

National Centre for
Partnership + Performance

Modernising Our Workplaces For The Future

A Strategy for
Change + Innovation
2002 – 2005

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Modernising our Workplaces for the Future — A Strategy for Change and Innovation 2002–2005

Section 1

Introduction

Following an extensive process of consultation and analysis this strategy and operational plan outlines the priorities of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance for the three years 2002 – 2005. It sets out a direction for the Centre which is bold and ambitious but which is necessary in order to address the external challenges and to meet the aspirations and concerns of those who engaged with the Centre in the strategic planning process.

An important element in the development of the strategy was a wide ranging and comprehensive consultation process involving discussions with over fifty organisations across the private and public sectors. Those interviewed represented the Social Partners, national industrial and economic policy agencies, agencies charged with dispute resolution, public sector bodies involved in education, health and local government, private enterprises and expert bodies in the areas of partnership and performance. In addition, through the circulation of the *Strategic Planning Discussion Document*, views were sought and received from a wide range of organisations and individuals.

A table outlining the strategic planning framework and a list of the organisations who participated in the consultation process are included in this document.

The strategy and operational plan as presented are the culmination of an intensive process of research, analysis, consultation and deliberation, and reflect a consensus approach to the way forward for the National Centre for Partnership and Performance.

Section 2

Analysis

The external environment

An in-depth analysis of the external environment was conducted by the National Centre for Partnership and Performance as part of the strategic planning process. This analysis examined trends in the environment and focussed on the implications of these trends for enterprises and work-places. It considered developments in the macro-economy and the labour market, trends in people's preferences with respect to work and jobs, developments at EU level and developments in the environment of industrial relations in Ireland.

While the findings of the analysis are rich and wide-ranging it is not possible to include these, in their entirety, in the context of this strategy statement. Instead a summary of the major drivers in the environment in which the National Centre for Partnership and Performance will operate, is outlined over the following pages:

The macro-economy, competitiveness and adaptability

Over the decade as a whole, while the economy will slow down from the exceptional growth rates of recent years, it will still achieve levels of growth above Ireland's EU neighbours. Living standards will continue to converge on the EU average and a return to full employment is projected following a temporary downturn. The medium-term challenge therefore involves building capacity, improving productivity and maintaining competitiveness in the context of a return to full employment and high growth, accompanied by rising costs pressures. In the short-term, however, businesses, employers, employees and trade unions face the challenge of adaptation and flexibility in the context of changed economic circumstances.

The major national competitive imperative, as outlined in a series of recent studies and reports, is for businesses to compete, primarily on the basis of productivity, quality, innovation and high skill. This imperative now underlies the policy of the IDA towards the FDI sector, where the priority is to shift from generating more jobs to improving the productivity and innovative capabilities of firms and the policy of Enterprise Ireland in building the capacity and competitiveness of indigenous firms to compete in a global economy.

Modernisation and adaptation in the public domain

The public services are faced with a need for modernisation, adaptation and change greater than at any time since the foundation of the State. Programmes of reform and modernisation are underpinned by the twin imperatives of supporting overall national, regional and local competitiveness and responding to the demands of users for services of higher quality and greater accessibility. For example:

- Reform in local government envisages significant improvements in efficiency, customer service and management decision-making .
- The Health Strategy proposes major changes with respect to core areas of work organisation, scheduling and staff development, and views such changes as prerequisites for the achievement of a better health service. Change of such scale and depth must be achieved in a context of radical reform of industrial relations procedures, communication and consultation arrangements and management systems.
- The education sector is also faced with new challenges at multiple levels. The Department of Education and Science faces the most significant reorganisation in its history. Wide-ranging change across the education sector as a whole will be required if it is to respond adequately to challenges in such areas as governance, curriculum reform, quality assurance, access, equality of opportunity and lifelong learning.

- The public utilities are also in the throes of the most significant programmes of restructuring in their history and will continue to face strong pressures for adaptation arising from deregulation, liberalisation and in some cases from major investment programmes.

Changing work preferences

Progressively growing numbers of people in employment value work that allows them scope to participate in various ways in job-based and organisational decision-making. International research provides evidence that employees commonly express a preference for higher levels of involvement in organisational decision-making and that progressively more employees are expressing a preference for involvement and participation as time goes by. The available evidence for Ireland suggests that similar patterns and trends are evident here.

These findings have important implications for the development of partnership. Part of the appeal of workplace partnership to employees and union members should be that large and growing numbers have revealed that they value working in jobs and organisations that provide scope for involvement and participation. In this way, advocacy of workplace partnership is working with the trend of social change in employment preferences.

Labour market and workplace changes

Developments in the labour market have given rise to multiple challenges within firms and workplaces. Developments in markets, production processes and technologies, changes in the structure of economic activity and changes in the basis of Ireland's competitive advantage, have added to the premium attached to increasing and updating the skills of the workforce. Progress in promoting lifelong learning will require the development of workplace arrangements permitting employees access to part-time, distance and block-release programmes and responsive to workplace-based learning and programme delivery.

Employees, both men and women, are also seeking more flexibility to enable them to achieve a better work-life balance and a better quality of life. Family-friendly policies can respond to employees' priorities and contribute to the recruitment and retention of staff, to increasing productivity and to enhancing business performance. In addition, occupational trends and migration projections point towards growing diversity in employment in enterprises and workplaces across a wide spectrum of sectors and activities. Adapting to growing diversity represents a challenge, and one with little precedent in Irish employment relations.

Developments at European Union level

Policy initiatives are being undertaken by the EU in a number of areas impacting on workplace partnership, including information and consultation, financial participation, lifelong learning and new forms of work organisation. Increasingly,

EU policy appears disposed to allowing the Social Partners in Member States to find ways of implementing directives and policies which make sense in national conditions.

Developments in Irish industrial relations

The industrial relations climate is one of unrelenting pressure for continuous adaptation, flexibility and improvements in productivity in response to global trends and increasingly intense competition. In the public sector, the ongoing process of deregulation and liberalisation will continue to require levels of change in employment practices and industrial relations structures in public utilities greater than at any time in their history. The success of programmes of investment in the transport services will also be predicated on major changes in underlying industrial relations postures and practices. Major investment programmes in the health services will also require new ways of working for employers, unions and employees. The drive to improve the delivery of public services and to modernise public service management cannot succeed without the engagement of unions and their members with management in the review and reform of mainstream organisational processes and systems.

The advent of benchmarking in pay determination in the public services involves the most significant change in how pay is determined in the public sector in half a century and may again trigger a review of the links between pay, performance, modernisation programmes and

prevailing industrial relations processes and arrangements.

In the face of these major challenges, across the private and public domains, some have suggested that future pay fixing arrangements may need to provide for greater flexibility and closer links between pay determination and performance at enterprise and workplace levels.

In this environment, the challenge will be to foster partnership in a context that will often be marked by immediate pressures on work organisation and productivity, as well as by pressures on pay. These pressures might in some sectors trigger the assertion or reassertion of traditional postures on the part of unions and employers.

