

	<p>Objective Five Participation:</p> <p>Enhance the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in Irish society, including a focus on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political level • Policy level • Community level
---	---

Objective Five is primarily concerned with the enhanced participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in Irish Society including a focus on participation at the political level, the policy level and the community level.

Participation: Expected Outcomes

9.1	Ensure as far a possible that elections are conducted in a manner that does not contribute to racism.
9.2	Enhance the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in political processes.
9.3	Enhance the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in policy consultative forums and research.
9.4	Develop an Intercultural Forum to give further consideration of issues related to cultural diversity in Ireland.
9.5	Enhance the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in community and local development.

9.1 Ensure as far a possible that elections are conducted in a manner that does not contribute to racism.

Key challenges

The key challenge is to ensure that elections are conducted in a responsible way and with respect to the dignity and rights of cultural and ethnic minorities, without stifling political debate. The primary responsibility for achieving this outcome lies with political parties, individual election candidates and groups involved in election campaigns.

Policy Context and developments underway

Anti Racism Protocol: All political parties in the Oireachtas have signed an Anti Racism Protocol on the Conduct of Elections. The Protocol requires Political Parties to send a consistent and clear message to their constituents that they reject racism and to ensure debate in relation to groups which are the potential targets of racism, such as asylum seekers and refugees and Travellers, is conducted in a responsible way and with respect to the dignity and rights of minority ethnic groups.

Codes of Conduct: Most political parties have codes of conduct for candidates in elections, which have the potential to reinforce the aim and content of the Anti

Racism Protocol. Political parties have responsibility for enforcing codes of conduct and the Anti Racism Protocol.

Monitoring: The NCCRI through its six-month reports on incidents related to racism, has included a focus on the conduct of elections that has helped to inform policy responses.

Graffiti: Local authorities have an important role in the effective and efficient removal of racist graffiti and related material, which tends to increase in the run up to elections.

Priorities

Measures will be undertaken to extend and enhance the Anti Racism Protocol, keep its profile high and to approach political parties to consider ways in which the Protocol might be mainstreamed into their policies and procedures.

Measures

- 9.1.1** Undertake further measures to heighten awareness of the Protocol, particularly in the run up to elections.
- 9.1.2** Consider the incorporation of the Protocol into party political codes of conduct for election candidates.
- 9.1.3** Enhance mechanisms within local authorities to report and remove racist graffiti particularly in the run up to elections.

9.2 Enhance the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in political processes.

Key challenges

There has been a long-tradition of diversity among parliamentarians and local councillors in Ireland, particularly by public representatives who are from the Jewish community. A key challenge is to ensure that positive action will be developed to encourage the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities at all levels within the political process.

Policy Context and Developments Underway

Seanad review: The Committee on Procedure and Privileges of Seanad Eireann has established a sub committee to review and make recommendations on the current and future composition and functions of the Seanad in Ireland. Other countries including Britain and Canada ensure that cultural and ethnic minorities are represented in the second parliamentary chamber.

Political Parties: Political parties are increasingly cogniscent of the growth in cultural diversity amongst the electorate.

Priorities

Priorities will focus on a range of measures designed to encourage participation in the wider political processes, including reviews of political structures, the role of Oireachtas Committees and participation in political parties

Measures

- 9.2.1 Consider the reservation of a seat in Seanad Éireann for a representative from a cultural and ethnic minority.
- 9.2.2 Enhance the role of Oireachtas committees and sub committees, in particular the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights, to consider issues related to racism and cultural diversity.
- 9.2.3 Encourage political parties to develop proactive measures to enhance/remove barriers to the participation of people from cultural and ethnic minorities within their membership and associated structures.

9.3 Enhance the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in policy consultative forums and research.

Key challenges

There a wide range of consultative mechanisms through which broader civil society can participate in broader policy development. The key challenge is to ensure that these policy forums provide sufficient opportunity for representative organisations working closely with cultural and ethnic minorities to participate effectively and that they proactively seek to make reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and promote positive action measures in their deliberations. There is a growing body of research undertaken in relation to cultural and ethnic minorities, and with this research there is a need for guidelines on how such research is conducted.

Policy Context and Developments Underway.

