



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS DG

Social protection and social integration
Social protection and inclusion policies

Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion 2002-2006

TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Phase I - 2002

CALL FOR PROPOSALS - VP/2002/010

UNDER BUDGET LINE B3-4105

GUIDELINES

1. Introduction and Context

Following the introduction under Articles 136 and 137 of the Amsterdam Treaty of the fight against social exclusion among the social policy provisions, the European Council of Lisbon in March 2000 recognised that the extent of poverty and social exclusion was unacceptable. Building a more inclusive European Union was thus considered as an essential element in achieving the Union's ten year strategic goal of sustained economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The Lisbon Council agreed to adopt an Open Method of Co-ordination in order to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion by 2010. Key elements in the Open Method include agreement by Member States on common objectives in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the development of common indicators to measure progress, the development of two-year National Action Plans, regular monitoring and analysis of progress and the exchange of learning and best practice.

Considerable progress has been made since the Lisbon Council. Common objectives were agreed in December 2000 at the European Council in Nice. All Member States drew up two-year National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion by June 2001. An initial set of common indicators on poverty and social exclusion have been agreed between the Commission and Council and, following an analysis of the National Action Plans, they have adopted for the first time ever a *Joint Report on Social Inclusion* which analyses the situation in relation to poverty and social exclusion in the European Union and identifies key challenges for the future.¹

Following a proposal from the Commission the European Parliament and the Council agreed on the establishment of a five year, € 75 million programme of Community action to encourage co-operation between Member States to combat social exclusion. This is to run from 2002 through 2006. The Commission is responsible for implementing the programme and is assisted in this by a committee made up of representatives of the Member States.

The Community action programme is intended as a key tool to support and advance the implementation of the Open Method of Co-ordination through supporting co-operation which will enable the Community and the Member States to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of policies to combat social exclusion. In particular the programme is intended to contribute in three ways. These are: first, by improving the understanding of social exclusion and poverty with the help in particular of comparable indicators; secondly, by organising exchanges on policies which are implemented and promoting mutual learning in the context of national action plans; and, thirdly, by developing the capacity of actors to address social exclusion and poverty effectively, and to promote innovative approaches. To these ends the Community action programme is divided into the three strands. Strand 1 supports research and analysis, Strand 2 promotes policy co-operation and mutual learning and Strand 3 supports the participation of the various actors and networking at European level.

¹ Further information about the EU's social inclusion process – the Open Method of Co-ordination, the Nice Objectives, the Common Indicators, the National Action Plans, the Joint Report on Social Inclusion and the Social Exclusion Programme – can be found on DG Employment and Social Affairs' web site on social exclusion at:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/index_en.htm

This call for proposals relates to Strand 2 of the Community action programme on social exclusion. Its objective is to promote and support the organisation of exchanges and promote mutual learning between Member States. It will be known as the **Transnational Exchange Programme**. It will be one of the two main vehicles for promoting transnational exchange and co-operation under the Community action programme. The other main vehicle will be a programme of peer reviews examining specific policies being implemented by Member States. These guidelines outline the key features of the transnational exchange programme.

2. A Phased Approach

Drawing on the experience gained from previous programmes and in particular from implementing the "preparatory actions" over the past four years the Commission recognises the complexity of preparing effective and influential exchange programmes involving transnational partnerships. In particular it understands that it takes time to design work programmes for longer term exchange and learning, to identify appropriate partners, to build successful multi-sectoral partnerships, to clarify objectives and potential outcomes, to decide on appropriate methods of exchange, to establish effective links with the policy making process and to develop clear strategies for the dissemination and promotion of findings. Thus time spent at the outset in building a firm foundation for transnational partnership will greatly increase the probability of success.

In view of this and in order to maximise the contribution that the Transnational Exchange Programme can make to the Open Method of Co-ordination and to the implementation and future development of the National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion the Commission has decided to implement the programme in two phases: an initial preparatory phase of 9 months followed by the main phase of up to 2 years.