Finally, there appears to be a growing sense among those centrally involved that existing policies, practices and institutions in the spheres of work, employment, workplace relations and dispute resolution, require a new guiding vision. Such a vision would focus efforts to reconfigure the existing framework in support of competitiveness, better public services, higher living standards and new employee and social priorities.

The main trends identified in this analysis constitute the key external drivers on which the strategy of the Centre is focussed and define the context in which it has set out its priorities. The immediate or short-term key driver is that of changed economic circumstances. A major challenge for the National Centre for Partnership and Performance, therefore, is to demonstrate the relevance of partnership in these conditions.

Partnership developments

From a synthesis of relevant studies and reports, the following broad conclusions can be made in relation to partnership in enterprises and workplaces.

A significant level of innovation and experimentation with partnership-based approaches to decision-making and work reorganisation has been evident in recent years in the private and public sectors; in non-union and unionised organisations, and in foreign-owned multinationals as well as indigenous companies. Therefore the Social Partners and many firms, workforces and unions have already acquired significant experience with the operation of various modes and forms of partnership.

A number of EU programmes have supported the development of partnership, the preparation of training and diagnostic materials and the dissemination of models and learning experiences. These are widely judged to have made an important contribution to diffusing partnership. Initiatives like the joint IBEC – ICTU ADAPT *Participation in Action at Enterprise Level (PACT) Programme*, the IBEC – ICTU and IPC's *New Work Organization Programme* and the SIPTU ADAPT Programme, made inroads in familiarising companies and unions with working through partnership.

Based on such evidence as is available, Ireland may possess a number of exemplars and models of partnership of international significance in both the private and the public sectors.

Partnership has been adopted as the main approach to handling major programmes of market-driven change or deregulation in a significant number of organisations, with consequences widely accepted as beneficial to management, staff, unions and customers. However, to date partnership has been more commonly applied to the resolution of operational challenges and problems than to the handling of strategic issues.

Assessments of partnership initiatives point to generally positive effects on performance, on employee attitudes and job satisfaction and on union representation. However, there are those who are sceptical of the benefits of partnership and perceive it as slowing down the decision-making process, particularly in times of economic difficulty. The Centre is aware of the need to address these concerns based on research and independent evidence.

In recent years there is some evidence that the momentum behind partnership initiatives may be waning in areas of the public service and in some public utilities, sometimes triggering reviews and reassessments of existing partnership arrangements. There is evidence also that the rate of adoption of partnership initiatives in unionised companies may have slowed in recent years.

The situation in non-union companies is less clear. There is little reason to suggest that multinationals are any less wedded than in the past to modes of partnership based on the direct involvement of employees. Nor is there any evidence that these modes of partnership are any less robust in the more difficult competitive and commercial circumstances being encountered currently. It is less clear that partnership has been diffusing significantly, more widely among non-union companies in general.

Networks of partnership facilitators, many of these ongoing, have been created in different sectors, particularly health, local government, in some public utilities and large private sector firms. These networks probably amount to several hundred persons, but little effort has been devoted to capturing, distilling and more widely disseminating their unique experience and expertise, their perspectives on the challenges of animating partnership and their assessment of its benefits and potential.

Section 3

Consultation

As part of the development of a strategic plan, the Centre engaged in an extensive process of consultation with the Social Partners and with a wide range of national organisations and businesses involved in the areas of promoting partnership and performance. The organisations invited to participate in the consultation process fall into six broad groups:

- The Social Partners
- National industrial and economic policy agencies
- Agencies charged with dispute resolution
- Public sector bodies involved in education, health and local government
- Private enterprises
- Expert bodies

This process of consultation yielded a rich and diverse range of issues for consideration by the National Centre for Partnership and Performance. The dominant and most notable theme was the lack of a clear definition of partnership and the need for a coherent rationale behind its promotion.

The issues which emerged from the process of consultation are summarised here:

All of the participants in the consultative process expressed the need to define partnership more clearly and concretely, to articulate its value and its meaning and relevance in the context of the modern workplace. They felt that the National Centre for Partnership and Performance needed to create and lead a debate about the benefits of partnership in order to build a vision of its role in the workplace of the future.

The most striking message arising from the process, in the eyes of employers, was the need to 'make the business case' for partnership. There is a need for evidence-based analysis, which will show the links between partnership and performance and promulgate successes in ways that are meaningful and relevant to a variety of business areas and settings.

The focus of industrial policy was presented as building Ireland's national competitive advantage on the basis of the adaptability, flexibility, creativity and high skills of its enterprises. It is evident from the consultation process that the Centre will also be in a position to contribute to these wider industrial policy objectives.

Unions felt that partnership ought to encompass strategic areas and that employees and unions needed to be brought more fully into core decision-making processes in the enterprise. Many expressed the view that union members did not possess a sufficient understanding of what partnership was about, what it could achieve and what their role in the process should be.

The Centre is regarded as well placed to address some of the problems highlighted by identifying and articulating the relationships and dynamics that should characterise the modern workplace. Many felt that it may also be well placed to lead a debate on the need to modernise workplace relations practices and to assist in the development of policies which support and reward good practices in the workplace and could foster a culture characterised by trust and mutual respect.

A number of the organisations consulted were faced with major and far-reaching programmes of organisational change, some involving the restructuring of entire sectors. Even where senior managers were well disposed towards partnership, they faced doubts and dilemmas as to how such programmes might or should be linked to ongoing partnership initiatives. Sometimes similar concerns were apparent among the immediate champions of partnership in these same contexts.

A number of the bodies consulted made specific comments concerning partnership in civil service departments and to the Strategic Management Initiative. Progress across the sector and with respect to the SMI was seen to be uneven. A preoccupation with structural arrangements was seen to dominate the partnership model.

Many expressed the view that an important priority for the Centre should be to ensure that partnership is mainstreamed in the education and training curriculum in business schools and union education.

The process of consultation highlighted priority areas for deliberation by the Council, in particular gaining agreement on more flexible systems of financial reward and the possible application of these new systems in the public services.

The parties involved in the consultative process expressed concern that the Centre should be sufficiently well resourced to have a real impact on the major issues identified as needing to be tackled.

The role for the National Centre for Partnership and Performance emerging from the process of consultation is one that is more challenging and ambitious than was envisaged at the outset. The most strident concern of those interviewed was that the Centre would begin to develop an overarching vision for partnership and provide leadership in defining the 'workplace of the future'. The absence of what many called 'the bigger picture' in prevailing policy and practice was a constant strand and it was felt that the Centre was well placed to play this path-finding role.

An emerging role for the Centre

The role for the Centre that emerged from the consultation process can be outlined under the following broad categories:

Leadership Setting out a new direction and developing new models of participation and practice in the workplace.

Responding to major change and policy initiatives Providing direction and proactive planning with respect to partnership as organisations begin the process of major change and restructuring.

