



**OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS N° VP/2007/11**

**BUDGET LINE 04.04.01.01**

**PROJECTS CONTRIBUTING TO LOCAL EMPLOYMENT  
DEVELOPMENT**

## **1. Introduction**

In its Social Agenda (2005-2010), the Union has as an overall strategic goal to promote more and better jobs and to offer equal opportunities for all. The realisation of the Social Agenda relies on a combination of instruments comprising EU legislation, the implementation of the open method of coordination in various policy fields and financial incentives such as the European Social Fund.

Until now, the implementation of the open method of coordination in the employment and social inclusion/social protection fields relied on two distinct Community programmes. Equally the promotion of gender equality and of the non-discrimination principle was at the core of two distinct Community programmes. And lastly promotion of labour law including health and safety regulations were dealt with by separate interventions.

With a view to fostering greater coherence and simplification in the way Community programmes are delivered, the Commission proposed that all these separate programmes be now integrated into one framework programme, PROGRESS.

Decision n°1672/2006 establishing a Community programme for employment and social solidarity – PROGRESS was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 24 October and published in the OJ on 15 November 2006.

The overall aim of PROGRESS is to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Lisbon Strategy in these fields.

PROGRESS aims to support the core functions of the European Community in fulfilling its Treaty-delegated tasks and powers in its respective areas of competence in the employment and social sphere. It will support initiatives aimed at reinforcing the role of the Community in proposing EU strategies; implementing and following-up EU objectives and their translation into national policies; transposing and following-up of EU legislation's application in a coherent way throughout Europe; promoting the co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms between Member States; and cooperating with social partners and organisations that represent civil society.

More specifically, PROGRESS will support:

- (1) Implementation of the European Employment Strategy (section 1);
- (2) Implementation of the open method of coordination in the field of social protection and inclusion (section 2);
- (3) Improvement of the working environment and conditions including health and safety at work and reconciling work and family life (section 3);
- (4) Effective implementation of the principle of non-discrimination and promotion of its mainstreaming in all EU policies (section 4);
- (5) Effective implementation of the principle of gender equality and promotion of its mainstreaming in all EU policies (section 5).

Against this background, PROGRESS pursues the following general objectives, as set out in article 2.1 of the Decision:

- (1) To improve the knowledge and understanding of the situation prevailing in the Member States (and in other participating countries) through analysis, evaluation and close monitoring of policies;
- (2) To support the development of statistical tools and methods and common indicators, where appropriate broken down by gender and age group, in the areas covered by the programme;
- (3) To support and monitor the implementation of Community law, where applicable, and policy objectives in the Member States, and assess their effectiveness and impact;
- (4) To promote networking, mutual learning, identification and dissemination of good practice and innovative approaches at EU level;
- (5) To enhance the awareness of the stakeholders and the general public about the EU policies and objectives pursued under each of the policy sections;
- (6) To boost the capacity of key EU networks to promote, support and further develop EU policies and objectives, where applicable.

The present Call for proposals is issued in the context of the implementation of the 2007 annual plan of work which is consultable at [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/progress/docs\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/docs_en.html)

## **2. Context**

Decision No 1672/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS, stipulates in section 2.2.1 of the 2007 Annual Plan of Work that activities under the Programme should "strengthen good governance and partnership with all relevant stakeholders through mutual learning activities, information and communication, and building ownership".

Over the years, various initiatives have been undertaken through the Structural Funds (ERDF, ESF – EQUAL, and LEADER, for example) to encourage attention to be given to local development (LED). In addition, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (DG EMPL) has financed (separately from Structural Funds) a number of local employment development awareness-raising projects such as IDELE (<http://www.ecotec.com/idele/>) and FALDE, both of which have now come to an end. Other such projects still being implemented include a co-financed convention for 2006-2008 with the OECD, creation of a website to encourage interactive sharing of best practice (Linking Local Actors), and the preparation of a handbook on LED in the EU12.

## **3. Proposed Call**

In order to capitalise on experience gained so far, and to encourage further awareness-raising of successful local employment strategies, this call for proposals has been prepared. This call for proposals would be particularly relevant for the EU12. Past governance traditions mean that experience of subsidiarity through genuine locally-generated employment strategies and initiatives needs to be enhanced. Entering in a new period of Structural Funds implementation (2007-2013) - and for Bulgaria and Romania for the first time - there is a need for the newer Member States to be given as much encouragement as possible to spend the funds taking into account local level priorities. Equally, there are regions within the older Member States and EFTA/EEA who could benefit from this call also, and/or who may be willing to share experiences.

As increasingly a more holistic approach is being adopted in local employment development, particular attention should be given to the involvement of the private sector. The engagement of enterprises with public authorities and other stakeholders within the local communities in which they are situated is especially relevant. A further important element that could be considered is delocalisation.

## **4. Objectives of the Call**

- To encourage sharing of best practice and transfer in local employment development strategies and initiatives,
- To facilitate knowledge acquisition to support implementation of Structural Funds at the local level, particularly in the EU12, and particularly involving sharing of knowledge between old Member States and new Member States,

- To implicate the private sector more directly in the preparation of local employment strategies and initiatives.