Phase I

Actions under the current preparatory phase, *Phase I*, are due to commence in November or December 2002 and to last no longer than 9 months, with no extension to be allowed. *Phase I* actions will concentrate on:

- taking stock of existing knowledge and policy developments in relation to the issue projects have chosen to investigate;
- fostering the development of a transnational and multisectoral partnership which will provide the basis for longer term co-operation and exchange; and
- defining objectives and developing proposals for a clear programme of further work for up to two years.

While allowing for the preparation of an application for *Phase II*, it is important to note that *Phase I* should also enable the projects to produce concrete outputs such as seminars/short studies/literature reviews, whose results will have to be adequately disseminated already in the context of this first phase. It is thus expected that during this initial 9 month phase, whether or not projects are selected for *Phase II*, the work undertaken by projects will result in learning which will contribute to the implementation and further development by Member States of their National Action Plans.

Phase II

Phase II will build on work undertaken in *Phase I*. Only partnerships selected to participate in *Phase I* will be eligible to apply for *Phase II* of the programme. A restricted call for proposals will be issued in Spring 2003 inviting all organisations participating in *Phase I* to apply for funding under *Phase II* for a maximum period of 2 years. However, subsidy agreements will be signed for one year and will be subject to an annual and conditional renewal.

Partnerships should note that applications for *Phase II* will be due to be submitted before the end of *Phase I*. This is to allow time for partnerships funded under *Phase I* to disseminate their outcomes more widely. It will also reduce the gap between *Phase I* and *Phase II* for partnerships whose applications to take part in *Phase II* are successful.

While application for *Phase II* is restricted to partnerships participating in *Phase I* should some of the priority issues for co-operation which have been identified (see below) not be sufficiently covered the Commission will consider issuing a call for proposals in 2003 addressed to other potential actors and limited to such areas.

3. Priority Areas for Co-operation

Applications may be submitted proposing policy co-operation and exchange on any aspect of poverty and social exclusion that is covered under the Common Objectives agreed at Nice. However, given the emphasis in this programme on supporting the implementation and further development of National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion, especial priority will be given to proposals addressing issues emerging from the first round of National Action Plans and identified in the *Joint Report on Social Inclusion*.

The Commission is keen to receive applications which aim to foster co-operation and exchange both on particular policy areas and on the development of institutional approaches which can underpin social inclusion policies. Proposals may be concerned with more than one policy area or institutional mechanism or may combine an interest in both a particular policy area and institutional approach or mechanism.

Within the context of the issues identified in the National Action Plans and *Joint Report* the following areas are of particular interest in this call for proposals:

Policy Areas

- removing blocks or barriers that may hinder those who are most distant from the labour market from moving from welfare into work;
- child poverty;
- youth exclusion and alienation including early school leaving;
- the social situation and policies to integrate immigrants and ethnic minorities;
- integrating the homeless;

- inequalities in access to health care and the links between social exclusion, poverty and health problems;
- the links between illiteracy and social exclusion;
- income adequacy, indebtedness and access to financial services;
- integrated local development initiatives to regenerate disadvantaged urban and rural communities;
- the links between access to culture and promoting social inclusion;
- access to justice for those experiencing poverty and social exclusion;
- the fostering of a rights based approach to social inclusion;

Institutional approaches and mechanisms

- methods of mainstreaming poverty/social exclusion across all policy areas;
- the development of local/regional anti-poverty strategies which complement national action plans and promote co-ordinated and multi-dimensional local responses to poverty and social exclusion;
- mechanisms for involving and supporting stakeholders, particularly those experiencing poverty and social exclusion, in the development, implementation and monitoring of NAPs/incl.;
- the development of methodologies to enhance the evaluation of the impact of policies;
- the development of indicators and instruments for analysis which will underpin social inclusion policies and programmes at local, regional and national levels;
- methods of promoting greater public awareness of and support for policies and programmes to eradicate poverty and social exclusion;
- the encouragement of local community development as a means to foster the participation and empowerment of those who are excluded and to build social capital;
- the development and methods of gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessments in the context of social inclusion policies.

Such priority areas are indicative. Other topics or themes will also be considered provided there is a clear justification to what extent they fit the overall political priorities of the social inclusion process and link to the NAPs/incl process.

