



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG  
ESF, Monitoring of Corresponding National Policies II  
**EGF (European Globalisation adjustment Fund), Innovation**

## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

**VP/2009/012**

<p><b>Learning for Change</b> <b>Setting up learning networks under the ESF 2007-2013</b></p>
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**Under Budget Line 04.022000**  
**ESF Technical Assistance operational budget - 2007-2013**

Questions should be sent by e-mail only to: [empl-ESF-grants@ec.europa.eu](mailto:empl-ESF-grants@ec.europa.eu)

To ensure a more rapid response it is helpful if applicants send their queries in English, French or German.

The English version of the call is the original.

All documents related to the call can be downloaded from the following site:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=630&langId=en>

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## **Budget Line 04.022000**

### **Learning for Change**

#### **1 RATIONALE AND GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

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The main purpose of transnational cooperation is to contribute to employment policy and delivering reforms essentially through learning from other countries and regions by bringing together people, knowledge and practice, activities, networks and fora in the field of employment, social inclusion and training. Exchange of information, sharing of good practice, and working together towards common solutions in a multicultural environment has an important multiplier effect:

- by strengthening the capacities to innovate;
- by modernising and adapting institutions to new social and economic challenges;
- by identifying and assessing issues and solutions for reforms in policy and delivery in order to meet the Lisbon targets; and
- by improving the quality of governance of public policies, programmes and actions.

In the previous period the Commission has been the main motor and resource for stimulating and supporting transnational cooperation under the ESF and making it work through the EQUAL Community Initiative and innovative actions (Art. 6). The revised Lisbon strategy emphasises the need to strengthen ownership of the reform agenda at national, regional and local level. As a consequence, in the period 2007-2013, the main responsibility for learning from one another has to be assumed by Member States and regions. This new role is backed by the ESF Regulation (Reg. (EC) No 1081/2006<sup>1</sup>) which stipulates that transnational co-operation is an integrated feature of the European Social Fund (ESF) 2007-2013:

*"The ESF shall also support transnational and interregional actions in particular through the sharing of information, experiences, results and good practices, and through developing complementary approaches and coordinated or joint action."*

This provision invites Member States and regions to support transnational cooperation, through their national and regional ESF Operational Programmes (OP),

- in all policy areas identified for ESF interventions, such as adaptability, labour market policies, social inclusion and combat of all forms of discrimination in the labour market, human capital and strengthening public administration;
- for all types (strategic stakeholders such as social partners, NGOs, training and regional development organisations, public administrations, ESF management bodies, beneficiaries, participants in projects) and levels of actors, and
- for all types of exchange and cooperation (joint projects; events; focus groups and networks; mobility and exchange of people).

As a result, Member States and regions, in their Operational Programmes under the ESF 2007-2013, plan to use 2 % (€3 bn) of the budgets of their Operational Programmes for transnational cooperation.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999, Official Journal of the EU, L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 12

## 2 THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF ESF SUPPORT AT EU LEVEL FOR TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

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In addition, the Commission has committed itself to provide flexible support to Member States and regions to facilitate the implementation of the transnational dimension of Operational Programmes. The Commission is providing swift support to emerging needs of Member States that are **more effectively met at European level**. As outlined in its “Action Plan to support Transnational Cooperation at EU level”<sup>2</sup>, it will **complement** and reinforce the **actions carried out at national or regional level**. In doing so, its role will be that of

- a **facilitator of good practice** between ESF managers and strategic stakeholders of Member States and regions, and
- a **catalyst for learning and change**, thus contributing to capacity building and supporting the reform agendas at national and regional level.

The Action Plan of Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is based on Art 45 (1) e of the General Regulation (Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006<sup>3</sup>) (“*measures to disseminate information, networking, raise awareness, promote cooperation and exchange experiences throughout the Community*”) and aims at implementing the provisions of the corresponding Art. 9 of the ESF Regulation (Reg. (EC) No 1081/2006). This calls for the Commission’s promotion of

*”in particular, exchanges of experience, awareness-raising activities, seminars, networking and peer reviews serving to identify and disseminate good practice and encourage mutual learning and transnational and interregional cooperation with the aim of enhancing the policy dimension and contribution of the ESF to the Community objectives in relation to employment and social inclusion”*.

These provisions have been further specified in the Action Plan, which was presented and welcomed by the ESF Committee in March 2007. The Action Plan includes *”support and thematic expertise for the establishment of thematic networks, exchange events and policy fora of groups of Member States and regions”*<sup>4</sup>.

In a nutshell, the Action Plan comprises a **coherent support package** for Member States and regions to share practices, experience and tools for spending their budgets for transnational exchange and cooperation in the most effective way.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/equal/data/document/200704-trans-actionplan\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/200704-trans-actionplan_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999, Official Journal of the EU, L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> The other lines of action relate to

- providing a platform to identify and share, at an early stage, the themes selected and implementation provisions established for transnational cooperation
- establishing a network of ESF managers, who are responsible for implementing the transnational operations under an OP,
- supporting the creation of a user-friendly IT tool facilitating searches for suitable transnational partners, transnational events funded under the ESF, and for activities and results of transnational networks; and
- supporting the validation of good practices and results and to provide space on the ESF web portal
- presentation of good practices of transnational work.

### 3 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

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In the context of the Commission's Action Plan to support Transnational Cooperation at EU level, a call (VP/2008/018) was launched in June 2008, with the aim to facilitate and strengthen transnational exchange and cooperation funded under the ESF Programmes through **networking for capacity building and mutual learning between ESF managing and implementing bodies and with strategic stakeholders**.

The present call intends to build on the experience of 2008 call in the development of sustainable networks on themes and issues relevant for delivering the Lisbon reform agenda, with the objective of:

- **improving the quality and efficiency of Structural Funds programmes** and their impact on employment, social inclusion and training across the whole Union; and
- **contributing to policy development** at EU level

through:

- **exploiting opportunities** for programme managers, strategic stakeholders, governmental departments in charge of policy supported under the ESF and practitioners **for learning** from one another, and with each other;
- **capitalising good practice** under the ESF Operational Programmes 2007-2013 (in particular from innovative action and transnational cooperation).

A key vehicle for speeding up these processes is the establishment of **learning networks and communities of practice**

- established around themes and issues with a European dimension where groups of Member States and regions expect that transnational co-operation will assist them in delivering employment and social inclusion policies;
- initiated and managed by Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, and public administrations in charge of policy supported under the ESF;
- open and participative and involve in their activities all stakeholders and people with competence and experience that can contribute to, and benefit from, a common learning process;
- focusing on common concerns and interests, and common learning objectives;
- facilitating exchange of practice, experience, tools and plans between the network partners and their peers across Europe;
- building on the capacities established by the network partners to monitor, validate and document good practice, and to test it in different contexts;
- generating results that can be used by the network partners and their peers across Europe for improving the quality, efficiency and impact of ESF programmes and the policies that they support; and
- supporting the development of a stable two-way bridge between good practice on the ground, effective implementation and results of Operational Programmes, and policy issues and actions at EU level.

## 4 MUTUAL LEARNING

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In the same way as for the 2008 call, **mutual learning** organised by these networks can be focussed on

- A. key policy fields and issues (“thematic networks”), or on
- B. key principles of programme management (“governance networks”).

Taking into account the policy issues and principles of programme management already covered by the networks approved under the 2008 call<sup>5</sup>, applicants are invited to submit proposals addressing further challenges. Some of these are listed below. This list is by no means exhaustive. Other themes could be considered, provided they clearly respond to the specific objectives of the call and are linked with the ESF Operational Programmes 2007-2013.

### A. Key policy fields and issues:

- Economic change, restructuring and responses to the crisis
- Life-Long-Learning / New skills/new jobs (green jobs)
- Active aging
- Reconciliation of work and private life
- Micro-finance support for disadvantaged people
- Pathways to integration and re-entry into the labour market
- Combating of discrimination in the Labour Market
- Reduction in early school leaving

### B. Key principles of programme management:

- Social Innovation (promoting of experimental approach; funding of scaling up)
- Capacity building of social partners and NGOs (such as local employment development; local social capital; quality management of projects and actions)
- Gender mainstreaming.

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<sup>5</sup> The assessment of the applications received under the two rounds of the 2008 call led to the selection of Learning Networks under the following areas:

- Inclusive Entrepreneurship policies, promotion of business creation for all
- Increasing the Participation of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Employment
- Improvement of the reintegration of (ex)-prisoners and ex-offenders
- Stimulating partnership thinking and implementation in the Structural Funds
- Transnational Cooperation in the ESF
- Promotion of Empowerment and Inclusion
- Increasing the social and environmental impact of Social Economy
- Supporting public administration reforms by ESF funds
- Results based management and Evidence based policy-making
- Youth Employment (Entrepreneurship; Educational and Vocational Counseling; Mobility and Enhancement of participative skills)

Networks should facilitate mutual learning, in particular by:

- **sharing information** on relevant issues, approaches, experience and evidence, actions and agendas, results and impact related to the network domain;
- jointly **exploring and testing** of ideas, experience, and practice;
- developing **common views** and building **shared understanding** on key issues of ESF interventions;
- reviewing, **validating and assessing** results and achievements, on the basis of common criteria, through (peer) reviews and benchmarks;
- collecting **cases of good practice** and identifying the factors for success and failure;
- sharing knowledge, tools and practice with a **wider community** of professionals and stakeholders, through networking and collaborative work on issues of common interest;
- **transferring** good practice and the lessons learnt to potential users such as decision makers, ESF administrators, and stakeholders.

The transnational learning networks funded under EQUAL have served as pilots for identifying specific policy needs for transnational cooperation, testing effective exchange and cooperation arrangements, such as learning communities of practice, and for gaining the critical mass of commitment from Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies to cooperate around common ESF issues.

## **5 PROFILE AND KEY ACTIVITIES OF NETWORKS**

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In order to achieve their objectives of improving the quality of Operational Programmes through mutual learning, networks will require:

- a critical mass of ESF programme managers, stakeholders and practitioners willing and able to share practice, tools, experience and plans around a common policy or good governance issue of the ESF;
- a learning strategy (including resources and professional management) for interacting, sharing good practice, building a common body of knowledge and experience, and learning;
- a common and robust methodology for identifying good practice;
- documented practice and experience to share;
- the capability and preparedness of ESF bodies and other relevant institutions to integrate the lessons learnt through networking into their Structural Funds programmes, policies and actions.

The lead partner, in agreement with the network partners has the responsibilities:

- to make available professional communication services and facilities for the network members, moderation and animation of their interactions, and expertise on the core subject of the network;
- to appoint and supervise network management and coordination, and sound financial management of the network.

The costs of these professional services are eligible.

In order to stimulate the development of skills and methods in nurturing, managing and benefiting from learning networks, and to exploit synergies, the Commission will organise exchange seminars for people with key roles in the networks.

Sharing and disseminating practice may synergise the following formats of exchange which had been the pillars of similar networks funded under EQUAL:

- **Exchange events;**
- **Peer reviews;**
- **Learning seminars;**
- **Policy fora;**
- **Common development and use of management tools for the implementation of ESF OPs;**
- **Communication platforms** (such as web platforms, wikis, etc) and **communication technologies** (such as audio and web conferencing);

**Personal transfer of competencies and experience** through e.g. training, secondments, coaching, or study visits.

This list of formats of exchange is by no means exhaustive. Networks are encouraged to apply the most appropriate formats of exchange and learning, and combine them to generate a value chain of activities.

The main functions of these networks will be to stimulate, facilitate and nurture a process of continuous sharing and accumulation of knowledge, experience and expertise around key ESF issues by providing an opportunity to

- share information across Member States – and demonstrate that linguistic barriers can be resolved;
- share concerns, questions, ideas, plans and evaluations – and demonstrate that mutual trust can be created;
- develop a shared understanding – and demonstrate that cultural and institutional differences can be overcome;
- establish discussion fora where practical questions of general interest are addressed and know-how and experience can be exchanged – and demonstrate that sharing of experience and practice has an added value for all participants in the process;
- create awareness, interest and commitment in joint learning throughout a wider community of peers across Europe;
- disseminate agreed guidance to other ESF managers and key stakeholders – and provide evidence for the advantages of good practice identified and validated.

The network organisation will take the necessary steps to ensure that:

- gender equality issues are taken into account when relevant for the drafting of the proposal by paying attention to the situation and needs of women and men;
- implementation of the requested tasks includes a gender perspective by considering systematically women and men dimension;
- monitoring and evaluation include the collection and gathering of data disaggregated by sex whenever possible;
- its staff respects the gender balance at all levels. It will also pay due attention when appropriate to the gender dimension of the work programme

Equally, **needs of disabled people** shall be duly acknowledged and met while implementing the work programme. This will in particular entail that where the network organisation organises



training sessions, conference, issues publications or develops dedicated websites, people with disabilities have equal access to the facilities or the services provided.

## **6 EXPECTED RESULTS**

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On the basis of the objectives stated above (section 3), the Commission will award grants to ESF Managing Authorities of Member States and regions, collaborating with Intermediate Bodies and strategic stakeholders from different countries around key thematic and governance issues in ESF implementation.

These networks will be successful if they generate added value for the ESF programmes and the policies which the ESF supports, and for the people and organisations participating in its activities.

At the **programme level**, networking is expected to result in, for example:

- the setting up of networks of stakeholders and practitioners at OP level contributing to, and taking up results of, the network;
- launching of action plans to base ESF support on commonly agreed good practice or approaches;
- introduction of common (management) tools;
- common approaches to monitoring, evaluation or reporting on ESF activities in the fields of cooperation.

Once the consolidation of the network has been achieved, networking is also expected to bring about a mutual fine-tuning and synchronisation of arrangements to promote transnational exchange and co-operation under the ESF programmes of core partners and network members, in order to develop and make use of synergies and complementarities.

Added value through networking will be also expected at the level of its **individual members** in terms of **professional development**, for example through,

- helping each other in solving problems at operational and strategic levels;
- providing stimuli to reflect on one's own practice and orientation to improve it;
- applying common working methods successfully tested in other countries or regions;
- providing opportunities for staff exchange;
- gaining professional skills and recognition.

In addition, added value will be expected at the **level of participating institutions and organisations** in terms of **capacity building** for managing ESF Programmes effectively, for example through:

- keeping up with developments across Europe in the policy or governance field in question;
- get easy access to a pool of competencies and experience which allows to respond faster to emerging policy needs;
- using common tools successfully tested across Europe;
- developing and assuring professional competence;
- speeding up the use and integration of good practice gained elsewhere in Europe;
- developing a common voice on the issues at stake.

The **longer-term impact** of the networks will be on the ESF programmes and the policies the ESF supports. It is expected that the networks will contribute to:

- strengthening the capacities to innovate;
- modernising and adapting institutions to new social and economic challenges;
- identifying and assessing issues and solutions for reforms in policy and delivery in order to meet the Lisbon targets; and
- improving the quality of governance of public policies, programmes and actions.

It is also expected that the networks will present their activities and results at key events of DG Employment and at the Open Days – European Week of Regions and Cities.

## **7 SYNERGIES WITH OTHER EU PROGRAMMES**

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In promoting transnational networks, the Commission will also ensure consistency and complementarity and the absence of duplication between actions supported under this call for proposals, and related Community Programmes.

The Commission intends to assist the analytical work of networks by making available the results of analyses, monitoring, surveys and evaluations generated under the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - PROGRESS<sup>6</sup>. It will facilitate access to the pool of expertise and good practices accumulated under PROGRESS, and support linkages with other networks and partnerships in the policy field concerned. This will stimulate the exploitation of synergies between transnational networks under the ESF and PROGRESS.

Transnational cooperation between Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies supported under this call will also be developed in parallel to, and will complement, the policy initiative "Regions for Economic Change"<sup>7</sup> which provides financial support for networks under INTERREG IVC, the 2007-2013 ERDF interregional cooperation programme, and URBACT II, the 2007-2013 ERDF cooperation programme on urban issues.

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<sup>6</sup> Alongside ESF interventions, the Commission implements the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS. PROGRESS' mission is to strengthen the EU's contribution in supporting Member States' commitments and efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. To that effect, PROGRESS is instrumental in:

- providing analysis and policy advice on employment, social inclusion and social protection, working conditions including labour law and health and safety, non-discrimination and gender equality policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in employment, social inclusion and social protection, working conditions including labour law and health and safety, non-discrimination and gender equality;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

To that end, PROGRESS supports or undertakes:

- Relevant training and mutual learning targeting legal and policy practitioners in PROGRESS policy areas;
- Accurate monitoring/assessment reports on the implementation and impact of EU law and policy in PROGRESS areas;
- The identification and dissemination of good practice in PROGRESS policy areas;
- Information and communication activities, networking between and with stakeholders and events on issues relating to PROGRESS policy areas
- Development of appropriate statistical tools, methods and indicators relating to PROGRESS policy areas;
- Appropriate policy advice, research and analysis relating to PROGRESS policy areas.
- Non-governmental organisations and networks active in PROGRESS policy areas.

More information on PROGRESS can be found under [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/progress/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html)

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index_en.cfm)

## 8. INDICATIVE AMOUNT

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A maximum of €3.6 million has been set aside for commitments in 2009.

According to the quality of applications received, the number of accepted networks should be between five and eight.

The budget line allows support to be given to networks to which the applicant organisation and its partners contribute at least 10% of the total cost of the operation. Contributions in kind (unpaid charity work by a private individual or corporate body, etc.) will not be taken into account.

The Community's financial contribution must not exceed 90% of the total eligible costs. It is therefore not possible to use other Community funds – including ESF funds (Technical Assistance) – to cover the 10% co-financing obligation.

## 9. TIMETABLE AND REPORTING

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The duration of the networks may be between 24 and 36 months.

The Commission services suggest that applications have their start date between 1<sup>st</sup> February and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

Eligibility of expenditure may be granted from the day of submission of the application, or an agreed date, to be set out in the grant agreement. However, any expenditure incurred before the signature by both parties of the grant agreement, is at the applicant's risk. Expenditure incurred before submission of the application is ineligible.

Selected networks will be required to achieve '**milestones**' to be defined in their work programme.

The **work programme** presented in the proposal must meet the award criteria presented below in section 12.2, in terms of strategy of the partnership to deliver and benefit; organisation of work; effectiveness and potential impact; and financial quality.

The work programme should include in particular:

- a detailed description of the domain, the network objectives and the learning strategy to attain them, as well as assumptions, success factors and risks;
- the outputs of the network;
- the expected results of the network (e.g. the immediate and longer term benefits for the partner's Operational Programmes, and the specific actions to ensure these);
- resources and capacities of the network's partners;
- a detailed description of the planned activities (possibly divided in "work packages") with clear distribution of tasks among partners in the partnership and within a "work package"; and with clear reference to relevant budget items;
- a timetable of these activities;
- detailed information on the methods for involving the stakeholders required for success;
- the methodology for on-going monitoring and evaluation.

Additionally, a **preparatory period** of up to 6 months, ending with the first milestone, shall be dedicated to network development, during which the partners shall especially:

- finalise the composition of the core partnership;
- carry out a baseline study including a diagnosis of the problem to be addressed and an assessment of its relevance across Europe, based on a mapping – across the EU – of actors and

stakeholders, agendas and actions, networks and events, centres of expertise and experience, which are relevant for the main objective and issue of the network;

- further develop the work programme in view of the results of the baseline study, and the needs and priorities of the partners;
- introduce the communication and collaborative tools for exchange, learning and dissemination
- sign all the required contractual agreements between the lead partner and service providers, in particular network facilitator and experts.

The initial milestone, completing this preparatory phase, is thus evidence of the consolidation of a sustainable and effective network and its learning strategy with a real added value. The time period available for this (up to 6 months, as a rule) will be determined by the quality and speed at which each network completes its partnership and achieves agreement with all partners on the work programme (including the relevant service providers) and the partners' contributions to it.

As result, a **preparatory phase report** has to be submitted together with an elaborated (and adjusted where necessary) work programme for the following 6 months.

Subsequent milestones relate to the implementation of the activities, outputs and results as set out in the work programme.

**Annual reports** have to be submitted together with elaborated (and adjusted where necessary) work programmes for the following 12 months.

## **10. PARTNERS**

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The lead partner mandated by signed letters of commitment applies in the name of a partnership. In case of selection, the grant will be awarded to the lead partner, which is responsible for administrating the grant.

The lead partner will undertake all organisational and financial management activities required for setting up and operating the network.

**Core** partners can be other Managing Authorities or Intermediate Bodies managing a structural fund operational programme, including ERDF Managing Authorities or Intermediate Bodies. They must have the resources and capacities to actively contribute to, and have the potential to use the results of, the network.

The inclusion of at least one core partner from EU-12 Member States is highly recommended.

**Other** network **partners** can be governmental departments in charge of policy supported under the ESF, including Technical Assistance bodies (i.e. organizations that deliver administrative, financial and other services to ESF Managing Authorities), centres of excellence and competence, and key stakeholders.

All partners need to prove the relevance of the proposed networking activities for their operational programmes, both in terms of capability to provide evidence of good practice resulting from support of relevant activities on the ground, and capacity for using the results of collaborative work to improve the quality of their Operational Programme. Partners' letters of commitment confirm their willingness to carry out the tasks allocated to them in the work programme, and their contributions to network activities.

## **11. ELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS**

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Eligible **applicants** are ESF Managing Authorities – whether national or regional – designated pursuant to Art 59 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, or – in the specific cases defined below – mandated Intermediate Bodies.

An Intermediate Body may apply, provided that:

- it is a public authority (at national or regional level); and
- it has been designated to carry out tasks referred to in Art. 60 a) to c) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, and is responsible – for the territory of the OP in question – in particular for selecting, promoting, analysing, monitoring and supporting actions, for the priority axis related to the key issues of the network; and
- it has been mandated by the relevant ESF Managing Authority to submit a proposal under this call.

## **12. EXAMINATION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS**

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Applications will be examined by an Evaluation Committee and selected, taking account of the budgetary remarks and the criteria laid down in this document (see below).

### **12.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

**To be eligible, applicants must be:**

Managing Authorities for ESF Operational Programmes designated pursuant to Art. 59 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 or mandated Intermediate Bodies as specified above in section 11.

**To be eligible, applications must:**

- be accompanied by a covering letter, mentioning the number of this Call for Proposals (VP/2009/012), providing details of the co-financing to be contributed by the applicant and/or partners or third parties, as well as their non-financial contributions and indicating that the application will not benefit from other Community funding;
- include signed letters of commitment from **Managing Authorities or Intermediate Bodies from at least four other Member States**, confirming that they would carry out the tasks foreseen in the work programme, have the resources and capacities to actively contribute to, and have the potential to use the results of, the network;
- include all the documents listed in the checklist below (see section 14 below);
- comply with the deadlines of submission (see section 13 below).

### **12.2 AWARD CRITERIA**

Proposals which fulfil the eligibility criteria indicated above will be assessed according to the following award criteria:

**A. Strategy of the partnership to deliver, share and benefit**

- quality and appropriateness of the partnership, in particular the extent to which it involves a good mix of Member States and Regions and a broad range of experience in setting up and participating in a transnational partnership;
- strategy to identify, assess and document good practice to be able to actively contribute to network activities;
- strategy for developing links and synergies with national (networking) activities.

## **B. Organisation of work**

- the extent to which the network meets the specific objectives of the call, as mentioned above in section 3;
- the extent to which the work programme is clear, realistic and well detailed, in particular as regards the definition of the domain of the network, its objectives and the learning strategy to attain them;
- the extent to which realistic time-lines and well defined and planned value chains of activities within the 'milestones' mentioned in section 9 are set (in particular for the preparatory phase);
- the partnership's capacity for achieving the desired results, by means of a clear allocation of tasks and responsibilities amongst the partners;
- quality and feasibility of the proposed managerial and organisational approach, including arrangements for decision-making;
- quality of the method proposed to ensure effective communication and collaboration between the network partners, including the approach to handle languages;
- quality of the method for disseminating experience, practice and results to other Member States and regions, in particular to ESF managers;
- approach to mobilise competencies and experience from a broad range of institutions, and to integrate them in the network;
- quality and relevance of the planned monitoring and evaluation arrangements;
- synergies with other EU Programmes and actions.

## **C. Effectiveness and potential impact**

- Strategy for using the results of the network for improving the quality, efficiency and impact of ESF programmes;
- the extent to which the network could add value at regional, national and European level and influence change;
- quality and relevance of mechanisms foreseen to ensure the lasting effect of the network;
- relevance for, and approach to, make an impact on EU policies, actions and agendas.

## **D. Financial quality**

- a reasonable and detailed budget, reflecting the actual financial needs of the action, as well as a realistic contribution from the partnership;
- the extent to which the application presents good value for money.

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

- priority themes and issues at EU level;
- 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 actively involved in the networks.

### 12.3 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

The assessment procedure will approximately take four months after the date for submission.

The European Commission will notify applicants after the meeting of the Evaluation Committee at which the application was examined. Successful applicants will receive two original copies of the grant agreement for acceptance and signature.

## 13. PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

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The **call**, the **application form**, the **Financial Guidelines for Applicants** and further information related to the call for proposals is provided on the following website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/emplweb/tenders/index\\_calls\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/tenders/index_calls_en.cfm)

Questions can also be sent by e-mail to [empl-ESF-grants@ec.europa.eu](mailto:empl-ESF-grants@ec.europa.eu).

The Commission will publish and update all questions and answers of general interest on the website referred to above.

**Applications accompanied by the annexes and all the required documentary proof** must be submitted by

**15 September 2009**

#### 1) in electronic format via the SWIM online application

The web-based application called "SWIM" (SAGA Web Input Module) allows applicants/beneficiaries to introduce, edit, validate, print and submit grant applications, request for payments and request for modifications on the budget estimate. SWIM can be accessed at the following web address<sup>8</sup>: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim>.

**and**

#### 2) in hard copy in triplicate to the following addresses

a) by **post** or **express courier service** (the submission date will be taken as the date of dispatch, as evidenced by the postmark or the express courier receipt date):

European Commission  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities  
Unit B4 (SPA3 00/009): Call for Proposals VP/2009/012  
B-1049 Brussels  
Belgium

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<sup>8</sup> Before starting, please read carefully the user's manual which you will find at the top of the page ("Help on SWIM").

b) or by personal delivery against a signed receipt from the Commission's central mail service (this personal delivery can be direct or through any authorised representative of the applicant, including private messenger service etc.) **by 16.00 hours on 15 September 2009:**

European Commission  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities  
Unit B4 (SPA3 00/009): Call for proposals VP/2009/012  
Avenue du Bourget 1  
B-1140 Brussels  
Belgium

The reference of the call for proposals must be indicated on the envelope.

**Failure to submit the application by post and online by the deadlines indicated above to the Commission will entail the ineligibility of the request for subsidy.**

Complementary documents sent by post, by fax or by electronic mail after the deadlines mentioned above will not be considered for evaluation unless requested by the European Commission. Please do make sure that the full set of the application form and all accompanying documents as listed above are included in your sending by post by the closing date.

The applicant's attention is also drawn to the fact that incomplete or unsigned forms, hand-written forms and those sent by fax or e-mail will not be taken into consideration.

The **Financial Guidelines for Applicants** annexed to the present call for proposals provides more detailed information for the applicants, especially as regards guidelines for presenting the proposal's provisional budget along with the rules governing which categories of expenditure are eligible and which are not.

The information contained herein together with the Financial Guidelines for Applicants provides all the information you require to submit an application. Please read it carefully before doing so, paying particular attention to the priorities of the present call.



## 14. CHECKLIST OF THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Please send in the following documents **in triplicate** (original + two copies). The application form and the requested annexes<sup>9</sup> must be submitted also **electronically** via the SWIM online application.

Regarding the presentation of the application file, it is recommended to:

- Follow the order of documents as listed in the checklist below;
- Print the documents double-sided, where possible;
- Use only 2-hole folders (please do not bind or glue).

<i>order</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Download from SWIM</i>
1	Original <b>letter of application</b> quoting the reference of the call (VP/2009/012) duly signed and dated by the legal representative of the applicant Managing Authority.	NO
2	Print-out of the complete online <b>application form</b> including estimated budget ( <a href="https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim">https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim</a> ) duly completed, dated and signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation.	YES
3	In case of an Intermediate Body being the applicant, a letter signed by the relevant ESF Managing Authority giving mandate to the Intermediate Body	NO
4	Print-out of the <b>work programme</b> and the <b>time schedule</b> signed by the legal representative of the lead partner (in MS Word format of max. 20 pages, Annex D1).	NO
5	Signed <b>letters of commitment</b> from other Managing Authorities or Intermediate Bodies from at least four other Member States, confirming that they would carry out the tasks foreseen in the work programme, have the resources and capacities to actively contribute to, and have the potential to use the results of the network, specifying the contribution of each partner (Annex D2).	NO
6	<b>Legal entity form</b> duly completed with the original signature of the legal representative of the Managing Authority (Annex D3).	YES
7	<b>Financial identification form</b> duly completed with the original signature of the legal representative of the Managing Authority and the original signature and stamp of the bank (Annex D4). The name of the bank account holder must be the same as that of the applicant Managing Authority/Intermediate Body, or it should be the account used by the Managing Authority/Intermediate Body for its regular ESF payments. The Financial identification form must correspond to the Legal entity form (see above).	YES
8	<b>Detailed CVs</b> (educational and professional qualifications) and job specification of the proposed network manager/coordinator and of persons who will perform the main tasks, with a brief description of their outputs related to the subject of the proposal (Annex D5).	NO
9	Subcontracting for external expertise: a copy of draft tender specifications (Annex D6) where the cost of a service exceeds €5 000.	NO

<sup>9</sup> The electronic forms and documents must be submitted via SWIM **before** printing. After the electronic submission no further changes to the application are possible.