



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT

2009

Progressing SEEDA's
Race Equality Scheme 2009-12, Disability Equality Scheme 2007-10 and
Gender Equality Schemes 2006-09

(December 2009)



Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2009

INTRODUCTION

1. SEEDA recognises our legal duty to develop and publish a Race Equality Scheme (**RS**), Disability Equality Scheme (**DES**) and a Gender Equality Scheme (**GES**). The duties present a shift from simply responding to the needs of individuals to making equalities part and parcel of our day to day business. We are required to publish our progress each year on the steps we have undertaken to meet that Duty regarding race, gender and disability. This report summarises the steps we have undertaken to embed race, disability and gender equalities into our business during 2009. These steps took place at a time of great change and have sought to lay a platform for developments within our newly emerging environment.

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

2. To date, SEEDA's work on equality and diversity has included identifying equality and diversity actions in the South East 'Regional Economic Strategy' (**RES**) prior to the present economic recession. The equalities and diversity cross-cutting theme in the RES has been the basis for SEEDA's current equality schemes on race, disability and gender. Progress updates have also recently been produced against the National Audit Office's Independent Performance Assessment's improvement objective: to mainstream equalities and diversity through the organisation.
3. However, the strategic context has significantly changed during the last eighteen months. The current economic downturn brings significant challenges to economic growth targets and substantial reductions in public expenditure.
4. During most of 2009 SEEDA consequently underwent a major restructuring of our business, and our staffing, through a Fit for the Future Programme. As a result, SEEDA's business is refocused around the core theme of productivity gain to support the region through and beyond recession. This means more innovation support to businesses (including R&D links with universities); infrastructure investment that supports strong economic growth; targeting inward investment to the key sectors (advanced engineering, ICT, life sciences and health, financial services, environmental technologies, aerospace and defence); and focusing on fast growth business whilst using Business Links for volume support.
5. SEEDA's current change and re-prioritisation process now offers a renewed opportunity to translate improving practice around equality and diversity into concrete economic impact measured through GVA growth, GDP per head, employment rates and increased innovation and enterprise. The post-transition work stream on culture and behaviour change coupled with previous work on SEEDA's values helps establish a positive and dynamic climate for this work.

6. SEEDA will address market opportunities and failures through programmes and projects prioritised around 'place', 'sectors' and 'themes'. All offer opportunities for performance enhancement through early consideration and effective integration of equality and diversity led actions.

EXPERT ADVISORY PANEL - SUPPORTING THE MAINSTREAMING OF EQUALITIES

7. For work on equality and diversity to become part of the organisational norms in achieving strategic economic growth, it needs to be built into the values and everyday practices of the organisation.
8. In advancing a mainstreaming approach to our delivery of equality and diversity, SEEDA adopts the following definition:

"Mainstreaming equality is the systematic integration of an equality perspective into the everyday work of government, an agency or an organisation, involving policy makers, practitioners, performance management and evaluation systems across all departments and dimension's of the body's activity, alongside equality specialists and external partners. It will be embedded in everything from the highest levels of governance and strategic decision-making through resource allocation and success measurement to the way the organisation and individuals in it demonstrate their values through everyday behaviours"

9. In December 2008, a paper entitled 'Integrating equalities and diversity into the DNA of SEEDA' was presented to the Director's Group and resulted in the establishment of the Equality Advisory Panel, chaired by the SEEDA Board Member who is the nominated corporate Champion for Equalities.
10. In the Spring of 2009, five Equality Experts were recruited. The initial intention was that each of these specialists would support Operational Directors and their teams to deliver the following aspects of the RES: Global Competitiveness, Business Support and Enterprise, Enabling Infrastructure and Development, Skills and Employment, Culture Communities and Consumers (including 2012 Leadership).
11. However, the Fit for the Future Programme resulted in such a radical change and restructuring of the organisation that the only area of the business to remain relatively unchanged was Business Support and Enterprise which enabled the respective panel member to support mainstreaming of E&D into the new BL provider contract. To make best use of the expertise that had been recruited, the Panel's work was renegotiated, and as a result the Panel have worked collectively to provide advice on how to embed equalities and diversity into the new organisation, alongside managing transition.
12. In December 2009, the Equality Advisory Panel presented a high level paper and recommendations on the way forward for mainstreaming equalities to the Executive Board. This paper was well received. Concurrently, SEEDA also presented our refreshed organisational values

at the December staff away day, with an overarching statement that includes equalities and diversity. The refreshed values are:

“We strive to be a valued and trusted partner, operating with **integrity** and promoting **equality** and **diversity** as a core part of all of our values:

- **Impact** - we focus on delivering results, through expert interventions, advice and deal-making
- **Expertise** - we bring experience and knowledge, to maximise our impact and learn from successes
- **Innovation** - we work creatively to build the global competitiveness of the region
- **Collaboration** - we operate as valued and trusted partners, both internally and externally”

13. These refreshed values were well received by staff at the Away Day and the event included an opportunity for table discussions about the values and gave individuals the opportunity to review how well they thought they were doing against the values – both individually and corporately as an agency. This has provided us with a valuable benchmark for ‘where we are now’ in December 2009. This will therefore form a critical part of the revised approach to equality and diversity that we are embarking on as part of our new focus and core business.

AN EVIDENCE BASED APPROACH

14. SEEDA has been influenced by relevant legislation, guidance and best practice in recognising that the effective responses to equality and diversity need to be guided by evidence. This section summarises SEEDA’s progress towards the development of an evidence base to support and develop race, disability and gender equalities with our Equality and Diversity Data Tool.

15. A ‘local data tool’ was commissioned in January 2008 on the following premises:

- a. It would be a single source for equalities data across the SE
- b. Key audiences would include local areas, SEEDA etc
- c. Data would be provided to most detailed neighbourhood level

16. We are committed to ensuring that all SEEDA staff are better able to integrate the use of the tool in undertaking our EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) process. At present, the tool comprises an Excel reporting application that covers the South East and considers:

- a. The size and makeup of groups (where located)
- b. Inequality between groups (groups faring badly)

- c. Comparisons / benchmarking (across areas, groups)
17. The tool was refreshed in April 2009 and is still being fine-tuned to provide ever more relevant and precise data. This update includes work to identify:
- a. National Indicators potentially available by equalities groups
 - b. Gaps in equalities data that could be filled from existing sources
18. SEEDA is currently considering how it can further refine the tool to allow for more RDA-specific functionality.

SEEDA AS A SERVICE PROVIDER

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS IN 2009

This section summarises progress towards the development of SEEDA's programme and project management to support and develop race, disability and gender equalities during 2009. It directly relates to the corporate actions that are included in the current RS, DES and GES Action Plans.

Business Link Procurement Process (Relevant to the Race, Disability and Gender Action Plans) – The Business Support team worked in partnership with a member of the RES Equality Advisory Panel to ensure that the Business Link Procurement Process and specifically the contract for the Business Link service from 1st April 2010 was exemplary in this area. To this end, we worked with lawyers to develop a new clause of the contract which deals specifically with the following issues where the Provider is deemed to be a public authority with respect to the following:

- "The Provider shall not commit an act of discrimination rendered unlawful by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (amended 2005), the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000, the Race Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.
- The Provider will be required by SEEDA to comply with the GENERAL, and SPECIFIC DUTIES under the above Acts and as covered by the Equality Act 2006 (the "EA2006"). The EA2006 also outlawed discrimination on the grounds faith / religion, and sexual orientation.
- Accordingly the Provider acknowledges and agrees that it shall comply with all the GENERAL and SPECIFIC duties applicable to a public authority under the EA2006 and other Acts, whether in the provision of the Project under This Agreement or otherwise:
- GENERAL DUTIES for race, gender and disability. Whilst the specifics of these differ according to the enabling legislation, the broad requirements are to:
 - eliminate discrimination and harassment

- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations and ensure effective engagement
- take account specifically of disabled people's disabilities (even where that means treating disabled people more favourably than others)

SPECIFIC DUTIES for race, gender and disability:

- Assess the impact of the design and delivery of its services, policies and practices on equality through the process known as Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), to publish and implement the results.
- In formulating our overall objectives, consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
- Gather and use information on how the organisation's policies and practices affect equality in the workforce.
- To consult stakeholders (ie employees, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine our equality objectives.
- To review and report against progress on a timely basis (to be determined by SEEDA).