Facilitation Facilitating and brokering agreements between parties such as IBEC and ICTU in partnership areas and surrounding implementation of EU policy.

Highlighting partnership in the workplace The distinct role of the Centre is in deepening partnership and performance at enterprise level.

Supporting partnership in a diverse economy There is no one model of partnership and the Centre should address the needs of different constituencies and foster a series of models relevant to companies.

A partnership fund The availability of a national fund in support of partnership initiatives in companies and workplaces could be seen as an effective means of priming the pump of innovation on the ground.

Research The Centre should direct its resources towards high-quality research and analysis thereby providing the foundation for the identification of best practice in the workplace.

Avoiding intensive operational involvement The resources of the Centre would not be best employed in supporting individual companies and organisations through the provision of direct training and facilitation support on an intensive or on-going basis.

Supporting facilitators and trainers The Centre needs to develop a national training strategy that would identify and seek to close gaps in current delivery and availability of trainers. The Centre might work with facilitators and with the training sector to identify priorities for further professional development.

Collaboration with other agencies The potential for significant value-added through collaboration was seen to exist within all six groupings interviewed. Specific proposals have been identified for strategic collaboration and joint ventures involving many of these groups.

Challenges & Opportunities

Section 4

The analysis of external trends, and the outcomes of the consultation process point towards a series of challenges and opportunities that provide a focus for the strategic response of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance. These are outlined in this section and they inform the Centre's mission, strategy and operational plan.

The National Centre for Partnership and Performance needs to demonstrate the centrality of partnership to the challenge of building competitive advantage and realising mutual gains in the context of an economy set to return to full employment and high levels of growth in the medium term. A major immediate challenge facing the Centre is to demonstrate how partnership can assist firms, employees and unions in achieving higher performance and joint benefits in the context of the current economic slowdown.

The critical challenge in the public sector is finding ways of 'mainstreaming' partnership into programmes of modernisation and change aimed at improving performance in central and local government, health, education, transport and other public utilities. Progress to date points to the need for a reassessment of how programmes of modernisation and adaptation might better link with partnership processes, industrial relations processes and reward systems.

The development of the economy and labour market since the second half of the 1990s has involved a number of trends with significant implications for firms and workplaces. These include pressures for more flexible working arrangements, the promotion of equal opportunities, growing workforce diversity, an increasing demand for upskilling and training, and the development of workplace regimes that are more responsive to the demands of continuing education and lifelong learning. Many of the challenges arising in these areas have been regarded as amenable to solutions based on partnership principles and arrangements. Demonstrating this to be the case and providing models of best practice will be priorities. More generally, growing numbers of people at work express a preference for jobs that allow scope for participation in job-based and organisational decision-making. These preferences seem set to intensify and can meet with an effective response through the promotion of partnership.

At the level of the European Union a series of initiatives are in train in the broad area of partnership, as well as in areas closely linked with partnership-based solutions, for example, the promotion of lifelong learning. Increasingly, EU policy appears to be to provide flexibility for EU countries and their Social Partners to find ways of implementing directives and policies that make sense in their national circumstances. This opens up an opportunity for the National Centre for Partnership and Performance to make itself available to the Social Partners to deliberate on these issues and to develop solutions and agreements that might effectively implement EU directives and policies within the broad area covered by its remit.

A large measure of consensus exists across the political spectrum on the value of partnership and its potential in respect to the changing basis of Ireland's competitive advantage in the global economy. However, there is a growing awareness of a need for a more coherent intellectual and policy framework in which the cumulative effects and contribution of policies across a range of areas might be assessed in the context of performance, adaptation and new economic realities. This opens up an opportunity for the National Centre for Partnership and Performance to provide leadership in an area of major strategic importance.

The Centre will need to find a path and a voice in an increasingly difficult industrial relations climate, where the rate of progress in developing partnership appears to have slackened.

It will need also to assess the consequences for its role and for partnership of changes in pay fixing arrangements in the public services and across the economy beyond the current national agreement.

The public service benchmarking initiative could lead to a reassessment of pay regimes and their linkage with performance, change and modernisation programmes. This could also happen with any move towards more decentralised pay determination following the expiry of the current national agreement. Any such developments would have significant implications for partnership. The role of partnership in such a context, the relationship between partnership and industrial relations processes, and how any new role for partnership might be supported, would need to be considered systematically.

The major challenge for the Centre is to start developing models, cases and ways of configuring partnership in the context of often complex change processes and programmes. A slow build-up is inevitable in at least some of these areas, but it is occurring in a fast-moving and ever-shifting business, employment and employment relations world.

An immediate and pressing challenge is to demonstrate the relevance of partnership in current, more difficult economic conditions and in the context of the current industrial relations climate. The more significant challenge the Centre faces, however, is that of engaging the big issues of capacity building, workplace change, modernisation and institutional redesign.

Strategy

Section 5

The strategy of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance is presented under three headings which reflect the challenges posed by the external environment and respond to the main themes emerging in the consultative process. These are:

- Positioning
- Mission
- Strategic priorities

Positioning

Positioning the Centre concerns identifying the space it will occupy in support of partnership and performance in the light of the external challenges that have emerged, the issues that surfaced during the consultative process and the work being undertaken by agencies and organisations with complementary concerns.

The Centre will be positioned in terms of the following set of eight major attributes.

Repositioning partnership

The National Centre for Partnership and Performance will refocus and revitalize partnership and re-establish momentum by repositioning partnership around key national strategic priorities. These involve adaptation to changing economic circumstances, responding to the changing basis of competitive advantage, and improving organisational flexibility and adaptiveness on an ongoing basis. The Centre will promote the 'mainstreaming' of partnership, into the core operations of businesses and public service organisations, as well as into the design of work, reward systems and organisational processes and structures.

Path-finding and leadership

The Centre will seek to adopt a path-finding role, to provide leadership and to develop a vision of the future of work, employment and workplace relations in the context of Ireland's economic circumstances and prospects. Such a vision can provide a coherent intellectual and policy framework to guide public policy across multiple agencies towards competitiveness, work, employment and workplace relations.

Making partnership practical

The Centre will be both visionary and practical. It will aim to influence developments on the ground in significant ways by providing practical support for partnership and higher performance. This will include the development and dissemination of case studies of best practice; analysis and research; support for training, and the provision of facilitation in circumstances where partnership is being linked with change programmes of national significance.

Strategic focus

The National Centre for Partnership and Performance will seek mainly to 'steer' rather than to 'row'. Its primary emphasis will be strategic rather than operational. It will be concerned with path-finding and leadership, with identifying priorities, with developing programmes to assist those directly involved in promoting partnership and improving performance, and with providing guidance and resources for significant partnership initiatives. While providing support for partnership it will not seek to become involved, on an intensive or ongoing basis, with facilitating partnership initiatives in individual firms or workplaces. The challenge will be to support and add value to the efforts and work of other organisations and of providers active in the field.

Highlighting workplace partnership

The Centre will continuously and emphatically highlight its role in deepening partnership and driving organisational change and improvement in the workplace and in the enterprise. In this way it will clearly differentiate its role from the activities and services of other national institutions.

