be mobilised where input into the design of policies and programmes is adopted, as well as the learning from practice and policy. It should involve the state and the local development bodies working together in the design, implementation, and evaluation of a project or programme. It is evident that the current adhoc methodology helps no one. It is time consuming for the Partnership and relies exclusively on the whether individuals can be accessed within the relevant Department and whether they are willing or able to put their shoulder to the wheel.

⁴ As part of the evaluation and monitoring system of ADM, Partnerships are required to prepare case studies on a number of themes which allows in-depth and more qualitative analysis of their work. The Community Workers Co-operative published a summary of these case studies on mainstreaming in their 'Strategy Guide 5 - Strategies for Mainstreaming', CWC (2000).

4. IDEAL CONDITIONS FOR MAINSTREAMING

In order to establish a more systematic method for mainstreaming, planet has drawn from the case studies and academic writing in an effort to identify the conditions which are needed at all different levels in order for, both learning and planning, mainstreaming to occur:

4.1 National Level:

There needs to be a demand created within the system for the mainstream for learning, the 'pull' factor - it is outside the scope of Partnerships to create such a demand. This demand must first be started by an explicit commitment to mainstreaming by the Government and relevant Government Ministers. Unless this happens, then there is no onus on Departments at local level to engage in the process.

Even though many of the Partnership projects involve a number of players, a lead Department with responsibility for the project overall must be identified and a named official within each Department who would have responsibility for the process.

Transparency is needed in the process. If information is fed in an appropriate manner to the respective Departments, then the process must be easily tracked and must be visible. Local players must be able to see the outcomes of their efforts, either positive or negative.

An innovative budget line must be established or ring-fenced within all Departments that would support projects or processes which fall outside existing budget lines but yet require support because of the potential they offer.

4.2 Public Sector

The public sector needs to become a real partner in the partnership process at a local level. Partnerships have low levels of power and influence relative to that of state organisations. The public sectors perceive the partnership experiment as a way to allocate extra funding at a local level and not as a mechanism to reform the implementation of public policy at a local level. There are a number of conditions which have to be present in the public sector before real mainstreaming can occur:

The public sector has to be prepared to change. Power has to be devolved by the head Departments to the regions or the relevant area of operation. This would allow the agencies more flexibility in dealing with local development agencies, allow them to adopt successful local practices and give local agents the scope to incorporate the views of clients into the decision making and planning process. Some mainstream organisations lack the authority to allocate funding or support to projects at a local level and are primarily implementers of central policy.

Guidelines for the implementation of the planning elements of mainstreaming need to be laid down and adopted by all public sector agencies and they should be encouraged to engage at the beginning of the planning process with local development bodies.

There is a need for increased resources in order for mainstreaming to occur. Presently, mainstreaming existing programmes or doing business differently, may require sacrificing existing programmes which does not prove too popular. There is a need for a discretionary budget, more control over the budgets at the local level and resources for training of personnel.

At the moment, there is very little incentives within mainstream organisations for personnel to get involved in Partnerships or in driving the work of Partnerships and they receive little reward for such practice. In order for mainstreaming to become a reality, each agency must have a mainstreaming policy making it part of their everyday work and rewarding personnel, branches who engage at this level.

4.3 Local Partnerships

Just as there needs to be a shift in the public sector perception so too do Partnerships need to be more aware of the strategic importance of this issue and be prepared to 'push' the relevant information horizontally and vertically.

Partnerships need to document and communicate their local experience and what they learned from it. Evaluating and reporting in an appropriate manner is of key importance in the mainstreaming debate and is the crux upon which the process will rise or fall.

There needs to be clarity amongst all company Directors about the objectives of a Partnership company and what their role is in the process. Until all partners see the Partnership as an extension of themselves and an opportunity to learn, little progress will be made.

Existing mainstream services need to be identified, specifically, how they are designed and how they are implemented. This can then be used as a benchmark in devising an alternative approach and evaluating the success of that alternative approach.

Partnerships have to attach a local priority to this issue and commit themselves fully to engaging in the planning and design process with the relevant state agency at the local level.

5. MECHANISMS FOR MAINSTREAMING

The commitment to mainstreaming at Government level must be explicit and Ministers with responsibility for various Departments should ensure that it is given a priority with related policy adopted by all the statutory agencies. This could be linked into the Strategic Management Framework and subsequently monitored through the performance management system.

A commitment to mainstreaming must be written into the Regional Programme Complements with guidelines developed as to how this will be achieved. All partners must be required to buy into this process.

This commitment should be supported through a Central Committee, possibly the Task Force on Local Development, which would take responsibility for ensuring the strategy is implemented. Alternatively, the Monitoring Committee for the Regional Operational Programmes could have responsibility for monitoring the progress of the mainstreaming strategy.

This commitment has to be mirrored at local level by both the State Agencies and the Partnerships by establishing a local agreement where they can implement the elements of mainstreaming by jointly consulting, planning, re-focusing and acting on issues that are relevant to both parties in relation to tackling socio-economic exclusion.

A Mainstreaming Unit be established centrally either in ADM or the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation or **planet** which would facilitate the flow of information from the region to the centre while also monitoring the development of the process around the country. The role of the Unit is to (a) look at the policy issues arising from the various projects/ processes around the country (b) support and monitor the progression of local framework agreements (c) look at the possibility of mainstreaming successful pilot projects in the future outlining what would need to be done to facilitate this (d) identify blockages in the process that are impeding progress and ensure these are cleared (e) liaise with the relevant Departments and officials on issues relevant to them. This unit would require a secretariat which would support and resource the mainstreaming issue.

A simple template could be developed which would allow partnerships to flag projects or processes that would have mainstreaming potential. This would allow the Unit to be aware of potential project or policy implications and make decisions as regards priority actions and what further steps need to be taken.

Partnerships should ensure adequate evaluation methodologies so that pilot projects or learning are captured in a form that would be accessible to the Mainstreaming Unit (see above).

Innovative budget lines should be identified in all Departments or a portion of their budget ring-fenced to allow the agencies locally to support innovative projects, to engage in locally targeted design and delivery of relevant programmes. Presently, mainstreaming existing programmes or doing business differently, may require sacrificing existing programmes which does not prove too popular. There is a need for a discretionary budget, more control over the budgets at the local level and resources for training of personnel.

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CONCLUSION

At the outset of the implementation of the new Regional Social Inclusion Sub-Programmes, a mainstreaming strategy should be agreed at all levels with Area-based Partnerships and state agencies working together in the design, delivery and learning of actions to counter disadvantage,. This should be done with a view to incorporating it into each City and County Strategy Plan due to be ready for 2002. We recommend that in order for all players to reach an agreed strategy for mainstreaming, three things need to happen in the short term:

- It is written, in principle, into relevant Programme Complements;
- Each Department put its thoughts on paper about its perception of mainstreaming, what it understands by the term and what it needs in terms of resources and supports for this to happen.
- Discussions begin with the relevant actors in order move the process forward - this could be done via the Task Force on Integration of Local Government and Local Development or another forums where all relevant actors are present.

There are a number of practical challenges to take into account when addressing this issue not least the amount of time, energy and number of meetings this will involve. However, if sustainable development is a priority of the Government, then mainstreaming has to be recognised as a key element which would allow this to be achieved. This commitment has to be supported with resources for both state agencies, their personnel and area-based Partnerships to allow them to engage in the process and mechanisms which facilitates this horizontal and vertical learning. If it does not happen, then the local development movement will have failed to leave any lasting impression on the system it was designed to influence.