



Call for Proposals VP/2009/012

Learning for change- Setting up learning networks under the ESF 2007-2013

The European Commission has just published a call for proposals under its ESF Technical Assistance operational budget “Learning for change- Setting up learning networks under the ESF 2007-2013”. The aim of this call is to facilitate the networking for capacity building and mutual learning between ESF Managing Authorities and implementing bodies and their strategic stakeholders. Lead partners in these transnational projects need to be Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, and public administrations in charge of policy supported under ESF, whereas core group partners could also be Intermediate Bodies, including ERDF Intermediate Bodies. In the meantime, other network partners can be key stakeholders, centres of excellence and competence, and governmental entities/departments in charge of ESF supported policy and Beneficiaries. In the case of the latter, eligible Beneficiaries are Public Sector organisations, Local Councils, Social Partners and Voluntary Organisations. The inclusion of at least one core partner from EU-12 Member States is highly recommended.

A maximum budget of €3.6 million has been set aside for commitments in 2009. Partners (lead and core partners) in these networks should co-finance at least 10% of the total cost of the network project’s operation. Contributions in kind are not acceptable. The Community’s financial contribution must not exceed 90% of the total eligible costs. It is also not possible to use other Community funds (including ESF Funds) to cover the 10% co-financing obligation. The number of accepted networks should be between five and eight partners. The duration of proposed networks may vary between 24 and 36 months. Proposed network projects should start between 1st February and 30th April 2010.

The deadline for submission of complete applications is by **16.00 hours on 15th September 2009.**

The Call’s Objective

The call for proposals supports the purpose of transnational cooperation of contributing to employment policy and delivering reforms 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. This transnational cooperation will help strengthen capacities to innovate, modernise and adapt institutions to new social and economic challenges, identify and assess issues and solutions for reforms in policy and delivery in order to meet the Lisbon targets and by improving the quality of public governance.

This call also aims at facilitating transnational exchange and cooperation under the ESF programme as part of the Commission's Action Plan to support Transnational Cooperation at EU level.

The specific objective of the call is to establish learning networks and community of practice on themes and issues relevant for delivering the Lisbon reform agenda:

- Exploiting opportunities for programme managers, strategic stakeholders, governmental entities/departments in charge of policy supported under the ESF and practitioners for learning from one another, and with each other;
- Capitalising good practice and the lessons learnt under ESF 2004-2006;
- Facilitating the use of networks to improve the quality and efficiency of Structural Funds programmes and their impact on employment, social inclusion and training across the EU; and
- Contribute to policy development at EU level.

Mutual Learning organised by these networks can be focussed on:

Key policy fields and issues (“thematic networks”) such as economic change, restructuring and responses to the crisis, life-long learning, active ageing, reconciliation of work and private life, micro-finance support for disadvantaged people, pathways to integration and re-entry into the labour market, discrimination combating in the labour market, and reduction in early school leaving,

or on

Key principles of programme management (“governance networks”) such as social innovation, capacity building of social partners and NGOs and gender mainstreaming..

These networks are intended will continue working on the pillars of similar networks funded under EQUAL by creating:

- Exchange of events facilitating information sharing, analysis and assessment of practices;
- Peer reviews bringing together policy makers, ESF managers, practitioners and evaluators;
- Learning seminars that provide an opportunity to share approaches, skills, tools and sharing of good practice;
- Policy fora that bring together policy makers and stakeholders at regional, national and EU levels;
- Tools that further develop, validate, test and pilot working methods and tools for ESF managers, strategic stakeholders and Beneficiaries implementing the ESF;
- Communication platforms such as websites, fora, blogs and wikis etc... and other communication technologies that complement face-to-face interactions;

- Personal transfer of competencies and experience through training, coaching and site visits.

Further information can be obtained from the following site:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=630&langId=en>

The Managing Authority can also facilitate the partner search for interested parties in transnational partnership and offer guidance to interested applicants. Given the Commission's 15th September deadline, interested applicants are required to provide their feedback by **Wednesday 2nd September, 2009**.

Questions can be sent by email to EMPL-ESF-GRANTS-2008@ec.europa.eu or to the Transnational Contact Point within the Managing Authority:

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