Broad appeal

The Centre will be independent and enjoy broad appeal. It will reach beyond the core institutions and constituents of social partnership to encompass areas of business and employment across a wider terrain. This is important in order to capture models of good practice and to support innovation, adaptation, capacity building and creative responses to employee priorities across the economy as a whole.

Evidence-based advocacy

The Centre will engage in evidence-based and experience-based advocacy of partnership and of the contribution it can make to improving performance and delivering mutual gains. Research will be independent and rigorous and geared towards assessing the situation with respect to partnership, as it actually exists.

Supporting multiple models

The Centre's role is not to support or privilege any particular model or models but to support multiple models where these can be shown on the basis of evidence to contribute to performance and the achievement of mutual gains. This does not mean that an indiscriminating approach will be taken towards supporting partnership activity. Research provides pointers to the features that make partnership arrangements more or less successful. The Centre will use evidence and experience to demonstrate the advantages and disadvantages of different models and their relative effects on performance and mutual gains.

Mission

The National Centre for Partnership and Performance will support and facilitate organisational change, based on partnership, to bring about improved performance and mutual gains and thus contribute to national competitiveness, better public services, higher living standards, a better quality of work life and the development of the workplace of the future.

Core business

The core business of the Centre is to bring about organisational change and innovation through partnership; to articulate a vision of the workplace of the future; to deliberate and develop policy in support of partnership and performance; to identify strategic training priorities; to provide the intellectual capital for learning and training materials; to engage in strategic facilitation in support of major programmes of change and restructuring; to assist major national based and EU initiatives focused on partnership; to engage in analysis, commentary and advocacy in support of partnership and change, and benchmarking and review based on research evidence and experience.

Reflecting the core business, the key activities of the Centre will involve searching out and researching partnership-based solutions, analysing and synthesising data and information, collaborating with the government and its agencies, employers, employees and unions and relevant bodies and individuals, providing services

to a range of organisations in the private and public sectors and influencing key constituents and stakeholders. It will involve activities in facilitation, deliberation and problem solving. As a campaigning organisation, the Centre will also be involved in promotion, communication and dissemination activities in support of partnership, and in driving organisational change, increased adaptability and competitiveness.

The core competencies, which will be developed in support of these activities, are synthesis, analysis, teamwork, facilitation, deliberation, project management and presentation and communication. These activities will require the creation of a learning organisation, capable of acting strategically, and providing thought leadership while remaining practical, accessible and supportive. The Centre will also seek to be recognised as independent, with an authoritative voice for change, which is based on evidence and experience.

Strategic priorities

Consistent with its positioning and mission, a series of strategic priorities will guide the work and operational programme of the Centre. These strategic priorities are outlined as follows:

- Deliberation
- Identification and dissemination of best practice
- Developing a national training strategy
- Strategic facilitation
- Analysis, commentary and advocacy
- Auditing and review

1. Deliberation

The National Centre for Partnership and Performance will establish itself as an independent and authoritative voice with respect to the future of work, employment and organisational change in Ireland. It will engage in proactive deliberation in two respects: the first addressing the broader canvas of work, employment and organisational change in the context of competitive pressures, national objectives with respect to improving public services and changing workforce priorities; the second addressing more specific ways in which the foundations of partnership in firms and workplaces can be strengthened.

The path-finding role of the Centre will involve deliberation and commentary aimed at promoting a guiding vision of work, employment and organisational change and the implications for prevailing models, institutions and public policies across the economy.

2. Identification and dissemination of best practice

The Centre will concretise partnership and its benefits for those directly engaged in organisational change through the development and dissemination of case studies and learning materials. It will initiate and support innovative partnership-based projects with the potential for wider learning, dissemination and use. It will also examine how progress nationally can best be benchmarked over time and will develop a national partnership research strategy in dialogue with external researchers and with research agencies active in the field.

Its research and project activities will illustrate best practice, partnership-based solutions to problems and ways of responding to environmental challenges on a partnership basis. In developing case studies and learning materials, the Centre will ensure that the models provided address a range of contexts, issues and approaches.

3. Developing a national training strategy

The Centre will develop a national training strategy in support of partnership. This will be aimed at identifying the training needs of the key groups involved in animating partnership initiatives. The strategy will examine the focus and content of partnership training materials. It will include the establishment of a national network of trainers and facilitators and the development of a database of highly qualified personnel in the areas of training, facilitation and consultancy.

4. Strategic facilitation

In providing support for partnership and change the Centre will endeavour to find ways of providing assistance to key sectors of the economy. It will be available to play a strategic facilitation role in circumstances deemed to be of national significance, where partnership initiatives affect the economy as a whole, arise in key sectors, companies, organisations, or in the context of major and radical change programmes. However, the Centre will not be another link or stage in the dispute resolution process.

5. Analysis, commentary and advocacy

The Centre will engage in regular commentary, analysis and review to promulgate the case for partnership. It will aim to raise awareness of the area and to stimulate debate on how workplaces are best able to compete and perform in the context of new competitive challenges and changing employment priorities. The case for partnership will be supported through authoritative research and high-quality data. Studies of the genesis, dynamics and effects of partnership in different contexts will also be supported with a view to adding to knowledge of the areas and to supporting the development of case-based learning materials.

A dissemination and communication strategy will be developed, aimed at ensuring accurate and timely information dissemination and enabling the Centre to develop strong communications with strategic alliance partners, joint venture organisations and key stakeholders.

6. Auditing and review

The Centre will develop a programme aimed at the provision of an auditing and review facility for ongoing partnership initiatives. This will identify an appropriate methodology for assisting the parties to partnership to assess its contribution and effects.

Collaboration & Structures

Much of the success of the Centre will depend on collaboration with other agencies and groups. The Centre will enter a small number of strategic alliances, with key collaborators, in mission-critical areas of its proposed strategy.

Strategic collaborators

The Social Partners

The Centre will work with the Social Partners in the development of a strategic agenda aimed at strengthening the foundations of workplace partnership. The Social Partners, particularly IBEC and its member companies and ICTU and its affiliated unions, have provided leadership in the development of workplace partnership through their individual and joint initiatives. They enjoy well-established channels of distribution and influence for the dissemination and implementation of partnership-based innovation.

Industrial policy agencies

The Centre will collaborate with Forfás and its major agencies, the IDA and Enterprise Ireland, and with FÁS, with a view to harnessing workplace partnership in support of organisational change and the aims of industrial policy. Programmes and executives in Enterprise Ireland and the IDA will be supported through identifying ways in which partnership could be used to build the capacity of indigenous firms to compete internationally and to support the efforts of the Irish subsidiaries of multinational companies in mandate renewal.

Dispute resolution agencies

The Centre will link with the Labour Relations Commission, the Labour Court and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with a view to analysing trends in industrial relations, work, employment and human resource management. It will deliberate on the contours of a new model providing a better alignment between partnership and industrial relations and more suited to Ireland's economic and social priorities.

