

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/2010/014

PILOT PROJECT – ALL-INCLUSIVE COOPERATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES, COMPANIES AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN FAVOUR OF SOCIAL INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

Budget Heading 04.03.12

Questions should be sent by e-mail only to: empl-vp-2010-014-PilotProject@ec.europa.eu

This text is available in English, French and German. The English version is the original.

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

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	3
2	PURPOSE OF THE CALL	5
3	WHO CAN APPLY?	5
4	PRIORITY THEMES AND TYPES OF ACTION	6
5	EXCLUSION AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	7
5.1. E	Eligible countries	7
5.2.	Eligible applicant organisations	7
5.3.	Eligible activities	7
6	SELECTION CRITERIA	7
6.1	Financial capacity	7
6.2	Operational capacity	8
7	AWARD CRITERIA	8
7.1	Quality of the proposal	8
7.2	Effective and efficient organisation of work.	8
8	PROVISIONAL CALENDAR FOR THE CALL	9
9	INDICATIVE AMOUNT AND CO-FINANCING	10
10	ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS	10
10.1.	Where can the application form be found?	10
10.2.	Where does the application need to be sent?	11
11	CHECKLIST OF THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS	13

1 Introduction and background

The social economy, composed by non profit distributing enterprises with social objectives reinvesting their surpluses for the achievement of their aims, plays an essential role in the European economy. These enterprises are present in most of the sectors of activity, and provide around nine million jobs in the EU.

The social economy is an important source of entrepreneurship and jobs in areas where mainstream companies consider that their investments are not sufficiently remunerative. The social economy is an important source of job creation, notably in a period of protracted employment difficulties, as it is less dependent on the up and downs of the business cycle and often provides labour intensive and socially useful services. In this context local authorities have an important role to play in promoting the building of connections, relations, and cooperation between all types of enterprises present at local level.

The social economy has a long history of working for and with the disadvantaged in society. Its strong links with local communities and its democratic governance structures help to consolidate and develop social capital. Many of its organisations have a well established historical role in supporting the active inclusion of disadvantaged people.

The social economy has demonstrated that it can greatly improve the social status of disadvantaged people and enable them to exercise gainful activity or create employment in areas where mainstream companies and employers do not necessarily invest to the same extent (peripheral neighbourhoods, remote rural areas). In particular, the "work integration social enterprises" (WISEs) build bridges towards employment for people who would otherwise remain excluded from the labour market and cater for a wide variety of disadvantaged groups, and while some act as temporary 'springboards' into permanent employment elsewhere, others themselves offer permanent sheltered jobs for more seriously excluded people. ¹

Obviously, the social economy must be seen not only as a vehicle of job creation, but also as a means to fulfil the needs for social services and assistance over and above those met by the market economy or by public authorities, and produce goods or services responding to specific local needs. Not only the social economy and the third sector are significant economic actors, they also play a key role in involving their members and European citizens fully in society. They also tend to involve stakeholders, including workers, volunteers and users, in their management.

The social economy has demonstrated its substantial capacity for social innovation. For example, proximity services have a very positive impact on reconciling professional and private life, gender equality, the quality of family life, and care for children, older people and people with disabilities. Projects with a positive environmental impact are another important aspect of the social economy's innovative nature.

Social economy enterprises have a unique way of doing business since they combine economic performance, mutuality between members and often also the achievement of social or societal objectives as a business purpose. Thus they are well placed to contribute to key Community policies and objectives, in the field of employment but also as regards social cohesion, regional and rural development, environmental protection, consumer protection or social security.

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The project *WISE - Work Integration Social Enterprises as a tool for promoting inclusion*, supported by PROGRESS in 2008-2009, assessed the diversity of WISE throughout the European Union and established guidelines for European policy makers (www.wiseproject.eu).

Several policy initiatives, such as the Recommendation on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market² and the European Progress Microfinance Facility for employment and social inclusion³, have recognised the specific role, value added and potential of social enterprises.

The social economy has also a key role to play in attaining the objectives of the new Europe 2020 strategy elaborated by the Commission for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth⁴. In fact, the social economy can usefully contribute to the three priorities at the heart of Europe 2020, in terms of developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation; a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy and fostering a high-employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Despite the increasing importance of the social economy, there is still a great potential to be exploited to

- create high-quality jobs,
- attract and retain in the labour market people currently excluded from it,
- strengthen social, economic and regional cohesion,
- generate social capital,
- promote active citizenship, solidarity and an economy with democratic values,
- support sustainable development and social, environmental and technological innovation.