Promoters should also ensure that their projects cannot be appropriately funded by other Community instruments, such as the Structural Funds including the EQUAL programme, the action Programme to Combat Discrimination or the action Programme to Promote

Gender Equality². In considering proposals the Commission will give priority to those concerned with issues not already covered under such programmes. When a proposal addresses an issue which is already the subject of policy exchanges and learning under another programme, for example disability or asylum seekers, it will be essential to demonstrate what added learning the proposed actions will bring.

Whatever the particular policy area or institutional mechanism for which applicants are submitting a proposal they are requested to make sure that they pay close attention to mainstreaming equality between men and women at all stages of the work they are proposing.³ They are also asked to take into account as appropriate the needs of disabled people in terms of the accessibility of activities they will be undertaking and results they will be disseminating when developing their proposal.

In drawing up their proposals, promoters should also take into account the wealth of information already available at EU level, especially the work carried out under the preparatory measures to combat social exclusion (1998-2001). In particular, organisations having already carried out such measures will be asked to demonstrate the value added of any further co-operation.

4. Types of Co-operation and Exchange

Providing they contribute to the overall objective of transferring information and good practice between Member States exchanges and co-operation may take different forms. These may include, for instance:

- meetings/workshops/seminars on benchmarks or on policies and practices
- joint conduct of policy analysis and research
- joint development of strategies;
- common dissemination of information;
- field visits and exchanges of personnel;
- exchanges between national observatories or other similar recognised bodies.

² The EQUAL initiative tests new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality experienced by those in work and looking for a job. Its thematic priorities are employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability, equal opportunities for women and men and asylum seekers. The Programme to Combat Discrimination supports transnational partnerships to contribute to the development of policy to prevent and combat discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The programme also contributes to eliminating inequalities and to promoting equality between men and women. The Programme to Promote Gender Equality aims to develop the capacity of players to promote gender equality effectively, in particular through support for the exchange of information and good practice and networking at Community level. Its priority theme in 2002 is reconciliation between work and family life. Further information on these programmes is available on DG Employment and Social Affairs' web site at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/index_en.htm

³ Article 3 par. 2 of the EC Treaty: In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between men and women.

5. Who Can Apply?

Access to this programme shall be open to all public and/or private bodies, and institutions involved in the fight against social exclusion. These can include national, local and regional authorities, bodies responsible for combating social exclusion, social partners, social service providers, non governmental organisations, universities and research institutes, national statistical offices and the media.

Applications must be partnerships involving, in the first instance, partners based in at least 3 Member States. However, as the project develops the involvement of additional partners from other Member States will be encouraged.

The Commission is particularly keen to receive applications which involve actors from several different sectors and which combine partners who are both involved in policy making at national, regional or local level with those who have direct experience of combating poverty and social exclusion on the ground. Applications will be expected to demonstrate how the proposers expect to go about ensuring the involvement of a range of relevant actors during the development of their project. Partnerships under both *Phase I* and *Phase II* must be co-ordinated by a single organisation designated by the other partners. However, the co-ordinating organisation could change between *Phase I* and *Phase II* if the partners so decide and providing there is continuity in terms of the policy area selected and the actors involved. This co-ordinating organisation will act as the Commission's only discussion partner for administrative matters and will submit a single overall application and will assume full responsibility for the implementation of the work programme.

Organisations co-operating in the action in *Phase I* who are not the co-ordinating organisation will be expected to fill in Part II of the application form. For *Phase II* organisations co-operating in the action will be required to clearly establish their role and responsibility during the implementation of the project.

Depending on a Joint Decision of the Council Committee being in force, this exchange strand of the Community action programme is open to EFTA/EEA countries. This Joint Decision is expected to be taken in the course of 2002. It is envisaged that this strand of the programme will also be extended to include accession countries from 2003 providing the relevant legal agreement between the Commission and accession country concerned has been concluded. While any extra costs incurred will not be eligible expenditure until after EFTA/EEA/Accession countries formally become part of the programme applicants in *Phase I* can already begin to integrate actors from EFTA/EEA/Accession countries in their projects during *Phase I* even though they cannot yet receive funding.