## **5. Target Audience**

It is hoped that the call would attract partnerships comprised of a variety of stakeholders, whether they be public authorities, private enterprise, business organisations, chambers of commerce, trade unions, NGOs, or other community groups.

## **6. Outcome**

It is hoped that this call will create an interest in and understanding of holistic local employment development, involving many stakeholders and especially the private sector, which will contribute in a very practical way to better implementation of the Structural Funds and to the growth and jobs targets of the Lisbon strategy. All projects should provide for experience transfer between old and new Member States, and should specify which aspect of the European Employment Strategy or the European Social Fund they will focus on.

It is envisaged that 3 or 4 projects would be funded, in the form of conferences with background papers.

## **7. Total available budget**

The total available budget is EUR 450,000.

## **8. Eligibility criteria**

### Eligibility of the Applicant

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be properly constituted and registered legal persons. Proof of this status must be provided in the form of the documents listed in the "Checklist of the required documents to accompany the application" (*not applicable to public authorities or agencies*),
- Fall within the following categories:
  - Public authorities or agencies<sup>1</sup> at central or regional level from EU Member States and EFTA/EEA countries.
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Non-profit organisations mainly dealing with employment policy, quality in work, or social inclusion can present proposals on condition that they have an international,

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<sup>1</sup> Public authorities and agencies with decision-making competencies in the area of employment policies, ie. in particular relevant ministries or other governmental bodies at national or regional level. This does not cover all public bodies like public universities or research institutes, which may be, however, involved as project partners.

national or regional coverage and submit a proposal in partnership with one of the public authorities or agencies cited above;

Social partner organisations may also take part in this call for proposals. To be eligible, they must be a European social partner organisation currently consulted in accordance with Article 138 of the Treaty. A list of these organisations is included in Annex 5 of the European Commission's Communication on "Partnership for change in an enlarged Europe – Enhancing the contribution of European social dialogue" (COM(2004) 557 final). Article 114 of the Financial Regulation allows social partner organisations without legal personality to be eligible also

- Certify in written format (self-declaration) that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93<sup>2</sup> and 94<sup>3</sup> of the Financial Regulation of the European Communities.

### Eligibility of the Proposal

Grant applications must be made in writing, on the standard application form and be sent by the deadline indicated in section 14 below. The project must be linked to the objectives of the call (as described under section 4 above) and not benefit from other Community funding. It must comply with the European Community co-financing percentage of maximum 75% and with the rules of start dates and duration of the project defined in section 13 below.

The application must be complete and include all the documents indicated in the checklist.

Proposals which do not comply with the above criteria are not eligible and will be rejected.

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<sup>2</sup> Situations referred to in Article 93 of the Financial Regulation are the following:

- (a) bankrupt or being wound up, having their affairs administrated 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) convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of res judicata;
- (c) guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- (d) 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 where the contract is to be performed;
- (e) 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, declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

<sup>3</sup> Situations referred to in Article 94 of the Financial Regulation are the following:

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

## 9. Selection criteria

Applicants must provide evidence of their technical, economic and financial capacity, based on the following criteria:

1. The applicant's technical capacity for performing the required work must be confirmed by:
  - A list of the main projects carried out in the last three years relating to the objective of the call. In the case of work done for the Commission, applicants must also indicate the reference number of the contract and the department for which the contract was performed;
  - The curriculum vitae of the proposed project manager/co-ordinator and the persons who will perform the main tasks;
  - A declaration of the project manager/co-ordinator certifying the competence of the team to carry out the required tasks;
  - In the case of proposals from partnerships: written confirmation from each partner that they are willing to participate in the project and briefly describing their role;
  - For non-profit organisations: the nature of the partnership with public authorities or agencies.
2. Economic and financial capacity to carry out the tasks set out in the specifications of the call for proposals (*not applicable for public authorities or agencies*) must be confirmed by:
  - Proof of turnover in the last financial year at least equivalent to 100% of the grant requested;
  - Declaration of honour;
  - Balance sheets from the last financial year.

## 10. Award criteria

The grants will be awarded following a comparative assessment of the proposals in order to determine those which (i) best meet the objectives of this call, and which (ii) have an adequate cost/efficiency ratio. This procedure will take approximately three months after the date for submission. In its evaluation the Commission will take into account the criteria listed hereunder:

### (i) Objectives of the call

#### a) The **relation of the proposal to the objective of the call**

The proposal should clearly show how the objectives of the call will be fulfilled, including how transfer of knowledge will take place between the old and new Member States, and which objectives of the European Employment Strategy or the European Social Fund are being addressed. The proposal should also identify possible lasting effects of the project, its follow-up, dissemination of results and the possibility of transferability of results to other countries/regions.

b) The **methodological quality** of the proposal

The proposal should clearly specify what methodology, including the work plan, is intended to be applied to the project and its innovative character. Where a project consists of several work packages, the methodology should be clearly described for each one. The feasibility and clarity of the work plan will be assessed as well as the proposed structure of the team and its relationship with the tasks to be performed. The division of tasks between the applicant and its partners should be described.

(ii) Cost/efficiency ratio

Only projects with an adequate cost/efficiency ratio will be financed. Therefore the proposal must include a **detailed budget breakdown** (see section 12) enabling the Commission to identify the efficiency in relation to the cost of the various tasks. In particular, the cost distribution and unit costs will influence the assessment of the project.

## **11. Requirements concerning equal opportunities**

The PROGRESS Programme aims at promoting gender mainstreaming in all its five policy sections and commissioned or supported activities. Consequently, the Beneficiary will take the necessary steps to ensure that his/her proposed team and/or staff respect the gender balance at all levels. It will also pay due attention when appropriate to the gender dimension of the action, for which the grant has been awarded, as detailed in the description of the action.

Equally, needs of disabled people shall be duly acknowledged and met while implementing the action. This will in particular entail that where the Beneficiary organises training sessions, conference, issues publications or develops dedicated websites, people with disabilities have equal access to the facilities or the services provided.

Finally, the European Commission encourages the Beneficiary to promote equal employment opportunities for all its staff and team. This entails that the Beneficiary shall foster an appropriate mix of people, whatever their ethnic origin, religions, age, and ability.

The Beneficiary will be required to detail in its activity report accompanying the request for the final instalment the steps and achievements it made towards meeting these requirements.

## 12. Financial conditions<sup>4</sup>

- The Community's financial contribution will not exceed **75% of the total eligible costs** of the activities involved. Sources of co-financing can be public or private;
- Only costs directly linked to achieving the objectives of the call will be accepted. Contributions in kind are not eligible. For further details concerning eligibility of costs, including the regime applicable to staff costs, see the **Applicant's guide**.

## 13. Start date and duration of projects

The projects should start after signature by both parties of the grant agreement, expected within three months of the date of submission. The start date of the project will be indicated in the grant agreement. The duration of each project is 12 months maximum, unless specific circumstances require a longer duration (to be justified).

## 14. Date for submission

The proposals must be sent to the Commission **not later than 21 September 2007** (the date of the post office stamp will be considered as proof of the date of sending).

## 15. Practical considerations

Applicants are invited to fill in the application form and present the project proposal preferably **either in English, French or German**, in order to facilitate the treatment of the proposals and carry through the evaluation as soon as possible. However, it should be noted that proposals in other Community languages will be accepted.

**The Application form is an electronic form which must be filled in online.** Annexes, which are compulsory, must be also filled in. The full application should be filled in and then uploaded online (see part F of the online Application form). For this purpose, the Internet Web application SWIM must be used. SWIM enables you to complete and submit a grant application. You can access SWIM at the web site <https://webgate.cec.eu.int/swim/displayWelcome.do>

Before starting, please read carefully the "User's guide", which you will find at the top of the page at <https://webgate.cec.eu.int/swim/displayWelcome.do> ("Help on SWIM").

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Applications accompanied by the annexes and all the required documentary proof should also be submitted in hard copy to the addresses cited below **by 21 September**

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<sup>4</sup> For detailed provisions on Community grants, please refer to Title VI of the Council Regulation 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities ([http://ec.europa.eu/budget/documents/implement\\_control\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/documents/implement_control_en.htm)).



**2007** (their submission date will be taken as the date of dispatch, as evidenced by the postmark or the express courier receipt date and proposals submitted after this date will not be eligible):

- a) by post to the following postal address:

European Commission  
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG  
Unit D2-Employment Strategy – Call for proposals VP/2007/11  
Archives-Courrier service J27 0/115  
B-1049 Brussels

- b) or by personal delivery against a signed receipt from the Commission's central mail service (direct or through any authorised representative of the applicant, including private messenger service etc.) by 16.00 hours on 29 June 2007 at the latest to the following address:

European Commission  
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG  
Unit D2-Employment Strategy – Call for proposals VP/2007/11  
Central Courier Service  
Avenue du Bourget, 1  
B-1049 Brussels

Failure to submit the application by post and online by 21 September 2007 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. Please do make sure that the full set of the application form and all accompanying documents as listed above are included in your dispatch by post by the closing date.

Incomplete or unsigned application forms, hand-written forms and those sent by fax, will not be taken into consideration.

The **Applicant's guide** 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;
- A check-list of the documents required to be sent with your application.

The information contained herein together with the Applicant's guide provides all the information you require to submit an application. Please read it carefully before doing so.

## **16. Data Protection**

Your grant application will be processed by computer. All personal data (such as names, addresses, CVs, etc.) will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on

the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies, and on the free movement of such data. Your replies to the questions in your application are necessary in order to assess your application, and they will be processed solely for that purpose by the department responsible for the Community grant programme concerned. On request, you may be sent personal data and correct or complete them. For any question relating to this data, please contact the Commission department to which the form must be returned. Beneficiaries may lodge a complaint against the processing of their personal data with the European Data Protection Supervisor at any time.