The Strategic Management Initiative

The Centre will collaborate with the Strategic Management Initiative with a view to promoting the mainstreaming of partnership in core programmes of public service modernisation in central government departments and in local government, health and education.

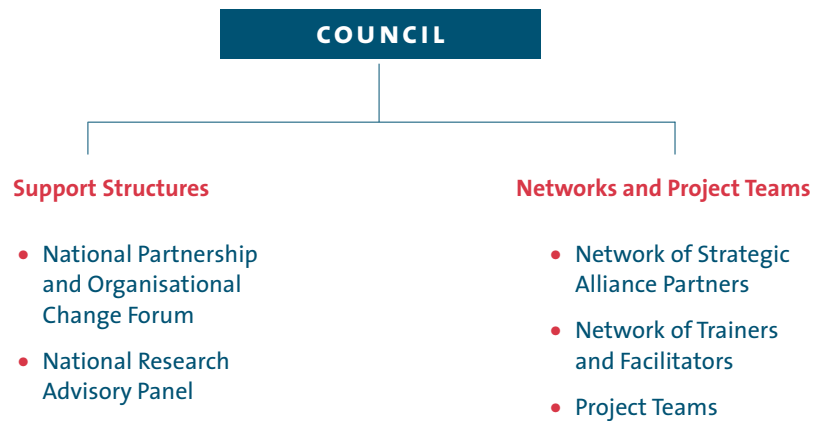
Joint ventures

Joint ventures will be established in a range of areas to progress initiatives consistent with the Centre's strategic priorities as follows:

- With LANPAG and the Health Service Partnership Forum to develop a methodology for reviewing progress against objectives in partnership initiatives and its application to drive forward partnership initiatives in health and local government.
- With the Advisory Service of the LRC in the joint development of an intervention model to guide the initiation of partnership in LRC client organisations.
- With the Equality Authority in developing and strengthening the partnership basis of equality audits and action plans, with a view to the joint promotion of equality proofing with respect to business and human resource policies and practices.
- With the Social Partners in reviewing and updating partnership training models and diagnostic tools developed under the ADAPT Programme.
- With the Health and Safety Authority in joint research examining whether the adoption of a partnership approach towards the work of health and safety managers and safety representatives could contribute towards improved health and safety, particularly in high-risk industries.
- With the Training and Consulting Sector focusing on the development of advanced skills training for experienced partnership trainers and facilitators, covering areas not commonly accessed at present and learning experience in other countries where voluntary partnership arrangements are well developed.

Structures

The strategy and agenda of the Centre are ambitious and will need to be supported by key organisations and actors in the areas of partnership and performance. Appropriate structures will be put in place to harness and maintain the high level of support that the Centre will need to meet its goals.



Council

The Council will fulfil a number of overarching responsibilities and will act as the forum for discussion and deliberation on key strategic issues relating to partnership and performance. It will provide a supportive national framework to deepen partnership and build organisational capability and increased flexibility at enterprise and workplace levels.

The positioning, mission and strategic priorities of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance require the creation of a knowledge-intensive organisation, capable of drawing on the expertise and experience of a range of agencies and groups. This capability will be developed through the following substructures:

- **Support Structures**
 - National Forum on Partnership and Organisational Change
 - National Research Advisory Panel
- **Networks and Project Teams**
 - Network of Strategic Alliance Partners
 - Network of Trainers and Facilitators

Support structures

National Forum on Partnership and Organisational Change

In providing support for organisations in strengthening partnership and increasing organisational capability, the Centre will establish a National Forum on Partnership and Organisational Change with representation from key organisations in the private and public sectors.

It will be a forum for learning and sharing experiences and best practice across sectors and industries, including public and private sector, multinational and indigenous enterprises, those who have experience of partnership and those who are new to partnership approaches and concepts. This forum will provide an opportunity for representatives from the different sectors to share ideas, to consider different approaches, to address barriers to progress and to identify the factors that will lead to success.

The National Forum will address a series of major issues:

- Concretising the benefits of partnership, and identifying and disseminating best practice
- Building a guiding vision for partnership and organisational change and helping to build a better vision of the workplace of the future
- Discussion, debate and deliberation on partnership and organisational change and performance
- Thought leadership, analysis, commentary and advocacy

National Research Advisory Panel

The Council will also create a Research Advisory Panel drawn from universities and other organisations to advise on and participate in the Centre's research activities, and to determine priorities. The network will assist the executive and will work with the national co-ordinator for research and policy development in commissioning and conducting research and collaborating with the Social Partners and relevant agencies in various research initiatives. It will also be the forum for analysing and deliberating on relevant findings from new and existing studies at national and international levels.

The objectives of the National Research Advisory Panel are to provide strategic advice to the Centre on its research programme and activities and to enable the Centre to influence and shape the research agenda in the areas of partnership and performance. It will help identify appropriate research studies and findings in support of its work in partnership and organisational performance and will advise on priorities in commissioning and conducting research.

It is expected that the National Research Advisory Panel will also provide a forum for the widespread dissemination of research findings and will create a greater awareness of the benefits of partnership and the link between partnership and performance.

Networks and project teams

The Centre will establish a number of networks and project teams to provide support in the implementation of its operational programme. Initially, it is envisaged that the Centre will establish a national network of trainers and facilitators and a network of its strategic alliance partners.

Network of Strategic Alliance Partners

The Centre will establish a network of its strategic alliance partners to harness the expertise of a range of organisations and to provide a forum for collaboration and planning. These will include the Social Partners, those responsible for progressing the Strategic Management Initiative, members of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, representatives from agencies such as the Labour Relations Commission, the Labour Court, Forfás (IDA and Enterprise Ireland), FÁS, and other expertise with particular relevance to the work of the Centre. The rationale for this network is to enable the Centre to have on-going liaison and collaboration with its strategic alliance partners and to provide a structure for strategic collaborators to meet with each other. It will also facilitate co-ordination across the different agencies and organisations that have responsibility for workplace issues. The need for such co-ordination was an important strand in the feedback from the consultation process.

Network of Trainers and Facilitators

As part of its national training strategy the Centre will develop a national network of trainers and facilitators working on partnership and organisational change. It will include trainers from the public sector, trainers from IBEC and ICTU and private sector trainers and consultants.

Part Two

Operational Planning Framework, 2002–2005

Strategic Priority 1

Deliberation

Strategic Priority 2

**Identification and
dissemination of best
practice**

Strategic Priority 3

**Developing a national
training strategy**

Strategic Priority 4

Strategic facilitation

Strategic Priority 5

**Analysis, commentary
and advocacy**

Strategic Priority 6

Auditing and review

Putting the strategy into action

The operational plan of National Centre for Partnership and Performance is based on the strategic priorities identified in its strategy. The plan outlines a series of actions and a programme of work for the Centre, which will enable it to meet its strategic goals and priorities. It reflects the mission, positioning and strategy of the Centre, the challenges and opportunities arising from the external analysis, the main concerns and interests of those interviewed in the consultation process and the contribution of the work of the Centre to the realisation of national strategic priorities.