6. Available Budget

The total budget for Phase I for Member States will be between € 3.6 – 4.0 million. The Community's financial contribution will not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs. The partnership must guarantee co-financing in cash of the remaining 20%. Contributions in kind are not accepted. The number of actions that will be funded under *Phase I* is likely to be in the region of about 60 depending on the quality and number of applications. Funding will be in the order of € 60,000 for each successful proposal.

For *Phase II* it is envisaged that funding will be not less than € 150,000 per project per annum. It is likely that in the region of 20-30 actions will be funded for this phase and that funding for projects selected will be available from Autumn 2003.

7. Eligibility Criteria

In order to be considered for funding under this call, proposals will have to meet the following eligibility criteria.

From the policy perspective proposals must:

- have clear objectives which address some aspect of poverty and social exclusion as outlined in the section 3 above on "Priority areas for co-operation";
- involve transnational exchange of learning and co-operation on the development of policies and programmes to combat social exclusion and must **not** consist of direct action to combat social exclusion;
- be consistent with other Community policies and, in particular, take due account of the Community's commitment to eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between men and women pursuant of articles 2 and 3 of the EC Treaty;
- not seek funding for services or supports which would normally be funded by Member States or which should be more appropriately funded by other Community instruments (such as the Structural Funds in particular the EQUAL initiative, the Programme to Combat Discrimination or the Programme on Gender Equality).

From the legal and organisational perspectives proposals must:

- be made by properly constituted and registered organisations with an established administrative and financial management structure;
- complete all sections of the application form and provide all requested supporting documentation;
- involve partner organisations from at least three Member States;
- be submitted by **05/07/2002** (their submission date will be taken as the postmark date or the express courier receipt date and proposals submitted after this date will not be eligible. The application forms must also be sent in electronic form and must be sent by **05/07/2002**;
- have a start date in November or December 2002 and actions must not exceed 9 months;

From the financial perspective proposals must:

- provide full details of the complete budget as proposed;
- not seek funding from the Commission in excess of 80% of the cost of the proposed project and demonstrate the ability to provide the necessary matching funding;
- not seek funding for activities in or involving countries outside the EU although proposals may involve activities in countries outside the European Union provided these are not taken into account in calculating Community support under this call for proposals;
- demonstrate that the proposed actions are not being financed twice from two different sources within the Community budget (particularly in cases where promoters are already participating in preparatory actions or other programmes – applicants must declare any other applications which they have made for funding under the Community budget for 2002 and any funding already received under previous calls or programmes);
- and not seek funding for the running costs of organisations, nor for their general ongoing habitual activities, nor for profit-making purposes.

8. Selection Criteria

When the eligible proposals received are being examined they will be assessed against the following criteria:

Policy Criteria

- the extent to which there is a clear cut and well-supported diagnosis of the issue to be addressed and a clear indication of its importance and urgency in relation to eradicating poverty and social exclusion;
- the extent to which the application demonstrates the relevance of the issue selected to the issues identified above (see section 3 "Priority Areas for Co-operation");
- the degree to which the proposal has a clear policy focus which will reinforce policies in the National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion;
- the clarity with which the proposal shows how the preparatory phase will be used to:
 - take stock of existing knowledge and clarify the issues concerned, including a gender impact assessment⁴ and so contribute to the further development of the NAPs/incl process;

⁴ This means examining measures and policies for their possible effect on the respective situation of men and women and taking into account such possible effects when defining and implementing them.

- foster and extend the transnational and multisectoral nature of partnership so as to provide the basis for longer term co-operation and exchange;
- define clear objectives and design work programmes for longer-term exchange and learning; and
- design a strong dissemination and public awareness element to the proposal;
- the extent to which the proposal will add to existing knowledge and work on the selected issue;

Organisational Criteria

- the extent to which the proposal involves or plans to:
 - involve a broad range of relevant actors;
 - ensure the involvement of those who are experiencing poverty and social exclusion⁵;
 - seek a balanced participation of women and men.
- the organisational and management experience of the proposers, their track record in relation to the issue they propose to exchange information on and their ability to implement the proposed plan;
- the degree of support and active involvement the proposal has from the national, regional or local authorities of the Member States concerned;
- the quality and potential of the multi-national partnership, the degree of involvement of the various partners as well as the number of Member States involved;
- the quality and feasibility of the proposed 9 month work plan (detailed activities, meetings, surveys or studies with clear and attainable time-lines);

Financial Criteria

- the financial quality of the proposal including its likely value for money and cost-effectiveness;
- the experience and track record of the proposers in financial management of projects.

