

*Gazelle speed & Elephant memory, a winning team in this jungle !*

# COOPERACTIVAGESUPPORTRUST

( " **CAST e. c. s.** " )

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the “pyramid of ages”, experienced executives aged 50-75 are “reservoirs” of resources and expertise, especially valuable to younger entrepreneurs and professionals aged 25-50 for them to develop their business or sustain the quality of their careers and projects with solid partners.

In 2050, there will be 1M people aged 100+ in the USA, over 275M aged 55+ in the EU, over 400M aged 50+ in China, ...! The Lisbon Process calls for the participation of “active ageing populations” to avoid losing valuable skills. The skills shortage problem, addressed in Luxemburg last year was there clearly re-focused and it was said that *“this process is not 'owned' by the Ministries of Labour, but calls for comprehensive employment initiatives with a wide range of stakeholders”* ([http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/employment\\_strategy/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_strategy/index_en.htm)).

There is a window of opportunity for our public-private partnership to develop and implement a cooperative business and maximise skills-pooling of both generations to their mutual benefit. The objective of **“Cooperative ActiveAGE Support Trust” (CAST<sup>®</sup>)** is to serve the purposes of authorities, employers, social partners, executives, ... while taking advantage of a genuine solidarity and a stable income derived from synergies between members.

The emerging profit-niche of the “career-care and income sustenance business”, - so often neglected by large corporations - was however recently strongly recognised and developed by French, Dutch, British, ... mutuals and cooperatives. Over 2.5 Bn € was spent in 2004 in Europe by “alternative project-finance initiatives” ([Source: COOPER http://www.ica.coop/europe/publications.html](http://www.ica.coop/europe/publications.html))

Our “life-cycles professionals” will interact between age-groups to provide “career transition” and “project transmission” value added services. Not only will they coach members to cooperate but they will transform traditional career functions into intergenerational projects. These will include, outplacing, CV-editing, recruiting, training, coaching, educating, re-vitalizing, mentoring, ... which will be acquired before it is needed. By anticipating future service needs at an early stage, and by booking service-providers in advance, they will provide external support at wholesale price AND/OR ensure this self-help support derived from the “members twinning”.

By matching talents and expectations with concrete tools and actions described hereafter, CAST will also derive concrete value from the melding of energy, qualifications and ambition with wisdom and continuation of work across ages. To this end, CAST itself will team-up with CV Warehouses and other Partnering specialists in order to tailor the co-operative teams in terms of abilities, age, gender, profession, location, sector, etc.

Through this co-operative support, human resourcing, intelligence and creativity will increase. Trustees will deliver services and Members will benefit from them but, because of this “lab-environment”, they will fertilize, blend and enrich each other with this unique biodiversity experiment. This requires “artistic spirit” but, also, high professional HR values and creativity to generate a sound career development business.

With the support of innovating authorities, alternative finance networks and datamining experts (all approached and interested or committed), CAST will generate a new momentum for executives while energizing usual suppliers and users, in search of new ideas, synergies and cross-fertilizers. This will enrich the careers and projects of its members.

## II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### 1. One page of context

In this sluggish economic climate, the class of executive staff aged 55+ is probably under more (un)employment pressure than any other category. Despite the fact that this workforce is usually experienced and well educated, they are often made redundant or retire early. This is why the Lisbon Process pays attention to the “Silver Economy” (senior workers) problem.

In this context, it is sensible to prepare for better times and challenging projects. Experienced executives were the artisans of the past years of growth. They were able to bring required intellectual and professional skills to manage all kinds of initiatives or new firms, not only within the new economy (and new EU-regions) but also in established ones.

Therefore, with a little help from the next generation, the “greyexecutives” or “silverworkers” could be the best category of actors to sustain present and future entrepreneurs. There is no reason to discard them because they’re 50+; they can probably work until they’re 75 or more!

Their desire for new challenges is considerable and they are often wealthier than young people. They are thus able to invest in new businesses, projects or companies. As they also want to remain useful to society, we believe they can play a key role in the economy and become change agents for the young entrepreneurs that may lack confidence and support.