Social economy related actions are funded under different EU financial schemes. In the area of employment, social affairs and equal opportunities many projects supported by the ESF (including EQUAL) and the PROGRESS programme concern the third sector, social economy or social enterprises, and the social economy has been deeply embedded in the delivery of Structural Fund programmes, notably European Social Fund vocational training programmes and Community Initiative programmes in favour of target groups such as women and disabled and disadvantaged people. For 2007-2013 the ESF Regulation stresses the role of the social economy for promoting pathways to integration and re-entry into employment and job creation for disadvantaged and disabled people. In this context, member states and regions have included integrated strategies for the social economy in their ESF operational programmes and in some cases they have also identified social economy as an issue where they would like to share their experience and practice under transnational cooperation chapters of their ESF programmes.

However, no legal basis seems to exist which promote cooperation between public institutions, companies and social enterprises. Thus, in line with its resolution on the social economy and the newly proposed Europe 2020 strategy, the European Parliament has identified a need to promote the development of the enterprises of this sector via the strengthening of this kind of cooperation, in order to create solidarity networks linking these different groups. Such networks will also allow the strengthening of the role of local communities and authorities in developing social policies and thus approaching social problems through local solutions.⁵

² The Commission recommendation on active inclusion adopted on 3 October 2008 invites Member States to "provide support for the social economy and sheltered employment as a vital source of entry jobs for disadvantaged people, promote financial inclusion and microloans, financial incentives for employers to recruit, the development of new sources of jobs in services, particularly at local level, and raise awareness of labour market inclusiveness".

Decision N° 283/2010/EU of 25 March 2010.

COM (2010) 2020 final, 3.3.2010.

European Parliament resolution of 19 February 2009 on Social Economy ("Toia Report").

2 PURPOSE OF THE CALL

The Call for proposals will be funded by Article 04 03 12 of the EU Budget – Pilot project – All-inclusive cooperation between public authorities, companies and social enterprises in favour of social inclusion and integration into the labour market.

The main purpose of this pilot project is to promote new models for cooperation between public institutions, companies and social enterprises, in order to bring about a more effective and coordinated approach, via the creation of specific partnerships.

This will allow the development of permanent spaces for dialogue and thus foster mutual understanding and promote good practice. This should also contribute to:

- fostering greater awareness of the business world of corporate social responsibility particularly in local communities;
- propose effective solutions to the socio-economic problems suffered by each specific area and target group; and
- generate measurable results in terms of integration of vulnerable groups, with a particular attention to the integration of early school leavers and unemployed young people into society and the labour market.

The pilot project will be implemented in cooperation and taking benefit from synergies with some of the networks established under the PROGRESS Programme and the transnational dimension of the ESF (Learning Networks), as well as of the work undertaken through the PROGRESS programme on encouraging companies in their corporate social responsibility through local employment development. ⁶

3 WHO CAN APPLY?

Interested partners and stakeholders are requested to submit their proposal through a single applicant, who will be responsible for the overall management of the project.

Applicant organisations can be public authorities or state or semi-state agencies at central or regional level from EU Member States. Non-profit organisations active mainly in the area of social economy, entrepreneurship or social inclusion may also submit proposals on the condition that they are active at international, national or regional level and submit a proposal in partnership with a public authority or state or semi-state agencies as described above.

Proposals must be developed and implemented by a **partnership** at transnational level, made of organisations from at least three Member States, and must involve at least three partners (one public authority, one profit-making company and one social enterprise) in each Member State.

The applicant organisation will sign the grant agreement with the Commission, receive and manage the grant from the Commission and be responsible for the implementation and reporting to the Commission on the progress of the overall project, as well as ensuring ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The Commission will only deal with the applicant organisation.

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⁶ These include the European Confederation of Workers' Cooperatives, Social Cooperatives and Social and Participative Enterprises (CECOP: http://www.cecop.coop/) and the Network for Better Future of Social Economy, the Community of Practice on Inclusive Entrepreneurship (http://copie.esflive.eu/) and the Network on Youth Employment.