Operational Planning Framework

The operational plan is presented in the following framework. Six strategic priorities, as identified in the strategy, are the foundation on which the programme of work for the Centre is built.

- Strategic Priority 1: Deliberation
- Strategic Priority 2: Identification and dissemination of best practice
- Strategic Priority 3: Developing a national training strategy
- Strategic Priority 4: Proactive facilitation
- Strategic Priority 5: Analysis, commentary and advocacy
- Strategic Priority 6: Auditing and review

Priorities are identified in each area and specific actions and responses are outlined which demonstrate how the Centre will operationalise these priorities.

The plan is ambitious and will require co-operation from other leading agencies and organisations that have responsibility for driving change in the workplace. It outlines how the Centre will collaborate with other agencies and use many channels and networks to promote partnership and identify opportunities for case studies of best practice and project development.

A programme for dissemination and advocacy is summarised in the Strategic Priority 5: Analysis, commentary and advocacy. The importance of this role will be further underpinned by the organisation's communication strategy, which is currently being developed.

The operational plan will also form the basis of strategies and work programmes in particular areas such as research, project development, training and communications and will inform the development of performance indicators, and budgetary and human resource systems within the organisation.

Strategic Priority 1

Deliberation

The National Centre for Partnership and Performance will establish itself as an independent and authoritative voice with respect to the future of work, employment and organisational change in Ireland. It will deliberate with respect to the foundations of partnership activity in firms and workplaces, with a view to influencing public policy and practice in ways that deepen partnership and widen its appeal and developing the workplace of the future.

Strategic Priority 1 **Deliberation**

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
<p>Strengthening the links between work-place partnership, organisational change and capability, and the quality of working life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop guidelines to assist companies in embarking and successfully putting in place partnership arrangements • Following the development of initial guidelines, develop different models and approaches to organisational change through partnership • Provide a forum for discussion on a strengthening of the links between the Strategic Management Initiative, the sectoral modernisation programmes and the partnership arrangements in the public service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with IBEC and ICTU • Collaborate with the relevant government departments, the unions, the management bodies and the partnership fora 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete June 2002 • Publish initial sample approaches and models December 2002 • Initiate Autumn 2002

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
<p>Putting the modernisation of the workplace and the management of change at the heart of national policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with NESC in the development of Strategy 2002, in particular the sections dealing with structural reform, enterprise level partnership, productivity growth and institutional change and development • Work closely with Forfás on the further development and implementation of Enterprise 2010 – a new strategy for the promotion of enterprise in Ireland in the 21st century – in particular those sections dealing with enterprise partnership and increasing productivity as the key to rising living standards • Work closely with FÁS (in accordance with its Statement of Strategy 2002 – 2005) and other relevant organisations and groups to promote through partnership and best practice human resource strategies, the development of learning organisations and greater investment in training and life-long learning • Work closely with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on the modernisation of the workplace and developing the workplace of the future • In the context of their Statements of Strategy, work closely with relevant government departments including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The Department of the Taoiseach — The Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment — The Department of Public Enterprise — The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with NESC, relevant government departments and the Social Partners • Collaborate with Forfás • Collaborate with FÁS and other relevant organisations • Work closely with Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and other relevant government departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete November 2002 • Ongoing • Ongoing • Ongoing
<p>Aligning partnership and industrial relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a forum for discussions on the need to modernise and develop a new vision for our industrial relations system and partnership arrangements, reflecting the speed of change, the need to avoid conflict and a deepening of partnership in the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with IBEC, ICTU, the relevant government departments, the Labour Relations Commission, the Labour Court and the public service industrial relations institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate June 2002

Strategic Priority 1 **Deliberation**

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
New reward systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and develop for discussion a policy document on new and different forms of financial reward in the private sector • Prepare and develop for discussion a policy document on the possible application of different forms of financial reward in the public sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the Social Partners, IBEC and ICTU • Research and analysis in collaboration with Forfás • Collaborate with SMI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete November 2002 • Ongoing 2002 – 2003
The practical effects of EU directives and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate on the transposition of the EU Directive on Information and Consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, IBEC and ICTU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2002 – 2005
Adapting the workplace to the needs of the individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a process of deliberation on the quality of working life and the work environment and a range of related issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Work/life balance — Family-friendly policies — Childcare — Lifelong learning — Equality — Diversity • Look to international examples of best practice, for example the Nordic countries, in improving the quality of working life and in adapting the workplace to the needs of the individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, the Equality Authority, other relevant government agencies, IBEC and ICTU • Work with a number of local bodies including local partnerships and county childcare committees • Collaborate with international agencies and organisations as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing

Strategic Priority 2

Identification and dissemination of best practice

The National Centre for Partnership and Performance will develop and disseminate case studies and learning materials and initiate and support innovative partnership-based projects with the potential for wider learning, dissemination and use. It will also examine how progress nationally can best be benchmarked over time and will develop a national partnership research strategy in dialogue with external researchers and with research agencies active in the field.

Strategic Priority 2 Identification and dissemination of best practice

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
Research strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a research strategy outlining the Centre’s research programme for a 3–5 year period including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Identify how the Centre, through its research activities, will facilitate the development of an overarching guiding vision for organisational change through partnership — Identify and outline priority areas for commissioning research — Identify and outline priority areas for collaboration and joint research projects — Develop a strategy for widespread diffusion and dissemination of research findings — Examine the feasibility of undertaking a workplace survey in Ireland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with bodies represented on the National Centre for Partnership and Performance Research Advisory Panel • Joint research initiatives with agencies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Forfás — FÁS — The Equality Authority — The Health and Safety Authority • Work with the Conference of University Rectors in Ireland in examining the feasibility of conducting an Irish workplace survey • Collaborate with cognate international organisations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — IPA — The Industrial Society — Organisations in Europe and the US with a similar remit to that of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete strategy before June 2002

Strategic Priority 2 Identification and dissemination of best practice

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
Partnership and organisational change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct and publish a review of international and Irish studies establishing the benefits of partnership and in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Its contribution to enhancing both the competitiveness of firms and the quality of working life across a wide range of organisational contexts — The establishment of broad principles, presenting different perspectives and developing a holistic definition of partnership 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish November 2002
Development of case studies of best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission/collate research on partnership in the context of organisational improvement in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Private sector, including indigenous and multinational, foreign-owned companies — Public sector — Crises, setbacks, business turning points and steady-state conditions — Manufacturing industries — Service industries — Large businesses — SMEs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with agencies and organisations with access to a wide range of companies and enterprises to identify cases with potential for the development of best practice including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — IBEC — ICTU — IDA — EI — FÁS — Excellence Ireland — Irish Centre for Business Excellence — IMI — CIPD — IPC — ETS — ERS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Publish case studies in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Website — In approaches and models of partnership October 2002 — Other publications and studies of the Centre