The Provider shall comply with all relevant requirements contained in or having effect under the legislation relating to health, safety and welfare at work, including, without limitation the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and any and all regulations made under or in connection with such act that are applicable to the Provider”.

Inclusive Enterprise Strategy and Action Plan (Relevant to the Race, Disability and Gender Action Plans) – Driven by its role as lead RDA for enterprise between 2007 and 2009, SEEDA invested considerable energy and resources in supporting and encouraging enterprise amongst equalities groups. Fuelled by personal interest from the CEO, SEEDA has put particular focus on women's enterprise and is making very good progress towards its RES target of achieving 10,000 new women owned businesses by 2016.

SEEDA's 'Inclusive Enterprise Action Plan' addresses access to enterprise for currently under-represented groups and individuals. The plan, produced in 2009, provides clear actions for regional stakeholders to raise awareness of the issues and barriers and to improve accessibility of appropriate business support. Objectives include getting a wider variety of people to start their own business and contributing directly to the GVA per head performance measures. This work has also been developed with the team's RES Equalities Advisor.

A key outcome of this plan is the establishment of a regional Inclusive Enterprise steering group that will become operational in early 2010 and that will have the role of overseeing progress in terms of business support to under represented groups and advising on strategic issues relating to inclusive enterprise. We are currently awaiting results data.

Of the region's economically inactive people, there are an estimated 247,000 disadvantaged or under-represented individuals, who want to work (Labour Force survey Feb 2008), plus 63,000, people on long term sickness who want to work

(ONS): that is, 37% of the 170,000 people claiming Incapacity Benefit. This means around 310,000 people from under-represented groups say they want to work but experience serious barriers to economic engagement, for whatever reason. This presents a considerable and untapped economic opportunity for the South East which needs to be addressed through business support.

SEEDA's Inclusive Enterprise Action Plan aims to ensure that business support services and information resources are 'fit-for-purpose' in meeting the needs of under-represented groups. Actions focus on:

1. Ensuring all publicly-funded business support in the region is as relevant and accessible as possible.
2. Developing a strong regional advocacy role in order to raise awareness and understanding, informing and educating a broad range of stakeholders of the existing barriers to enterprise for our target groups, and the potential economic and social benefits to be realised through developing an enterprise culture within the region's under-represented groups.
3. Developing a strong strategic role to influence key partners to embed the IE agenda within their own plans for both policy and delivery of Solutions for Business products, whilst promoting Business Link as the primary access channel for business support in the region.

Women's Enterprise Taskforce (Relevant to the Gender Action Plan) – SEEDA has played a leadership and supportive role in respect of the UK Women's Enterprise Task Force. It ran for 3 years and concluded in December 2009. The WETF was co-chaired by SEEDA's Chief Executive, Pam Alexander and the Enterprise Policy team provided the Secretariat and Support function to the TF. The WETF focussed its work on five key areas in order to achieve a strong pipeline of high growth, women-led businesses: gender-disaggregated data, women-friendly business support, access to finance, supplier diversity and strategic influencing.

The final report, Greater Return On Women's Enterprise (GROWE), was published in November 2009. The report recommends targeted ways of supporting female entrepreneurs to increase the contribution made by women-led SMEs to the UK economy – turnover from women-led SMEs is currently an estimated £130bn.

Regional Development Agencies with Business Link have taken on board the GROWE recommendation about raising awareness amongst women of the possibilities enterprise holds, and of the support open to them. As a direct consequence of the GROWE report, Business Link will be running road shows early next year to promote enterprise to women, ethnic minorities and disabled people. This marries well with the work of the Ethnic Minority Business Task Force.

SEEDA has agreed with the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions, that SEEDA will be piloting a new offer to the recently unemployed. Business Link Advisors will be sitting in Job Centre Plus offices in three key

locations in the South East, ready to advise those who have the desire to start up a business exactly how to go about doing so.

RDAs will also be involved in helping with the establishment of new regional women's enterprise champions to support the Women's Enterprise ambassador network which encourages more women to start in business.

The GROWE report was welcomed by Lord Davies of Abersoch, Minister for Trade, Investment and Small Business and Maria Eagle MP, Minister of State at the Government Equalities Office and Ministry of Justice. The Government response was published on 4 November.

Enterprise UK (Relevant to the Gender Action Plan) – Enterprise UK was founded in 2004 by the British Chamber of Commerce, the Confederation of British Industry, the Institute of Directors and the Federation of Small Businesses, and now seeks to reach out to new people of all ages and backgrounds in encouraging them to apply entrepreneurial talents and overcome the obstacles to make ideas happen.

SEEDA has a strategic relationship with Enterprise UK to encourage enterprise in the SE region. Enterprise UK is responsible for nationally coordinating the Womens Enterprise Ambassadors Programme. SEEDA runs and funds this programme in the South East region.

Knowledge Transfer Networks (Relevant to the Disability Action Plans) – The Knowledge Network Programme is a project managed by SEEDA. It brings business and the knowledge base together, to exploit research opportunities and catalyse collaboration. The key driver programme is to turn knowledge into commercially successful products and services. This is achieved through Knowledge Networks which focus on a specific technology or group of technologies.

The Knowledge Networks are managed through SEEDA's Sector Consortia. These seven Sector Consortia are set up as limited companies with the aim to offer advice and support to companies within a given sector. All Sector Consortia have received equality awareness training from a specialist consultant, the objectives of which were:

- To ensure the Sector Consortia understand SEEDA's commitment to equality and diversity and how it forms a key feature of all areas of our work, including with our partners, stakeholders and not-for-profit limited companies core funded by SEEDA as strategic partners.
- To ensure that all partners, stakeholders and not for profit companies with whom SEEDA has a contractual relationship, are aware of SEEDA's legal responsibilities and understand their contribution towards meeting the General Duties as set out in the equality legislation

Business Link (including the Skills Brokerage & Enterprise Gateway functions) – (Relevant to the Disability and Gender Action Plan) - Through the procurement of the new Business Link Service provider and through the contract that has been signed with Serco as described above, SEEDA has led the way in ensuring that equality duties are embedded within the Business Link (integrated brokerage) service.

In addition, SEEDA has

- Implemented the Regional Customer Relationship Management & Information System (RCRMIS) which will be constantly reviewed and updated to ensure that the BL service can, and does, capture as much data as possible to monitor and inform future service provision

Training Pools (Relevant to the Race, Disability and Gender Action Plans) – A Training Pool is a consortium of employers, learning providers, trade bodies and employer organisations (e.g. Skills Councils, LSPA) that bid to SEEDA to develop training that will meet their needs which are not currently being met in the region by existing FE/HE or private sector providers. All Training Pools projects at application stage had to submit an equality and diversity statement that laid out the measures they would take to ensure compliance in and around Race, Disability and Gender Action Plans. SEEDA's project managers reviewed compliance as part of the contractual process.

The programme commenced in summer 2006 and concluded in March 2009. The programme funded 17 projects through three bidding rounds. The projects focused on the training needs of a number of different sectors from marine through to retail. SEEDA's total investment in the programme was £2.5 million with projects receiving from £26,000 to £200,000 depending on the scale and focus of their proposed activities".

Redundancy Support Service (Relevant to the Disability Action Plan) – SEEDA's Redundancy Support Service (Continuous Employment Support Service) in partnership with various organisations including Jobcentre Plus, Nextsteps, colleges & private providers, offers employers and employees across the South East support with redundancy situations.

The Service uses employer's premises to deliver information, advice & guidance and those companies have to adhere to the Disability act around access. Individual employees with disability and access issues are signposted and referred to the Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisory Service for additional support.

Enabling Infrastructure and Development (EID) (Relevant to the Race, Disability and Gender Action Plans) – In January 2009, SEEDA organised an internal "teach in" on community engagement. This supported the Strategic Site Evaluation Framework (published in November 2008) which provides guidance on where and how equality and diversity should be considered in evaluation. The EID website pages also signpost users to a range of resources such as 'A Diversity toolkit – How to work with Your Communities, and Planning and Engaging with Intercultural Communities'. Since 2008, design and access statements have been submitted with planning applications for all SEEDA developments. For example, West Medina Mills, East Cowes Town Centre and a new Waitrose store on the Isle of Wight. DDA compliance is a standard clause in all SEEDA briefs.

The Built Environment Team have also commissioned a number of regional good practice case studies, which include examples of addressing design issues for older people and engaging adults with learning difficulties. Although SEEDA will

be discontinuing its financial support to South East Excellence, all the information will still be available on the SE Excellence website. This includes design and planning guidance, and good practice case-studies to support 2,000 built environment practitioners in the region to meet their obligations.

Making the Most of 2012 and CompeteFor (Relevant to the Race and Gender Action Plans) – **CompeteFor** is a web portal that has been set up by the Olympic Delivery Authority, Regional Development Agencies (RDA's) and Devolved Administrations (DA's), and acts as a matching mechanism between contracting agencies and suppliers for London 2012 (www.competefor.com). All tier suppliers are contracted to advertise all new sub-contracting opportunities on the site: an obligation that is cascaded throughout the supply chain. Once a supplier fills in an online profile it can apply for any appropriate opportunity, whether as a prime or sub-contractor. Benefits of this system include:

- Providing SMEs with support and access to supply chain opportunities to which they would not otherwise have had access, and enabling SMEs to identify potential partners for the formation of consortia and onward supply chains;
- Providing buyers with support to access a wider, more diverse supplier base, and the tools to shortlist suppliers to meet their needs;
- Using London 2012 as a 'hook' to link SMEs to their local business support provider (Business Link) for diagnosis and support;
- Interactivity between many tendering systems (part of the simplification agenda);
- Fully disaggregated data – for example, we know that, although women own 15% of British business stock, just 3% of Government contracts are awarded to women-owned businesses. However, women-led businesses currently make up 18% of the nearly 90,000 businesses registered on CompeteFor.
- CompeteFor has been adopted by over 400 buying organisations ranging from local authorities like Westminster, the emergency services to major projects like Transport for London and Crossrail.

SEEDA engages with CompeteFor in order to measure the success rates of women, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and disabled people gaining contracts under this 2012 procurement programme. Table 1 provides a historic breakdown by areas within the region.

Table 1

Diversity analysis of companies published on CompeteFor at 02.12.2008				
Area	Status	% BAME owned	% Women owned	% Disabled owned
Berkshire	N	82.5	71.5	92.2
433 total	U	9.5	6.5	6.7
	Y	8.0	22.0	1.1
Hampshire	N	89.5	72.2	94.0
622 total	U	6.0	3.5	4.2
	Y	4.5	24.3	1.8
Kent	N	87.0	72.6	93.0

767 total	U	5.6	3.5	5.2
	Y	7.4	23.9	1.8
MKOB	N	83.9	68.5	92.8
559 total	U	8.2	5.0	6.2
	Y	7.9	26.5	1.0
Surrey	N	84.8	71.7	92.2
624 total	U	6.7	5.3	7.0
	Y	8.5	23.0	0.8
Sussex	N	88.7	67.0	93.8
549 total	U	7.0	4.7	5.3
	Y	4.3	28.3	0.9

Status Key

N = No/unsuccessful	Y = Yes/successful	U = status Unspecified
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At the end of 2009, at a regional level there were 808 BAME owned/led businesses (representing 4.6% of all businesses registered) and 3197 women owned/led businesses (18.4%) that are registered with CompeteFor. However, there is not a breakdown at a regional level on the number of regional BAME or women owned/led businesses who have been awarded contracts from CompeteFor. 101 businesses located in the South East and registered with CompeteFor have been awarded contracts representing 14.7% of all contracts awarded.

SEEDA is joining with London Regional Development Agency and the East of England Development Agency to deliver an Accessibility event that will bring together three projects that partners have been working on for some time. The relevant projects are:

- CompeteFor and the opportunities that still exist around the Olympic Park construction and the event. Business Support Kent has been working with the Royal British Legion to bid for signage contracts. 75% of RBL's workforce is disabled.
- Job Centre Plus is working on increasing the number of disabled in the workplace
- Tourism Southeast have been conducting accessibility audits with towns and businesses in the SE.

SEEDA will be investing a further £230, 000 over the next two years in business support to accelerate the number of businesses able to competeFor. SEEDA is also investing £400, 000 as are all the RDAs and other development agencies in the programme.

Making the Most of 2012 and the Accentuate Programme (Relevant to the Disability Action Plan) – SEEDA is providing match funding to the Accentuate

project. Accentuate is a £4.5 million multi partnership programme. Screen South is the accountable body, as well as delivering aspects of the programme.