The effective contribution of each individual partner, including the amount of its financial contribution, must be clearly described in the project.

4 PRIORITY THEMES AND TYPES OF ACTION

Projects will aim at the promotion of innovative models of partnership focusing on the identification, measurement and validation of good practice that can be reproduced in other EU countries and regions.

Projects put forward under the present call should focus on the following **themes** (one application can cover more than one theme):

- A. Development of innovative approaches in relation to the services provided and/or to the target groups and promotion of high-quality standards of services;
- B. Improved cooperation between actors, with a particular emphasis on reinforcement of the role of local communities authorities, and their stakeholders (companies, chambers of commerce, local trade union branches, local special interest groups, academic institutions, and local investors) in developing integrated policies and contribute to sustainable local development and social cohesion;
- C. Design of assessment frameworks aiming to gather and structure evidence on social impact of social economy activities, in order to improve policy-making;
- D. Access to credit, including microcredit and tax relief, including the identification and validation of adapted financial products for the social economy and the systematisation of previous research in the area;
- E. Regulatory/legislative environment of social economy enterprises, including the analysis of the influence of different legal solutions to improve transparency, effectiveness and quality of their work.

By way of example, activities carried out by the proposed partnerships may concern:

- development and testing of innovative instruments/methodologies;
- actions to raise visibility and awareness on social economy and Corporate Social Responsibility;
- training/information/advice actions;
- organisation of peer reviews, round tables, exchanges of experience and best practices;
- case studies, including comparative studies of the situation in different Member States;
- transfer between sectors, regions and countries or mainstream existing successful instruments and practices (e.g. adaptation and transposition of particularly successful existing activities developed in a given sector, country or region to a broader context);
- seminars, conferences;
- initiatives to further the collection, use and dissemination of information on the social economy, such as websites, publications, newsletters and others means for the dissemination of information, including a final dissemination conference.

5.1. Eligible countries

Applications may only be submitted by organisations legally established in one of the 27 Member States.

5.2. Eligible applicant organisations

To be eligible, applicants must:

- a) certify that they are not in one of the situations listed in Articles 93(1), 94 and 96(2) of the Financial Regulation.⁷ The applicant organisation's legal representative must sign a Declaration on honour.
- b) be a properly constituted and registered legal entity in a Member State.
- c) be public authorities or state or semi-state agencies at central or regional level from the EU Member States.
- d) be non-profit organisations active mainly in the area of social economy, entrepreneurship or social inclusion. These organisations may also submit proposals on the condition that they are active at international, national or regional level and submit a proposal in partnership with a public authority or state or semi-state agencies as described above.

5.3. Eligible activities

To be eligible, activities must:

- be linked to the objective of the call;
- be carried out by a partnership made of organisations from at least three Member States. Each Member State should be represented by at least three partners (one public authority, or state or semi-state agencies at central or regional level; one profit-making company and one social enterprise).

6 SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria will enable the Commission to assess the financial and operational capacity of the applicant organization to complete the proposed work programme. Only organisations with the necessary financial and operational capacity may be awarded a grant.

6.1 Financial capacity

In order to prove that they have access to solid and adequate funding to maintain its activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary, applicants shall provide:

⁷ The situations referred to include bankruptcy, compulsory winding-up, being under court administration, in an arrangement with creditors or any other similar proceedings; convictions of professional misconduct; non fulfilment of social security or tax payment obligations; convictions of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity; declared in serious breach of contract in relation to activities funded by the Community budget; subject to conflict of interest; guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the required information

- the letters of commitment signed by the legal representatives of the co-funding organisations and specifying the amount of each cash contribution, proving that together they co-finance the project for at least 20 percent of the total action eligible costs;
- the annual balance sheet and profit and loss account for the most recent financial year for which the accounts have been closed for the applicant.

The assessment of financial capacity shall not apply to public bodies.

6.2 Operational capacity

The applicant must demonstrate to have the operational resources (technical, management) and the professional skills and qualifications needed to successfully complete the proposed action, as well as the ability to implement it. The applicant must have a strong track record of competence and experience in the field and in particular in the type of action proposed.

This will be demonstrated by the following:

- the CVs of the persons responsible for carrying out the action, showing all relevant professional experience;
- a list of projects carried out in the last 3 years by the applicant related to the objective of the call.

