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A CELEBRATION OF 20 YEARS OF EUROPEAN FUNDS IN WESTERN SCOTLAND

Project Title	Worklife Adaptability Partnership (WAP)
Lead Partner	Adam Smith College

Background

WAP is a Scottish Development Partnership under the Theme F of the Equal Programme, *'Helping firms and employers to adapt to structural economic change'*

The DP operated in Round 1 of the Equal Programme (2002 – 2005) and in Round 2 (2004 – 2007) and comprises 9 partners in the first Round and 12 partners in the second Round, such as from Universities, FE Colleges, Economic Development Agencies, Local Authorities and Employers.

DP Aims and Objectives

In Round 1 of Equal the DP aimed to develop and disseminate a range of tested methods/practices to help firms improve adaptability by adopting new practices for work/life balance and utilising new technologies to support this process. Projects operated in both urban and rural environments.

In the second Round the DP aims to develop pilots that engage both employers and employees in challenging traditional workplace practices: projects that encourage innovation, thereby promoting equality in the workplace and ultimately contribute to Social Justice and allow the SME base to operate more competitively in the European and World Market places. The objective include; to create future sustainability for SMEs by establishing collaborative networks with emerging clusters; promoting cultural changes in the workplace towards a better worklife balance, through innovative business practices i.e. remote/flexible working; test positive actions for employers to reduce discrimination against employees from black and ethnic minority groups and enhance their career progression prospects; addressing rural and urban regeneration by promoting ICT (including wireless and mobile technologies).

DP Outcomes

In the First Round of Equal WAP DP piloted the use of **MOLI (Mobile Interactive Learning Initiative)**, a broadband enabled, fully IT equipped mobile bus. MOLI has been instrumental in triggering broadband exchanges throughout Scotland. It has 'toured' Scotland promoting the business benefits of Broadband to SMEs and has been particularly successful raising awareness in rural areas. The project has been credited with contributing the over 90% of Scotland being Broadband enabled. British Telecom subsequently committed to increasing this to 100%. Glasgow Caledonian University developed and piloted The **'Virtual College'** methodology that has now been adopted by NHS Scotland for nurse training. Ad hoc funding has been received for staff salaries for one year until mainstream funding becomes available.

In the second Round the DP developed 9 innovative projects that targeted both employers and employees. The results that are starting to emerge demonstrate that, from the point of view of the impact on business, the pilot projects increased profitability, improved competitiveness, improved procedures for managing change, improved efficiency and customer service. At the same time, from the point of view of the impact on individuals, the projects demonstrate to have improved management skills and the ability to contribute to business strategy; increased competence and

confidence as well as ability to work at a more senior organizational level and created among employees a desire for further training.

Finance

	Round 1	Round 2
Total Eligible costs	3,161,244	3,554,416
Total ESF Award	1,580,622	1,777,208