

**ESF PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT FOR CONTINENTAL FINLAND 2007-2013  
(PROPOSAL)**

**The EU objective of regional competitiveness and employment**

**7 November 2006**

**8.4 PRIORITY 4: Transnational and inter-regional ESF actions**

The goal of priority 4 is to improve European co-operation in the employment, education and industrial policy by promoting labour immigration and by seeking and mainstreaming good practices.

**Objectives**

In priority axis 4 will be implemented transnational co-operation between authorities and regions well as between regional, thematic and national networks. Project level international co-operation will in priorities 1-3 be implemented in projects in which it is appropriate and in which it is regarded to bring added value. The contents of priority 4 are divided into two parts: promoting labour immigration and finding and mainstreaming good practices.

The objective of co-operation relevant to labour immigration is to safeguard the availability of labour force in the future. In addition to preventing labour force bottlenecks, the objective is to safeguard economic growth by means of also promoting the international interaction between highly educated and other skilled labour.

The national and regional anticipation of external labour force needs will be relied on, and the permit procedure of work-driven immigration will be simplified and made more efficient. In addition to these, employers will be supported in recruitment. Another objective is to create a guidance system that will introduce foreigners to the language, working life and society in Finland and create good preconditions for continuing the integration process if necessary. The aim is to develop and implement the guidance system in co-operation with the countries of origin, so that part of the measures can also be started in these countries.

In order to make use of the skills of those immigrating for work, the objective will be to develop the identification of skills and recognition of diplomas as well as further education and language teaching based on these in the country of origin. The education and training imparted in the countries of origin could then be complemented in Finland as necessary. The objective is to develop a new type of co-operation required by these activities both nationally and between EU member states.

In addition another aim is to increase the prerequisites of employers and work communities to receive immigrants coming to work by developing diversity to management and promoting equality and good ethnic relations in the work community.

International co-operation associated with finding and mainstreaming good practices will continue the activities developed under the Equal community initiative, but in a more wide-reaching form and with a more simple administrative structure than in the period 2000-2006. The Lisbon strategy sets for all EU countries common goals in order to improve employment and competitiveness. The different histories and practices of the member states are a richness

which makes it possible for us to learn from one another and receive new ideas that can be applied in our own country.

The general aim of the international co-operation associated with finding and mainstreaming good practices is to bring added value to the Finnish labour, industrial and education policy. The objective is to find new perspectives and alternative solutions for common problems afflicting the member states and developing the human resources in each member state through common learning processes. Another objective is to generate official and unofficial networks and to develop the work practices and skills of experts. All these objectives will reinforce the European dimension when striving to achieve the goals of the Lisbon strategy.

## **A description of activities to be funded**

### *Co-operation associated with labour immigration*

In order to increase labour immigration, the anticipation systems developed under priority 3 will be used so that they also will offer adequate amounts of information at both the national and regional level on the needs to recruit foreign labour. Issues associated with labour immigration will be considered in the development efforts of the anticipation systems. To ensure the success of the whole, the permit system will be developed so that it works smoothly, efficiently and flexibly. The development of the permit system will not, however, receive ESF support.

An administrative framework will be created for co-operation with the countries of origin. In the pilot project, partner countries that are suitable in terms of such as their population, age structure, educational standards and distance will be sought. This project will be linked to the EU external relationships instrument, so that the model to be created can if necessary also be applied and developed with third countries, such as Ukraine.

Information and other recruitment methods will be developed in co-operation with the authorities and employers. The attractions of Finland will be promoted in selected target countries.

The move to the Finnish labour market and society will be supported by creating a guidance system that is accessible to all. It would be useful not only for the employees and self-employed persons but also their family members. The guidance will already start before the employees enter the country. As part of this guidance, a written and electronic information package that is more comprehensive than at present would be developed for the immigrants. The basic information material would be complemented by successive, more advanced training periods.

To this guidance could be associated the identification of skills and/or recognition of diplomas in the country of origin or Finland, and the further training plan and training based on these. The training may implemented either totally or partly be imparted in the country of origin, but the various parts will be seamlessly connected to one another.

National measures to encourage work-driven immigration will be reconciled with regional measures so that these will be mutually supportive.

### *Finding and mainstreaming good practices*

A good practice refers to a new, more efficient and effective operating method, which can be applied in Finland. Seeking good practices in other countries can give added value to the Finnish labour, industrial and education/training policies. The international co-operation associated with finding and mainstreaming good practices will be elementally linked with national development projects and programmes. The experiences and operating models of other countries can be made use of in the labour, education and industrial policies, for example when developing anticipation, skills and services systems and operating models for preventing social exclusion. Internationalisation education for young people and regional product development and research activities can also be supported through international co-operation.

The work to find good practices can start from the Finnish prerequisites. On the other hand, Finnish good practices and operating models can also be exported and spread to other countries. International co-operation at multiple levels will give better possibilities for finding, exporting and mainstreaming good practices.

Finding and mainstreaming good practices at the national level will be linked to national development projects. Regional level international co-operation will arise from the specific interests of the regions. These sections will be matched in order to avoid overlapping measures.

#### **Target groups**

- partnerships associated with labour immigration at the central government and regional level both in Finland and the target countries
- citizens of the target countries, especially those intending to immigrate for work, and their family members
- Self-employed persons in the countries of origin wishing to come to Finland
- partnerships associated with the finding of good practices and exchanging international experiences (central government and regional level authorities, regional, thematic and national networks).

In addition, stakeholders relevant to the implanting and mainstreaming of the project results can take part in the measures.

#### **Financial framework**

Financial allocation reserved for priority 4 is XX % of the financing reserved for priorities 1-4 in the national section.

#### **Organisations responsible for the implementation**

Financiers: All relevant administrative sectors will be involved as regards work-driven immigration; in finding and mainstreaming good practices, all Ministries implementing the ESF, the National Board of Education, Provincial Governments and the Employment and Economic Development Centres will take part. At the project level, municipalities and the private sector will also take part in the funding.

Co-operation: The Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, labour market organisations, educational institutions and NGOs.

Support structure: For the purposes of implementation of labour immigration, an implementation programme will be prepared, which will define in more detail the central parties bearing the responsibility, partners and forms of co-operation.

Finding and mainstreaming good practices will require a national support structure, which can liaise with other member states and assist in finding suitable partners. This will also require a European database and coordinating co-operation between the administrative authorities of the various member states.

### **Complementary nature in terms of national and EU financing instruments**

Co-operation associated with labour immigration is a new form of development activities with a long time span, for which no normal budgetary resources are available. By means of the proposed measures, an attempt will be made to create a comprehensive framework for the planning and implementation of the immigration policy, to promote the development of a pluralistic, multicultural and non-discriminating society and to support the internationalisation of Finland, improve international competitiveness and as one means among the rest to respond to the challenges arising from the ageing of the work force and the whole population.

In finding and mainstreaming good practices, the added value to national policies arises from new perspectives, new ideas and new alternative solutions which can be received from other countries and applied in Finland, and the joint learning and development process with the representatives of the member states taking part in the co-operation. Added value at the European level will also be brought by the fact that these activities can help to prevent the parallel development of similar innovations in the member states of the European Union.

As regards labour immigration in particular, the ESF programme will work in co-operation with the objective Regional co-operation in Europe and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

### **Links to the Finnish National Reform Programme (Lisbon strategy)**

The ESF funding of the priority axis will support the implementation of all Employment Guidelines of the Lisbon strategy.