At this stage, we must ask ourselves what has gone wrong? Why does this trend to cast 55+ aside continue while they themselves want to remain active and want to contribute to the world of work? Why are younger persons more employable than older ones? Why are so many business projects clustered within a specific age-group? For example, IT for younger ones and crafts/arts/tourism for mature workers. While the survey below will address these issues, our target is clear : CAST is the logical straightforward selection and matching system to contribute and benefit from the redirecting and refocusing of trends and human resources.

In this HR “jungle” of short-term employment policies, the perceived necessity to skim weaker genders/ profiles is unfortunately leading the way for companies to see dispensing with staff as the way to survive while waiting for better times. Just as there is evidence of a growing gap between rich and poor, both the young and old find themselves in harsh competition. The quality of each age-group is not questioned but relationships between them put the quality of life and business centre stage. How does CAST trigger successful changes ?

Young entrepreneurs will see opportunities and will benefit from the transmission changes. Experienced workers will bounce back and boost the young economy. It is a question of **cooperation, communication** and **timing** for us (and governments) to seize the benefits.

Together, within the CAST cooperative framework :

- MATURE personalities and business angels have essential skills and knowledge, wide networks, strong team powers, rich intercultural skills, impressive analytical methods, creative problem solving, positive control functions, etc.
- EMERGING experts or entrepreneurs embrace multiple technologies, rapidly acquire professional skills, often experience chaotic development, use multiple information sources, marketing techniques and have different priorities and expectations from the world of work, ...

will join forces whenever appropriate in a life-long track , present a “Joint Project ” and/or secure sustainable shared business ventures or simply propose harmoniously shared employment advantages (possibly with a grant for a “twinning career scheme”), etc. EU authorities have understood that the situation needs attention. They are encouraging transition and mentoring programmes (e.g. DG Entr/ SME’s Mentoring) and make the older/ younger relationship concrete and productive (e.g. DG Enterprise InnovActions).

## 2. What is CAST ?

To understand the basics of **CAST**, let's look at our three layers. They form our "raison d'être" but also the "raw materials" AND the "communication channels" for the project.

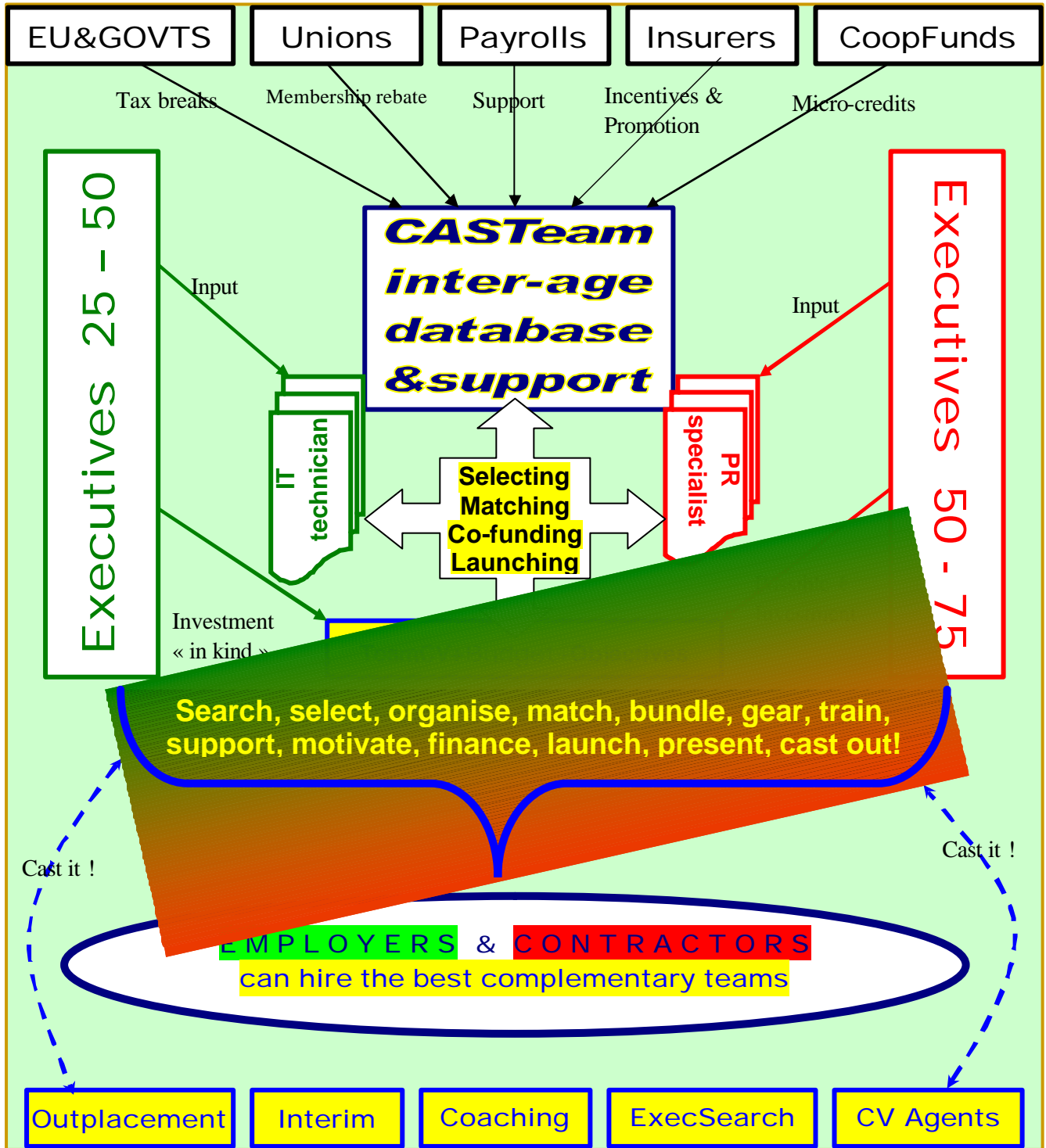
- **Senior executives** : CAST means a new career-path for them when they reach 50 and work sometimes until they're 65-75, they represent a "DRIVING FORCE" in our society whose "success-stories" must be encouraged and disseminated ;
- **Young executives and entrepreneurs** : CAST is a new way for them to understand and more easily recognise labour market challenges while they are only 25 or 30; they will be in a position to "PROGRESS and GEAR UP" with the help of our team AND, if they need a "re-start" when they reach 40, they will benefit from the 50+ persons, based on their concrete EXPERIENCE and also useful CREDIBILITY (financial resources, assets, ...);
- **Market actors** : groups like employers associations, social secretariats, retirement trusts, unions, employment and education agencies, etc. will find a way to "FIGHT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT, AGE-RELATED AND OTHER DISCRIMINATION" (that neglect or waste skills and talent). At the same time, specialized HR-related service firms like executive search, outplacement, interim agencies, coaching, training, CV-editing specialists, etc. will of course DEVELOP THEIR BUSINESS with a revived interest from both age-groups AND benefit from various grants and support measures provided by the EU Member States and rather unknown by the public;

Looking at the service providing activity of CAST and the approved service-providers, set out here is the immediate **added-value of CAST** :

- **SELECTIVE SUPPORT** : the repositioning success chances of the Trustees of CAST (*young or mature ones*) will increase when they realize that a team helps to select different AGED additional strengths for them to turn their career project into a viable business; Strong characteristics of younger executives will complement the weaker ones of senior ones and vice-versa . For example, while a younger person will be computer literate, a more senior one will excell in structuring and using her/his networks!
- **SERVICE SOURCING** : with a significant contribution from the service-providers who can "pre-sell" their services to our target audience and along with the contribution from Trustees, the beneficiaries will effectively receive carefully scrutinised support which they buy at "wholesale price" (as if it were "securities, bonds or futures" on the market-place), from specialized career guidance firms, with the selective help of a CAST-professional;
- **SYNERGETIC START-UP** : with a strong commitment and solid reputation in the market, the CAST 50+ age-group will derive substantial financial incentives and possibly INVEST or guarantee in project-tandems as well. Not only will they benefit from the support fund and matching-tools of CAST but also from resources of other groups such as insurances, governments, unions and other para-public agencies who seem to be willing to join the synergy, based on our preliminary contacts with them.