Strategic Priority 2 Identification and dissemination of best practice

Project Development			
<p>Project Development Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy for project development outlining the Centre's programme for a 3–5 year period • Identify areas where best practice can be observed, monitored and evaluated • Outline a strategy for the development of an overarching guiding vision for organisational change through partnership through the analysis of best practice cases • Identify areas where there are gaps in partnership development and where projects can be initiated, supported, developed and disseminated as best case examples • Develop methodology for monitoring and evaluating projects • Identify sources of funding for project development and opportunities for collaboration and joint ventures with other agencies and organisations • Explore possibilities and options for the creation of a national partnership fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss funding issues with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Finance and other relevant government departments • Collaborate with agencies and organisations that have been very active in promoting partnership in recent years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete strategy June 2002
<p>Existing projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify best practice projects and initiatives in different workplace settings including some of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Private sector, multinational and indigenous — Public sector — Crises, setbacks, business turning points and steady-state conditions — Manufacturing industries — Service industries — Large businesses — SMEs • Develop case studies of best practice from existing projects and initiatives • Prepare and publish examples of best practice from the existing suite of partnership projects and initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with and building on the experiences of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Social Partners: IBEC and its member companies; ICTU and its affiliated unions, for example, SIPTU College and Ideas Institute — IPC — ETS — Partnership in key sectors such as LANPAG in the Local Government Sector and the Health Sector Partnership Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Work in this area will inform work in other areas of the operational plan

Project Development			
Initiation and development of new projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify organisations, sectors and industries for project development and support • Identify cases for project development and action research to enable the Centre to develop templates and to create a new guiding vision for organisational change through partnership • Prioritise partnership issues for project development from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Partnership in the context of major programmes of change and restructuring — Partnership and incremental organisational change — Alternative ways of effectively linking industrial relations processes and structures with partnership in unionised firms and how such linkages may evolve over time in organisations — The contribution of partnership to mandate renewal and bids for major investment programmes in multinational subsidiaries — The contribution of partnership to capacity building and the development of competitive advantage in firms — Strategic and operational decision-making and problem solving — Gain-sharing and financial participation programmes — Flexible work arrangements, responses to diversity, the promotion of gender equality, skills upgrading and lifelong learning — Alternative modes of conflict resolution and grievance handling 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing

Strategic Priority 3

Developing a national training strategy

The National Centre for Partnership and Performance will develop a national training strategy in support of partnership including the management of change.

Strategic Priority 3 **Developing a national training strategy**

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
National Training Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a National Training Strategy incorporating the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Identification of the training needs of the key groups involved in animating partnership initiatives — Identification of the focus and content of partnership training curricula — Identification of alternative ways of resourcing and delivering training to groups with differing needs — Agreeing structures and standards for the evaluation of partnership training programmes — Providing leadership and support to trainers and facilitators in areas of national strategic importance, i.e. the Health Sector, the Education sector, the Transport Sector, etc. — Possible accreditation of partnership trainers and consultants — Possible accreditation of workplace partnership training modules/courses — Mainstreaming partnership into the core curriculum of business schools at undergraduate, graduate and post experience (especially MBA) levels — Mainstreaming partnership into union training courses and management development courses — The incorporation of partnership and new ways of working into the curriculum at second-level education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with agencies and organisations that have been very active in promoting partnership in recent years • Work with and build on the experiences of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Social Partners, IBEC and ICTU — IPC — ETS — ERS — Partnership in key sectors such as LANPAG in the Local Government Sector and the Health Sector Partnership Forum — Civil Service — Major areas of the public sector such as education • Work with universities, business schools and relevant educational institutions • Work with unions, universities and relevant educational institutions • Work with NCCA, the Department of Education and Science, Business Studies Teachers Association and other relevant subject associations, teacher unions and relevant educational institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete June 2002

Strategic Priority 3 Developing a national training strategy

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
Design and development of training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemble a design team to prepare high quality training materials for use by partnership trainers and facilitators when delivering partnership training • Design and develop Train the Trainer (TTT) materials in collaboration with other organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with IBEC and ICTU in updating existing materials such as ADAPT and PACT • Work with Ireland's eLearning companies to develop high quality multi-media training and facilitation materials • Collaborate with public service bodies in updating existing materials and designing and developing new materials • Collaborate with the Irish Centre for Business Excellence in the development of high quality materials in the areas of strategic planning and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemble design team June 2002 • Complete TTT materials December 2002
Accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore accreditation options for training undertaken by partnership trainers and consultants • Explore accreditation options for training undertaken by those involved in workplace partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with accreditation bodies including the National Qualifications Authority, in designing and implementing accreditation systems and standards • Explore issues of accreditation with FÁS because of their experience in this area, and work with the accreditation agencies of the NQAI, FETAC and HETAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with agencies towards agreeing standards and the compilation of a directory of accredited personnel by end 2003

Strategic Priority 3 Developing a national training strategy

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national network of trainers and facilitators • Develop a database of highly qualified personnel in the areas of training, facilitation and consultancy • Organise events, fora, seminars and workshops for training and facilitation network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a national network for facilitators and trainers working on partnership and organisational change such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — IBEC — ICTU — Private Sector Trainers and Consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete establishment of network September 2002
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream partnership into the core curriculum of business schools at undergraduate, graduate and post experience (especially MBA) levels and into training for trade union officials and activists • Mainstream partnership into the training programmes for union officials and local representatives and management development programmes, in particular HR managers • Incorporate partnership and new ways of working into the curriculum at second-level education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with universities and business schools • Collaborate with cognate international organisations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — IPA — The Industrial Society — Other organisations in Europe and the US with a similar remit to that of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance — IBEC and ICTU — Work with NCCA, the Department of Education and Science, Business Studies Teachers Association and other relevant subject associations, teacher unions and relevant educational institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership module in curriculum for academic year 2003 – 2004 • Part of Business 2000, 2002 – 2003 • Align with schedule for review of the business studies curriculum

Strategic Priority 4

Strategic facilitation: supporting change through partnership

In circumstances deemed to be of national significance, where partnership initiatives affect the economy as a whole, arise in key sectors, companies, organisations, or in the context of major and radical change programmes, the Centre will be available to play a strategic facilitation role. The Centre will endeavour to find ways of providing assistance with the potential for significantly improving relations and driving change in these organisations over the medium-term and long-term; adding value to the work of other agencies, and avoiding displacement both with respect to the work of other agencies and with respect to the Centre's own strategic remit. The Centre will not be another link, or stage, in the dispute resolution process.