Among the consultative forums/mechanisms that have been developed include the following:

National Economic and Social Development Office: NESDO, which is soon to be established on a statutory basis, will comprise the three main social partnership bodies at national level, namely the National Economic and Social Council (NESC), the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) and the National Centre for Partnership and Performance (NCP). These bodies have provided analysis, evaluation and research related to major social, economic and social policy issues and has contributed in a significant way to social policy development.

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism: The NCCRI is an expert body which aims to both provide advice and to develop initiatives linked to its role and remit. A key part of its role is to achieve consensus, on as wide a basis as possible and involving a wide range of stakeholders on combating racism and promoting a more inclusive, intercultural society

Priorities

The priority will be to enhance the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in consultative and decision-making processes through the reasonable accommodation of issues and take positive action related to cultural diversity in broader social and economic policy development.

Measures

- 9.3.1 Provide continued support for the role and work of anti-racism bodies.
- 9.3.2 Seek to ensure that broader economic and social policy forums, such as NESDO, make reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and take positive action measures.

9.3.3 Develop guidelines to ensure that research involving cultural and ethnic minorities is as participative as possible and undertaken in regard to best international practice and ethical considerations.

9.4 Develop an Intercultural Forum to give further consideration of issues related to cultural diversity in Ireland.

Key challenges

The NPAR is not an end in itself. A key challenge is to create a mechanism through which dialogue and discussion on cultural diversity in Ireland can be continued and deepened, involving a wide range of stakeholders, which will take some of the key issues identified in the Plan to a further stage.

Key Developments

Programme for Government: There is a commitment to develop an initiative on managing cultural change in the 'Agreed programme for Government'.

Consultative Process: The priority will be to develop an Intercultural Forum which will seek to promote continued dialogue and research on cultural diversity in Ireland.

Priorities

The priority will be to develop an Intercultural Forum, which will seek to promote continued dialogue and research on cultural diversity in Ireland and contribute to further policy development.

Measures

9.4.1 Establish an Intercultural Forum to:

- Promote further research, interaction and dialogue on cultural diversity in Ireland.
- Consider the policy implications arising from growing cultural diversity in Ireland.

9.4.2 The Intercultural Forum will have a Government agreed terms of reference and will comprise key stakeholders .

9.5 Enhance the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in community and local development.

Key challenges

Community development and provides an important means of involving local communities in issues of concern, in particular issues related to disadvantage and social exclusion. Local development is primarily concerned with integrated socio economic development principally through local development partnership companies involving a broad range of stakeholders. The key challenge is to ensure that policy strategies in place to support community and local development will seek to make reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and take positive action measures.

Policy context and developments underway

The Community Development Support Programme's: Under the aegis of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, CDSP's are programmes to provide financial assistance to fund community development projects in disadvantaged areas and specific target groups that experience disadvantage, including Travellers. The Department also provides once off Grants to voluntary and community groups.

Local Development Social Inclusion Programme: Under the LDSIP, which is administered by ADM a total of 38 area partnerships, 33 community groups and 4 employment pacts receive funding.

Family Resource Centres: Under the aegis of the Family Support Agency in the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the centres focus on issues such as poverty, family supports, self development and parenting skills.

Supports: Area Development Management (ADM) and Combat Poverty Agency provides expertise and support for community development and local development. The Community Development Unit of the NCCRI provides assistance and support to a range of relevant groups and organisations. A range of health boards and local authorities employ community development workers.

Priorities

Reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and positive action in community and local development supports is a multifaceted issue involving commitments in relevant strategy statements and action plans; the development of initiatives targeted at groups such as Travellers, refugees and migrants; monitoring progress and ensuring active participation by the concerned groups.

Measures

- 9.5.1** A new pilot initiative will be developed within the Community Development Support Programmes to provide funding and support for a number of new projects focussing on supporting people from cultural and ethnic minorities to articulate their needs and to support integration and intercultural interaction.
- 9.5.2** Existing projects supported through Community Development Support Programmes will be given greater technical support and training to work with cultural and ethnic minorities.
- 9.5.3** Continue to support existing community and voluntary groups and specialised support organisations working with cultural and ethnic minorities.
- 9.5.4** Enhance the focus on intercultural and anti racism initiatives in the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme.