



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

Open Call for Proposals - VP/2004/05

NATIONAL AWARENESS RAISING ACTIONS ON SOCIAL INCLUSION

Under budget line 04040202 (ex B3-4105)

Guidelines

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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 Coordination 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 yearly 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 and subsequently revised and updated in December 2002. Member States have prepared two rounds of two year National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion (June 2001 and July 2003) and acceding countries and the Commission have prepared Joint Memoranda on Social Inclusion (December 2003). A set of common indicators on poverty and social exclusion have been agreed between the Commission and Council. Drawing from their examination of the National Action Plans in 2001 and 2003 the Commission and the Council agreed a *Joint Report on Social Inclusion* analysing the situation in relation to poverty and social exclusion in the European Union and identifying 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 cooperation between Member States to combat social exclusion for the period 2002 through 2006. The programme is divided into three strands. Strand 1 supports research and analysis, by improving the understanding of social exclusion and poverty with the help in particular of statistical data, comparable indicators and policy studies. Strand 2 promotes policy cooperation and mutual learning by organising exchanges on policies which are implemented in the context of national action plans. Strand 3 promotes the participation of the various actors and supports networking at European level in order to develop the capacity of actors to address social exclusion and poverty effectively, and to promote innovative approaches.

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 Programme Committee must, among other things, approve the annual work programme of the Community action programme to combat social exclusion and the

¹ Further information about the European Union's social inclusion process – the Open Method of Coordination, the Nice Objectives, the Common Indicators, the National Action Plans, the Joint Inclusion Memoranda, 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

overall breakdown of the budget between the different strands of the programme. The Committee also advises on the criteria for selecting actions under the programme and approves the list of pre-selected beneficiaries following the publication of the calls for proposals and a selection process organized by the Commission.

This call for proposals for awareness raising actions relates to Strand 2 of the Community action programme whose objective is to promote and support the policy cooperation and exchange of information and best practices.

This call for proposal is part of a wider strategy on information and awareness-raising. In the context of the Programme's work plan for 2004, greater attention is being given to the role of the Programme for improving information and raising awareness among concerned stakeholders and the wider public about the European Union's social inclusion process. Several means of achieving this are envisaged in addition to this call for proposals. These include: attracting the attention of the media to the Peer review exercise; reinforcing the relevant actions of European networks in this field; including a specific priority on awareness-raising in the next call for proposals for transnational projects to be launched in the second semester of 2004; and ensuring adequate dissemination and visibility of the results of the activities funded under the SEP on DG Employment and Social Affairs web site on the social inclusion process.

2. General objective of the call

This particular call for proposals is concerned to promote the participation of various actors in the struggle against poverty and social exclusion in Member States, candidate countries and EFTA/EEA countries. It aims to do this through improving information and raising awareness among concerned stakeholders and the wider public about the relevance of the European Union's social inclusion process to national efforts to prevent and reduce poverty and social exclusion. These guidelines outline the key features of the programme of national awareness raising actions on social inclusion.

3. Type of proposals that will be eligible

Applications may be submitted which aim to increase awareness within Member States, candidate countries and EFTA/EEA countries of the Union's social inclusion process so as to mobilise support for and participation in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion (NAPs/inclusion) and Joint Memoranda on Social Inclusion (JIMs).

The Commission is keen to receive applications which adopt a strategic and planned approach to raising awareness and mobilising actors. Thus proposals are likely to involve a mix of actions which are tailored to meet the needs of different audiences. These should include both the general public and relevant stakeholders such as the media, national, regional and local authorities, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, businesses, specialised bodies and those directly experiencing poverty and social exclusion. There should be a programme of work covering a period of up to 18 months rather than an isolated action. The work programme must commence before the end of 2004.

Applications will be particularly welcome which make a clear link to the implementation of the 2003 NAPs/inclusion or to the development and implementation of the NAPs/inclusion that will be adopted by the new Member States

in 2004 or to the development and follow up of the Joint Inclusion Memoranda to be agreed by the Commission and Candidate Countries in 2004.

Proposals may focus on a whole national territory or a major region within a country. They may also focus on more than one country or on a cross-border group of regions. However, in this case, the proposal should clearly specify how the interests of the different national audiences will be addressed by the proposed actions.

4. Types of Activities

Providing that they contribute to a strategic approach to transferring information and promoting the participation and involvement of different actors, different forms of activity may be used. These may include for example:

- Seminars,
- Leaflets and pamphlets,
- Newsletters,
- Press releases,
- Web-sites,
- Media campaigns.

5. Who Can Apply?

Applicants must be from organisations registered in either one of the Member States or one of the acceding or eligible candidate countries² or an EFTA/EEA country.

Access to this programme shall be open to all public and/or private bodies and institutions involved in the fight against social exclusion. The Commission will be particularly interested in proposals from those organisations with an active interest in promoting the development of National Action Plans such as national, regional or local authorities, social partners or NGOs. Applications may come from either single organisations or from a number of organisations involving several different sectors working together in partnership. A specific co-operation with the media will also be of great interest.

6. Eligibility Criteria

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

Regarding the lead applicant

- be made by properly constituted and registered organisations (legal persons) with an established administrative and financial management structure;

² Those are the candidate countries that have opted to join in this strand of the Community action programme: Bulgaria and Romania.

- be made by organisations whose legal representative has signed a declaration on his honour³ that he is not in one of the situations listed in Article 93(1) and Article 94 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (Council regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002)⁴ (see the quotation in the box below)

Article 93(1):

Candidates or tenderers shall be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure if:

- (a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of *res judicata*;
- (c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- (d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- (e) they have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- (f) following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations

Article 94:

Contracts may not be awarded to candidates or tenderers who, during procurement procedure:

- (a) are subject to a conflict of interest;
- (b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information.

Regarding the proposal

- be submitted by post by the deadline for submitting the application set out below;
- complete all sections of the application form and provide all requested supporting documentation;
- provide full details of the complete budget as proposed;
- only seek funding for activities in or involving Member States, EFTA/EEA countries, acceding countries and eligible candidate countries⁵;

³ This declaration is included at the end of part 1 of the application form which must be dated and signed.

⁴ OJ, L 248 of 16.09.2002, p. 26

⁵ Those are the candidate countries that have opted to join in this strand of the Community action programme: Bulgaria and Romania.

- 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). The applicant shall indicate the sources and amounts of any other funding received or applied for under the Community budget for 2004 for any other action, and any funding already received under previous calls or programmes in the course of the three preceding accounting periods;
- and not seek funding for the operating costs of organisations, nor for their general ongoing activities, nor for profit-making purposes.

Regarding the action/work programme

- have a start date before 31st December 2004 and must not exceed 18 months;
- have clear objectives aimed at raising awareness within a Member State, or Accessing or Candidate Country or an EFTA/EEA country about the European Union's social inclusion process and National Action Plans or Joint Inclusion Memoranda;
- involve information and awareness raising activities 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).

7. Selection Criteria

In order to be allowed to receiving funding under this call, applicants will have to meet the following selection criteria:

- have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain his activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and to help finance the project for at least the remaining 20% of the total eligible costs; applicant shall demonstrate the ability to provide the necessary matching funding in cash ; for that purpose, a signed declaration from the potential beneficiary on his honour that he has the financial capacity to complete the proposed action or work programme⁶, as well as any other supporting documents, are requested;
- have the professional competencies and qualifications required to complete the proposed action or work programme: organisational and management experience, track record in relation to the issue they propose to exchange information on and the ability to implement the proposed work programme; to this end, the proposal must include any supporting documents requested as evidence of the applicant operational capacity.

⁶ This declaration is included at the end of part 1 of the application form which must be dated and signed.

8. Award criteria

The proposals that satisfy the above eligibility and selection criteria will then be assessed against the following award criteria:

Policy Criteria

- the extent to which there is a clear assessment of current weaknesses and limitations in awareness in relation to the European Union's social inclusion process in the country or region in question and a clear understanding as to how information and awareness-raising can be used to mobilise support for and participation in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of NAPs/inclusion or JIMs;
- the extent to which there is a clear strategic approach which is linked to the development and implementation of NAPs/inclusion and/or JIMs, and which clearly identifies different target groups and develops appropriate activities and actions to reach them;
- the quality and the precision of the work programme (detailed activities and clear and attainable time-lines);
- the extent to which the proposal has attracted support (including in financial terms) from national authorities responsible for the implementation of the NAPs/inclusion or the JIMs.

Organisational Criteria

- the quality of the organisational and management record of the proposers, their track record in tackling poverty and social exclusion and their ability to implement the proposed plan;
- the extent to which the proposal involves a range of actors and the extent to which these have a knowledge and understanding of the European Union's social inclusion process and of NAPs/inclusion and/or JIM;
- the extent to which those experiencing poverty and social exclusion will be involved in the development and implementation of the information and awareness-raising strategy;
- the quality of arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy and for documenting key lessons about mobilising all actors.

Financial criteria

- the financial quality of the proposal in respect of the rules of good and sound financial management, and in particular in terms of value for money and cost-effectiveness;
- the experience and track record of the proposers in financial management of projects.

9. Available Budget

It is envisaged that the total budget for this call for proposals will be in the region of €800,000. It is likely that between 10 and 20 projects will be selected.

10. Arrangements for Community financing

The Community's financial contribution to any project will not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs. See the Annex 1 "Applicant's guide" for the rules governing eligible and ineligible costs.

The promoters must guarantee co-financing in cash of the remaining 20%. Contributions in kind are not accepted.

11. Arrangements for submitting the application

The **application form** (available in English, French and German and made up of three separate parts) and the **Applicant's guide** can be obtained:

- By downloading them from the following address:
- http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/index_en.htm
- By sending an e-mail to empl-e2@cec.eu.int

(Please include "Call for proposals VP/2004/05-Info" in the subject of your e-mail)

- By writing to:

European Commission
DG Employment and Social Affairs
Unit E2: Call for proposals VP/2004/05-Info
J27 1/33
B-1049 Brussels

The application must be drawn up in one of the official languages of the European Union 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 supporting documents as listed in the Applicant's guide by post to the address below by **04/06/2004** (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
Unit E2: Call for Proposals VP/2004/05
Archives-Courier service J27 0/115
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

The application form in three parts must also be returned to the Commission service by e-mail to empl-e2@cec.eu.int stating VP/2004/05 by 04/06/2004 without fail.

The Applicant's guide annexed to the present guidelines forms a separate document which sets out the way in which the application form should be completed with:

- Guidelines for presenting the proposal's provisional budget along with the rules governing which categories of expenditure are eligible and which are not;
- Main provisions of the grant agreement;
- A check-list of the required documents to accompany your application.

The information contained herein together with the Applicant's guide provides 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.

However, if you should have any further queries, please contact us quoting the reference "VP/2004/05 - 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 assessment 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 29 56561
- By e-mail to empl-e2@cec.eu.int

12. Notification procedure

- Receipt of applications will be confirmed to the applicants within three weeks following the deadline of submission. All applications received will be registered. A reference number will be allocated to each application and shall be quoted in any further correspondence regarding the proposal.
- No complementary documents sent by the applicant by post, by fax or by electronic mail after 04/06/2004 will be considered for evaluation.
- No information regarding the award procedure shall be disclosed until the award decision has been sent to the beneficiaries.
- All applications will be examined. Only the proposals that satisfy the eligibility and selection criteria will be assessed against the award criteria by an internal evaluation committee. This evaluation committee will be made up of at least three persons representing at least two organisational entities of the Commission with no hierarchical link between them and subject to the obligations laid down in Article 52 of the Financial Regulation relating to conflict of interests.
- Upon completion of its work, the evaluation committee will draw up a list of proposals recommended for funding under the National Awareness raising actions on social inclusion programme, sorted by order of merit.

- The whole selection procedure will be submitted for the opinion of the Committee of the Programme to Combat Social Exclusion and then for approval of the financial unit of the Directorate General Employment and Social Affairs.
- Applicants whose proposals have not been accepted will be informed of the results of the selection process in writing, probably mid-September 2004. Reasons for the rejection of the application, with reference in particular to the selection and award criteria announced, shall be mentioned.
- Proposals recommended for funding shall be subject to a *budgetary analysis* with the purpose of ensuring that the expenditure in the provisional budget conforms to the financial provisions laid down in the guidelines of the call and in the applicant's guide. To this end, selected applicants shall be contacted by the Commission during September-October 2004.
- Successful applicants will receive two copies of a grant agreement for their approval, signature and return to the Commission. Grant agreements will be signed by the Commission, probably between November and 31st December 2004 at the latest. The Commission will return to the beneficiary one of the copies signed by the two parties.
- The Commission will publish, on the Internet site of the Directorate General Employment and Social Affairs, probably early 2005, the list of the awarded proposals with the beneficiary's name and the address, the subject and purpose of the grant, the amount granted and the proportion of the action's total cost covered by the funding.

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