The programme is delivered through 15 projects seeking to achieve the following;

- Every young disabled person in the South East has the opportunity to create, compete or collaborate with a young person in another competitor country during the lead up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- That the South East becomes the most welcoming and accessible region for disabled people in the UK.
- That the South East region is recognised as a lead region in the UK for disability and deaf cultural activity and as an international centre of excellence.
- That the South East's role as the birthplace of the Paralympic movement at Stoke Mandeville is recognised by the world and that its historic archive and the individual histories of Paralympian athletes alongside the impact of the movement itself is explored by artists, and young people in the South East.
- That people across the South East have raised awareness of and are inspired by the values of personal best, going for gold and excellence and are offered strategies to help them to adopt these values in their own lives.

SEEDA AS AN EMPLOYER

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for Fit for the Future –

A full analysis of the impact of Fit for the Future on Equality and Diversity was carried out in December 2009, and gave a full breakdown of all areas of the E&D agenda, and the impact the consultation period has had on the agency. It is important to note that of the current 276 employees, 235 have provided SEEDA with their E&D information. This represents 14% of staff for whom we do not have complete E&D information.

The headlines from this report are as follows:

- There was no significant drop in the gender mix of SEEDA 63% of those who took VERS (voluntary early release) are women, compared to 59% overall female population
- Men were most affected by compulsory redundancy (61%)
- 88% of those who requested and were granted early acquiescence were female
- Of the 9 employees who had informed SEEDA of being disabled, 2 (22%) were affected by redundancy
- Of the 8 employees who have informed SEEDA of a sexual orientation other than heterosexual, only 1 (12.5%) took VERS, with none redundant
- Of those who took VERS, 41% were over 45, and 46% were 30 – 39.
- Over 45s represented 73% of those affected by compulsory redundancy, which is double the overall SEEDA figure for this age range (37%)

- Given the high level of White British ethnicity, it is unsurprising that this group was affected the most.
- The above point is replicated with religious beliefs, with the Christian faith being most affected.

Overall, there is no evidence to suggest that any discriminatory action against the five E&D streams was taken through the Fit for the Future programme, although it is important to balance the level of experience that has been lost because of the number of over 45s lost in restructuring the new SEEDA.

It is also planned to have clear overall accountability for Equality and Diversity in the Chief Executive and Executive Directors' job profiles, as well as more job related accountabilities for all Directors. One of the RES Equality Advisory Panel is currently supporting the HR team to deliver this objective.

SEEDA has also created a new post within its Business Support and Enterprise Team, called Relationship and Enterprise Culture Manager. The remit of this new post is to oversee the delivery of the Business Link contract to under-represented groups (identified in the Government's Enterprise Strategy & SEEDA's Regional Economic Strategy) - including women, BAME groups, young people, older 50+ people, disabled people and long term unemployed people as well as specific activities which actively engage these groups in enterprise activity e.g. Women's Enterprise Ambassadors Network.

In addition, the post holder is required to oversee and facilitate successful implementation of SEEDA's Inclusive Enterprise Action Plan. There are currently over 925,000 economically inactive people in the South East. People who are economically inactive are those who are out of work, and who are either not seeking work or are unavailable to start work. The Relationship and Enterprise Culture Manager also ensures effective relationship management with key representative and membership groups for under-represented groups.

At a strategic and policy level, SEEDA has progressed the following activities in the RS, DES and GES Action Plans:

- **Human Resource Policies:** All HR policies undergo an EIA process through an internal panel, before they are launched
- **Recruitment and Staffing:** A comprehensive review of recruitment processes and applicant statistics is regularly monitored and recorded, and there is ongoing analysis of recruitment advertising to ensure vacancies reach the wider population. Statistics on ethnicity and gender of staff are reported monthly in the HR report. Joint staffs Council regularly discuss and review good and best practice.
- **Accessibility:** SEEDA provides online assessment of work areas for all staff during induction, to assess the suitability of the work environment, with alternative arrangements made where required.
- **Cultural Survey** – The annual cultural survey includes reporting on staff attitudes and awareness of equality and diversity, as well as seeking their observations on leadership and management
- **Training** – SEEDA's online equalities awareness training programme was implemented from March 2008

- **Equal Pay:** SEEDA undertakes an Equal Pay Review as part of our Pay Remit to BIS, and plans a full review in the 10/11 Pay Remit, given the restructure of SEEDA's pay bands. This will be reported to the Executive Board, Joint Staff Council and EIA panel.