Strategic Priority 4 Strategic facilitation: supporting change through partnership

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
Models and procedure for strategic facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop agreed procedures and models for strategic facilitation which would enable the Centre to define its role more clearly and create understanding and awareness of the nature of the assistance and support it can provide to organisations in the private and public sectors • Work with the LRC Advisory Service in developing a joint model of partnership intervention and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the dispute resolution agencies, in particular the LRC Advisory Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete September 2002 • Complete January 2003
Provide initial support for organisational change through partnership. Examples of key sectors which have emerged to date are outlined below			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
Transport Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide initial support for organisational change through partnership in the transport sector 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing

Strategic Priority 4 Strategic facilitation: supporting change through partnership

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
Education Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the process of strategic planning and organisational change through partnership in key areas of the education sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The IOT sector — The VECs — The University Sector — The Schools Sector — The Department of Education and Science • Support the work of trainers and facilitators in the education sector 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
Health Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support, through the Action Plan for People Management, the use of the partnership structures as the vehicle for the involvement of staff and staff groups in the implementation of the Health Strategy at national and local levels • Work with the Health Services Partnership Forum, trainers and facilitators in the implementation of the Health Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Health and Children • Health Services Partnership Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
Other organisations and sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance for organisational change through partnership in other sectors and organisations as appropriate 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing

Strategic Priority 5

Analysis, commentary and advocacy

The National Centre for Partnership and Performance will engage in regular commentary, analysis and review to promulgate the case for modernising the workplace and workplace relations through partnership.

Strategic Priority 5 Analysis, commentary and advocacy

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
<p>Communication strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop dissemination and communication strategy including the identification of key audiences and channels. This strategy will also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Ensure accurate and timely information dissemination — Develop strong communications with the National Centre for Partnership and Performance strategic alliance partners, joint venture organisations and key stakeholders — Build the National Centre for Partnership and Performance brand — Create and manage effective internal communications systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for collaboration with organisations that have access to a wide range of companies and enterprises • Identify potential for use of communication channels of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — IBEC and its affiliated companies — ICTU and its affiliated unions — IDA — EI — FÁS — Excellence Ireland — Irish Centre for Business Excellence — IMI — CIPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete April 2002

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
<p>Development of website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop website to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Regularly updated information on the activities of the Centre — Publications of the Centre — Links to other websites, organisations and their materials nationally and internationally. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA • The Industrial Society • Websites of strategic alliance groups • Websites of Joint Venture Organisations • Websites of institutions on Research Advisory Panel and other Council substructures • Government website • DETE website — Multiple cases of best practice in different sectors and industries — Provide links to the National Centre for Partnership and Performance from websites of key organisations and agencies, and in particular IBEC and ICTU websites — Examples of different models of organisational change through partnership — Links for trainers and facilitators nationally — Training materials and the training of trainer materials — Education materials 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous development • Links developed April 2002 • Include case studies from September 2002 • Develop links for trainers September/October 2002

Strategic Priority 5 Analysis, commentary and advocacy

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
<p>Promotional events and activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise conferences and seminars to raise awareness and share best practice • Develop an award system for excellence in change management through partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for collaboration with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — IRN annual conference — IPC — Irish Centre for Business Excellence — Industrial Policy Community, Forfás, IDA, EI and FÁS — Dispute resolution agencies; the Labour Court, LRC and LRC Advisory Service — IBEC — ICTU • Explore possibilities for collaboration with the FÁS Excellence Through People Award • Explore collaboration with Excellence Ireland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of strategy and operational plan March 2002 • Publication of Annual review February 2003 • Progress throughout 2003

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
Twice yearly bulletin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish and circulate bulletin giving details of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Activities of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance — Important articles on partnership and organisational change — Research findings in relation to organisational change and partnership — Existing and new studies evidencing the benefits of partnership — Profiles of partnership champions — Case studies of best practice 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First bulletin March 2002
Annual Workplace Review and Outlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce an annual summary document outlining issues and developments in the workplace incorporating the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Annual review of partnership developments and progress in organisational change and issues emerging from the Centre's research, project development and training activities — Snapshot of the world of work — Discussion on models of work, employment and better workplace relations — Annual commentary on the state of the workplace now, charting progress towards the workplace of the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This review may be published as a joint venture with the following agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Industrial Policy Community, Forfás, IDA, EI and FÁS — Dispute resolution agencies; the Labour Court, LRC and LRC Advisory Service — Social Partners, IBEC and ICTU — Relevant government departments, in particular the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First publication February 2003

Strategic Priority 6

Auditing and review

The National Centre for Partnership and Performance will develop a programme aimed at the provision of an auditing and review facility for ongoing partnership initiatives. This will identify an appropriate methodology for assisting the parties to partnership to assess its contribution and effects.

Strategic Priority 6 Auditing and review

Priority	Action	Collaboration	Target Dates
Pilot project to develop a benchmarking model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Initiate a pilot project to develop a methodology and a model for benchmarking partnership projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collaborate with LANPAG in benchmarking project in the Local Government Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none">End Pilot December 2002
Benchmarking methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Following the initial piloting phase, develop a methodology for benchmarking partnership initiatives, projects and training at organisational and national levels		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete June 2003

Conclusion

This strategy and operational plan sets out a framework within which the National Centre for Partnership and Performance will work with the government and its agencies, employers, employees, unions and organisations in the private and public sectors to bring about change, and to develop a new and more ambitious guiding vision that puts competitiveness, increased productivity, adaptation to change, a better delivery of public services and a better quality of working life at the heart of national and workplace policies in Ireland.

Organisations consulted

The National Centre for Partnership and Performance would like to thank the following organisations that participated in the consultation process and submitted responses to the *Strategic Planning Discussion Document*:

- *Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)*
- *Small Firms Association (SFA)*
- *Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME)*
- *Aughinish Alumina*
- *Bausch and Lomb*
- *Tesco Ireland*
- *Cantrell and Cochrane Group Ltd.*
- *Intel Ireland Ltd.*
- *Córas Iompair Éireann*
- *Jurys Doyle Hotel Group*
- *Jefferson Smurfit Group*
- *Eircom*
- *National Competitiveness Council*
- *Superquinn*
- *Waterford Crystal*
- *Wyeth Medica*
- *IDA Ireland*
- *Enterprise Ireland*
- *FÁS*
- *Forfás*
- *Irish Management Institute*
- *Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development*
- *Irish Congress of Trade Unions*
- *Irish Municipal, Public and Civil Trade Union (IMPACT)*
- *Irish National Teachers' Organisation*
- *Services Industrial Professional Technical Union (SIPTU)*
- *Department of the Taoiseach*
- *Department of Finance*
- *Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment*
- *Department of Public Enterprise*
- *Department of Education*
- *Department of Health and Children*
- *Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform*
- *National Economic and Social Council*
- *National Economic and Social Forum*
- *Labour Relations Commission*
- *Labour Court*
- *Equality Authority*
- *Health and Safety Authority*
- *Irish Productivity Centre*
- *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*
- *Health Services Employers Agency*
- *Health Services National Partnership Forum*
- *South-Eastern Health Board*
- *Western Health Board*
- *Local Government Management Services Board*
- *Meath County Council*
- *Conference of Heads of Irish Universities*
- *University College Dublin*
- *National University of Ireland, Galway*