7 AWARD CRITERIA

All proposals that meet the above eligibility and selection criteria will be evaluated against the following criteria:

7.1 Quality of the proposal

The quality will be judged on:

- the relevance and degree to which the proposal meets the objectives of the call for proposals and the priorities identified;
- the extent to which there is a clear and well-supported diagnosis of the issues addressed in the proposal;
- the involvement of bodies responsible for public policies, service providers, social partner organisations, profit-making companies and social enterprises in setting up and participating in a transnational partnership;
- possible lasting effects and follow-up measures both at national and European levels;
- the relevance for, and approach to make an impact on EU policies, actions and agendas.

7.2 Effective and efficient organisation of work

The effective and efficient organisation of work will be judged on:

⁸ As an example, one possible way to analyse the financial capacity of the applicant is to calculate a ratio between the total assets in the balance sheet and the budget of the project (i.e. the ratio between the "total assets" in the balance sheet divided by the total project budget should be higher than 0.70).

- what methodology, including the work plan with timetable, is intended to be applied for the project and its innovative character; in case of projects consisting of several work packages, the methodology should be clearly described for each work package;
- the feasibility and clarity of the work plan, as well as the proposed structure of the team and its relation to the tasks to be performed;
- the partnership's capacity for achieving the desired results, by means of a clear allocation of tasks and responsibilities amongst the partners;
- the quality and relevance of the approach to monitoring and evaluation;
- the quality of the method for identifying transferability of results and disseminating of these to other Member States;
- the cost/efficiency ratio.

8 PROVISIONAL CALENDAR FOR THE CALL

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS: 2 March 2011

COMPLETION OF THE ASSESSMENT: May 2011

- CONCLUSION OF GRANT AGREEMENTS: June 2011

The Commission will register proposals, which have been submitted electronically and on a hard copy by the 2 March 2011 (postmark will serve as proof).

Applications must be submitted electronically **and** sent by post to the Commission **not later than 2 March 2011**. Proposals sent after this deadline will not be considered.

The Commission will assess the proposals against the formal and then the award criteria listed under points 5 to 7 of the present call.

The Commission will notify applicants once the selection has been completed.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of reasons for rejection or non-eligibility.

The selected organisations will receive two original copies of the grant agreement for acceptance and signature. Both these copies must be sent back to the Commission, which will then return one of them once it has been signed by both parties.

It is expected that successful applicants will receive agreements for signature by the end of June 2011. The period of eligibility of costs will start on the day the grant agreement is signed by the last of the parties, i.e. the European Commission.

Extensions to the eligibility period beyond the maximum duration will *not* be granted, except in very exceptional circumstances.

The **deadline** for the submission of complete applications is as follows:

2 March 2011 for actions starting no earlier than 1^{st} July 2011 and no later than 30^{th} September 2011.

Only applications with a maximum duration of 18 months and a minimum duration of 12 months will be considered.

In view of the time needed to examine applications, actions may not start before the deadlines given above. Applicants should note that if their project is selected, they will not necessarily

receive the grant agreement prior to the action starting dates indicated and should, therefore, take this into account in programming the timing of their project.

Any expenditure incurred before written confirmation that the application has been accepted is at the applicant's risk.

Proposals which indicate an earlier starting date than the ones indicated above will not be considered by the Evaluation Committee.

9 INDICATIVE AMOUNT AND CO-FINANCING

The amount envisaged for this call is EUR 1 500 000.

The maximum European Community financial contribution will not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs for each of the selected projects. According to the quality of applications received, the number of accepted proposals should not exceed five.

This budget heading allows support to be given to projects to which the applicants contribute at least 20 % of the total eligible costs of the action. Contributions in kind will not be taken into account.

10 ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

10.1. Where can the application form be found?

An electronic application form must be filled in by using the web-based application called "SWIM" (SAGA Web Input Module).

This system allows the introduction, edition, validation, printing and submission of the grant application form. Once the application is submitted electronically, a print-out of an exemplar has to be signed by the legal representative submitting the proposal and be sent to the Commission as per point 10.2 below. After submission of the application electronically no changes are possible.

Only applications submitted on or before the deadline and on the prescribed forms will be considered. Applicants are strongly advised not to wait until the deadline to submit their on-line applications as the application process may prove difficult if too many applicants are trying to submit at the same time.