## CAST scheme

**Structured and resourceful co-operative between two age-groups, supporting its members towards a successful and a collaborative re-start of their career and providing financial return to its members.**



### 3. The objectives of CAST

Even where public or private programmes or tools exist, the executives are not often aware of their availability and functioning. Synergies between smaller public or voluntary facilities are quite fragmented, while collaboration within the private sector in this respect is very limited.

The need for help to bridge the gaps (geographic, cultural, linguistic, technologic, behavioral) between age-groups and generate solidarity is still considerable. It does not mean that the public is not aware of the issues but a systematic method and visible information stream is essential as we support :

1. the **momentum** to launch such a synergetic initiative that is positive. What is missing is a practical and sustainable trigger mechanism;
2. the **positive attitudes** of older and younger executives : they are willing and intending more than ever to **work in teams, join forces** and be complementary;
3. the **facilitating** and organizing of this cooperation that would be more than welcome and simple enough, as several **transition services** are readily available but haphazardly delivered or geographically limited;
4. the **synergies** and “ready-to-use” systems to help executives successfully find their counterparts and **select** the best projects/ partners
5. the notion that both generations **debate and promote** ideas for the best responses to challenges but also **develop effective projects**, contracts or companies (and avoid past mistakes), with adequate resources, experts and partners provided by **CAST**.

We believe that the climate is propitious to start, grow, and develop these cooperative initiative, even though we recognise it will be complex and challenging. Financial and human resources are available for good projects if there is a guaranteed need and sustainability.

Key success factors of **CAST** are: (1) strong “**self-help**” and easy to use **database** system with well informed and up to date information on expertise, skills and needs, (2) efficient “**matching mechanism**” between typecasts and (3) a “cooperative **ethos**” clearly channelled towards to the public. With mutual needs and dissemination of success-stories, it will provide a ‘back-to-back’ success, delivering the promise FOR trustees WITH trustees, and, from this base, to a wider citizens’ audience.

As you will see in the financial statements, there is (a) minimum initial investment, (b) sound return on investment, (c) room for creativity and flexibility, (d) compliance with social and economic rules and (e) simplicity of use for direct tangible members’ benefits. To be effective and successful, CAST will need :

- a **team** funded by yearly **cooperative contributions** from Trustees and grants from market actors; this team will search, select, connect and support relevant persons who need support as employee, entrepreneur or self-employed. This is achieved with both internal/external skills, experience and networks of CAST, juniors and seniors;
- a **trust** in which at any time, against the payment of an entry fee or a yearly contribution, executives can buy **services for the future at wholesale prices**. The trust invests that money for future needs and constantly compares best prices and practices in the HR-services industry to provide the best value for money for executives and for projects;
- **functions** and **procedures** under Board **supervision**; career or project services are provided to actively ageing executives as a function of their repositioning needs. Junior ones can contribute financially (e.g. on the basis of a small salary %) and thereby get CAST’s support and quality service; Senior ones can be part of a more pro-active coaching/ patroning committee or “self-help” working group. Senior executives (as well as Junior ones) can invest in projects, possibly in collaboration with selected service providers.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

<i>before ...</i>	<b>WHY CAST TODAY ?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>isolated actors while youth rejecting older executives</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PRACTICAL PROJECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL ACTIVE (AGEING) ENTREPRENEURS</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>waste of skills and retired people : redundancy</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>APPROPRIATE SUPPORT STRUCTURE MAXIMIZING COOPERATIONS BETWEEN YOUNGER AND OLDER PEOPLE</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>short-term employment measures</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ENRICHING EXPERIENCED ACTIVE AGEING WITH YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>financial scepticism about late-start projects</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>COOPERATION BETWEEN AGE-GROUPS IS ORGANIZED VIA A DATING DATABASE AND USE OF SKILL-POOLING SYSTEM</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>healthcare oriented funds and actuarial red tape</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>INCIDENTALLY, CAREER AND BUSINESS VENTURES MAY AS WELL ATTRACT EQUITY FINANCING, GRANTS, ...</b></li> </ul>