⁵ Proposals may come from public, private, NGO or other organisations but the more they involve or propose to develop partnerships involving a wide range of players and the more they allow for the participation of persons experiencing poverty and social exclusion the better they will meet the objectives of the Exchange programme.

Achieving Balance

In finalising its list of proposals to be supported the Commission will take into account:

- the need to ensure a balance in the range of issues to be supported;
- the importance of making sure that as many Member States as possible are involved in the exchange programme;
- the need to achieve the involvement of a broad range of actors in the programme.

9. Participation in Commission Events

It is important for applicants to recognise that this exchange programme is more than just a source of funding and is part of the wider EU social inclusion process. Thus partnerships whose applications for support are successful will be expected to be available to participate in any meetings or events organised by the Commission for participants in the Co-operation and Exchange Programme or in other events organised as part of the Social Exclusion Programme or as part of the Open Method of Co-ordination if so requested.

10. How to Apply

The request must be drawn up in one of the official languages of the EU and accompanied by a signed official letter explicitly requesting the subsidy.

Proposals must be submitted on the prescribed application form and be sent together with all documents forming part of the application by post to the address below by **05/07/2002** (their submission date will be taken as the postmark date or the express courier receipt date and proposals submitted after this date will not be eligible).

European Commission

DG Employment and Social Affairs- Archives-Courrier J37 0/26

Unit E2 : Call for proposals VP/2002/010

B-1049 Brussels

Belgium

The application form in four parts **must** also be returned to us by e-mail to the address below stating "**VP/2002/010 - application**" by **05/07/2002** without fail:

empl-e2@cec.eu.int

11. How to obtain the application form and its instructions

- The application form (available in English, French, German) is made up of four separate parts:
 1. Part I (Excel format): Details of the main applicant organisation, including a summary of the project (main objectives). This part includes the Bank identification form.
 2. Part II (Word format): Details of co-applicant/partner organisations (partners based in at least two Member states different from the main applicant's country).
 3. Part III (Word format): Proposal description and justification.
 4. Part IV (Excel format): Proposal provisional budget, including four sheets: 1) the Annex III (global budget form), 2) the detailed provisional budget, 3) the global conference budget and 4) the Conference detailed budget.

You can obtain all four parts of the application form :

- by downloading them from the following internet address:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/calls_en.htm
 - by sending an email to empl-e2@cec.eu.int (please include "Call for proposals VP/2002/010 - Info" in the title of your email).
 - by writing to:

Unit E2: Call for proposals VP/2002/010 - Info
European Commission
DG Employment and Social Affairs
J27 1/33
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium
 - or by sending a fax to +32 2 295 65 61 (please include "Call for proposals VP/2002/010 - Info" in the title of your fax).
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- The instructions for the applicant on how to apply form a separate document which presents:
 - Documents to accompany your application (checklist)
 - Guidelines for presenting the proposal's provisional budget
 - Main provisions of the grant agreement

You may download this document at the following internet address :

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/calls_en.htm

The information in these guidelines together with the instructions for completing the application form should provide all the information you require to submit an application – please read them carefully before doing so paying particular attention to the priorities that have been set for the programme and the emphasis on developing transnational and multi-sectoral partnerships. However, if you should have any further queries, please contact us **quoting the reference “VP/2002/010 - query”** at the contact points below and allow a reasonable time for a reply. Please note that we can only answer questions related to the requirements of the call for proposals and the application process. We cannot prejudge the process by offering any opinion on the merit of a particular application.

Our contact points are:

- by post at the above address
- by fax to + 32 2 295 65 61
- by e-mail to empl-e2@cec.eu.int