

Structured Dialogue with the Community & Voluntary Pillar.

1. Engagements between the State and the Community & Voluntary Pillar to be underpinned by the commitment contained in *Towards 2016* and reiterated in the Review and Transitional Agreement 2008-2009 as follows:

“The Government will also engage with the Community and Voluntary Pillar on how to progress development of future frameworks to support the deepening of the partnership between statutory bodies and voluntary and community organisations.”

2. Engagements will have regard to the principles underpinning the relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector as set out in the White Paper Supporting Voluntary Activity, and noted in *Towards 2016*.

3. Engagements will proceed on the basis of the following considerations:

- ◆ the advantages of more effective joint working in the current difficult climate are recognised;
- ◆ the wider context of reform and change requires the development of more effective ways of working together in the public interest;
- ◆ enhanced resources in the form of funding, personnel or structures will not be possible;
- ◆ legally binding arrangements are not in prospect; and
- ◆ any change deemed to be warranted will be worked through arrangements in place at present.

4. A set of principles would underpin the deepening of the relationship and inform engagements between officials and stakeholders. A number of the joint principles set out in the White Paper are particularly relevant in this context:

I. Both Sectors value openness, accountability and transparency in the relationships between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector.

II. There is a shared commitment by both the State and the Sector to ensure the involvement of consumers and people who avail of services in the planning, delivery, management and evaluation of policy and programmes. This applies at all levels: national, regional and local.

III. There is a joint commitment relating to fostering co-operation and the co-ordination within and across each Sector as well as between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector.

IV. There is a commitment on the part of both the State and the sector to provide access to, and to share, information relevant to the pursuit of shared objectives.

V. The State and the sector commit themselves to carrying out periodic and mutually agreed monitoring and evaluation of their individual actions, as well as joint evaluation of the experience of operating this framework.

VI. The State and the sector each recognise their respective rights and shared objective in relation to developing and implementing effective policy, including the right to constructively critique each other's actions and policies, in a context of mutual respect.

VII. There is a commitment to developing mutual understanding of the culture and operating principles of each Sector and to take practical steps to achieve this.

VIII. Both Sectors commit themselves to using working methods that are flexible and efficient in the context of the growing demands and range of tasks posed by modern society.

Elements for a Bilateral Engagement

Engagements between the Department of Community, Equality & Gaeltacht Affairs and the C&V Pillar to be mutually beneficial and solutions focused. Meetings to have a consistent format, with a sharply focused agenda, which is agreed and balanced for each side. Meetings would be focused on:

- ◆ outline plans, strategies, legislation
- ◆ information about developments
- ◆ possible mutual approaches to addressing challenges
- ◆ feedback on how actions are impacting and practical suggestions for resolving any unintended effects
- ◆ feedback on suggestions or ideas
- ◆ opportunities for improved information, integration, efficiency, etc.
- ◆ strengthening relationships

Elements for a wider Cross-Cutting Engagement

It is envisaged that engagement between Government Departments and the CV Pillar on cross-cutting would involve mutually agreed meetings, from time to time, of a small group drawn from both sides under the chair of D/CEGA. The emphasis of such engagement would be on informality and facilitating the open exchange of views on the resolution of cross-cutting issues that may arise.