We have also begun revising our monitoring categories in line with best practice and have introduced the option of "prefer not to say" when monitoring staff. This has demonstrated that a high proportion (20%) of the current staff opted not to disclose their status regarding disability and (21%) preferred not to disclose their ethnic/racial background. This reluctance to disclose will be an area that we will seek to understand and address.

The reorganisation that SEEDA has just completed has therefore had an obvious impact on the makeup and data sets now available. On present figures, the new SEEDA has 4% staff identifying themselves as being disabled and 4% declaring they come from a BAME background. We have also seen a 1% increase in the proportion of women in the organisation with 59% of staff now being women.

Communications

During 2009, SEEDA has undertaken significant revisions to our website, culminating in launch of the new site in October 2009. Priority 2 (or "AA") compliance was a key element of the brief to the specialist agency employed to assist in the redesign and the agency confirm that this has been achieved. AA compliance involves meeting all the criteria of a checklist that is designed to ensure that our website is accessible to all web users (whether they are disabled or not), and regardless of the technology they are using. This is important as SEEDA's aim is to focus much of our future communications efforts on electronic methods.

Traditional print publications continue to be produced but as a result of SEEDA's internal restructuring there is an ambition to rationalise and consolidate publications and, in light of reduced budgets, to reduce print runs in favour of e-documents. Our accessibility statement was reviewed in 2009, following advice against making reference to publications being available in particular formats/languages as these can become out of date. For 2010 we will amend the statement to ask readers to contact us as publications are available in alternative languages and formats. Requests for alternative formats were extremely limited in 2009, with translation services provided by external suppliers as and when requested.

Groundwork was done in 2009 for upgrading the hosting and storage of SEEDA's photo library. This has included a review of current photo stocks for quality and to ensure available photos are representative of the age, gender, race & disability mix of the region. Budget is allocated in 2009-10 for commissioning new photos to expand the photo library and help fill any gaps in the current library stocks.

On event management, SEEDA uses a checklist to ensure event venues are disability-friendly. This checklist is currently under review and is scheduled for update in 2010 to ensure we are complying with the latest guidance.

NEXT STEPS

The following next steps, were recommended by the Equality Advisory Panel, and approved by the Executive Board in December 2009. As such, they mark the new approach and direction that the restructured SEEDA will be taking towards equality and diversity in the immediate future:

1. SEEDA will agree and publish a short **policy statement** on how equality and diversity contribute to strategic objectives of economic growth and productivity gain.
2. SEEDA will develop and complete our new **Single Equality Scheme by September 2010** to focus and prioritise on areas of greatest equality impact, expanding the scope of our commitments to cover all six equality strands.
3. SEEDA will build towards a more mainstreamed approach by:
 - Developing a streamlined **interim equalities action plan** by January 2010, to reflect the organisational restructure and refocus. This enables SEEDA to provide the evidence required for the IPA visit in February. It would subsequently be embedded in the new Single Equality Scheme.
 - Reviewing our **functions** within the new structure to ensure that equalities are appropriately considered in long term regional direction setting; regional leadership relationships; internal strategy development and operational delivery
 - Building equality outcomes that contribute to economic growth and productivity gain into the **role descriptions and performance objectives** of relevant senior staff.
 - Developing the new **programme and information management system** to properly reflect relevant equality dimensions and ensure the necessary insight for effective analysis and evaluation.
 - Continuing to develop internal and external **capacity and expertise** addressing;
 - Equalities and its relationship to Governance for the Board.
 - The strategic relationship between equality and diversity and economic performance for Directors and Senior Management.
 - Operational expertise amongst staff in implementing SEEDA's programmes and policies in a way that delivers against the equalities policy statement and Single Equality Scheme.
 - The transfer of expertise and knowledge to stakeholders and partners to support the achievement of SEEDA's strategic equalities objectives and improve equality outcomes across the region.

We aim to be the best economic development agency a top global region could have: with expert interventions, expert deal making and expert strategic advice. The above completed and pending developments concerning equality and diversity epitomise SEEDA's drive in realising this aim.



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