Applicants must complete an online application form (create a 'SWIM account') by registering on the following internet site (web gate):

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim/external/displayWelcome.do

Before starting to fill in the application form on SWIM, please read carefully the User's Guide (click on the 'Help on SWIM' button at the top of the page):

http://ec.europa.eu/employment social/calls/pdf/swim manual en.pdf

After creating an 'account', applicants or their legal representatives will receive access details (user name and password) enabling them to access the form (which can be completed at their convenience, saved for future reference or printed). A step-by-step online explanation is provided to help users fill in the boxes, sections and annexes of this form.

The compulsory annexes must also be filled in online on the SWIM site (and then printed out for signature).

Questions can be sent by e-mail to empl-vp-2010-014-PilotProject@ec.europa.eu.

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

2 March 2011

10.2. Where does the application need to be sent?

After filling in the form, applicants or their legal representatives must submit it both electronically and in hard copy.

 in electronic format via the SWIM online application: validate the request (click on the 'send' button). This step is irreversible and must be carried out on or before the deadline.

and

THREE HARD COPIES (i.e. one should be marked 'original' and two should be marked 'copy'): Please send your covering letter of application together with all the other documents listed in the checklist as per point 11 below as signed originals as well as two copies of all these documents by the deadline to the following *postal* address:

Call for Proposals VP/2010/014
European Commission
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG
Unit D4
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

The submission date will be taken as the date of dispatch, as evidenced by the postmark or the express courier receipt date.

For hand-delivered applications or applications delivered by express courier services (DHL, UPS, etc.) these must be received by the European Commission by 16.00 hours on 2 March 2011. The address for hand deliveries/express courier service delivery of documents for the European Commission is:

Call for Proposals VP/2010/014
European Commission
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG
Unit D4
Avenue du Bourget n° 1, B – 1140, Evere, 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, handwritten 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.

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

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).

ALL ENQUIRIES MUST BE MADE BY E-MAIL ONLY AT

empl-vp-2010-014-PilotProject@ec.europa.eu

11 CHECKLIST OF THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

 Please number the documents as shown and send in the following documents in triplicate (original + two copies).

Order	Document	Check	Download SWIM
1	Original letter of application quoting the reference of the call (VP/2010/014) duly signed and dated by the legal representative of the applicant organisation.		NO
2	Print-out of the complete online application form generated by the SWIM application, including the estimated budget (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim) duly completed, dated and signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation.		YES
3	Printed version of Annex E1: Declaration on honour , dated and signed by the legal representative of the applicant that the organisation is not in one of the situations listed in Article 93 (1) and article 94 and 96(2) (a) of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, the organisation has access to stable and adequate funding to maintain activities for the period of the project to help finance it as necessary and has the operational capacity and the operational resources (technical, management) to successfully complete the activity.		YES
4	Printed version of Annex E2: Letter of Commitment/Co-funding signed by the legal representatives of each partner organisation, confirming their participation into the proposal with the name, address and person responsible, explaining the nature of their involvement, the tasks to be carried out and specifying the amount of each cash contribution.		YES
5	Printed version of Annex E3: Financial identification form duly completed with the original signature of the legal representative and the original signature and stamp of the bank. The Financial identification form must correspond to the Legal entity form (see below). The bank account must be held in the name of the applicant. Applications cannot be accepted with an account held in the name of an individual.		YES
6	Printed version of Annex E4: Legal entity form duly completed with the original signature of the legal representative.		YES
7	Annex E6: Detailed work programme dated and signed by the legal representative of the lead partner (in MS Word format of max. 5-6 pages), including a timetable linking months to activities and outputs.		NO
8	Annex E7: Contracts for implementing the action: for all the services whose cost exceeds € 5 000.		YES
9	Annual balance sheet and profit and loss account for the most recent financial year duly signed and dated by the legal representative of the applicant organisation (not necessary for public bodies).		NO
10	Detailed CVs (educational and professional qualifications) and job specifications of the project manager and of the other main experts involved in the project implementation.		NO
11	A list of projects carried out in the last 3 years by the applicant relating to the objective of the call.		NO
12	Copy of the official registration certificate or any other official document attesting the legal establishment of the organisation (not necessary for public bodies).		NO
13	Copy of articles of association/statutes or equivalent, proving the eligibility of the organisation.		NO