



**CALL FOR PROPOSALS
VP/2012/007
CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR SOCIAL POLICY EXPERIMENTATIONS**

PROGRESS 2012

BUDGET HEADING 04.040102

In view of the large number of enquiries, please do not telephone.
Questions should be sent by email only to:
EMPL-VP-2012-007@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 would be helpful if applicants sent their queries in English or French.

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I. TEXT OF THE CALL VP/2012/007

1. THE PROGRESS PROGRAMME

PROGRESS¹ is the European Union (EU)'s employment and social solidarity programme set up to provide financial support for the attainment of the EU's objectives in employment, social affairs and equal opportunities. The realisation of these objectives relies on a combination of instruments comprising EU legislation, the implementation of open methods of coordination in various policy fields and financial incentives such as the European Social Fund.

The PROGRESS mission is to strengthen the EU's contribution in support of Member States' commitments and efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. To this effect, PROGRESS is instrumental in:

- Providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;
- Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in PROGRESS policy areas;
- Promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities;
- Relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

More specifically, PROGRESS supports:

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

The present call is issued in the context of the implementation of the 2012 annual work plan.²

¹ 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, JO L 315 of 15.11.2006.

²<http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?type=0&policyArea=0&subCategory=0&country=0&year=0&advSearchKey=ProgressAnnualWorkPlan&mode=advancedSubmit&langId=en>

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CALL

2.1. Policy background and objectives

The Europe 2020 Strategy³ recognises that the EU's success in delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth largely depends on its ability to innovate across all fronts. Two of its flagship initiatives put this priority centre stage: the Innovation Union⁴ and the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion⁵.

The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion promotes social innovation and social policy experimentation as renewed ways to address challenges of social policies: evolving social needs, growing budgetary constraints, participation of stakeholders in all steps of the policy cycle, evaluation of the social impact of decisions.

Social policy experiments are:

- policy interventions bringing innovative answers to social needs,
- implemented on a small scale because of existing uncertainty as to their impact,
- in conditions which ensure the possibility of measuring their impact,
- in order to be repeated on a wider scale if the results prove convincing.

This call for proposals on social policy experimentations intends to improve the quality and effectiveness of social policies and to facilitate their adaptation to new social needs and societal challenges.

Through this call, PROGRESS countries embarking on welfare reforms are offered financial support to experiment envisaged policy changes and reforms before implementing them, if successful, on a wider scale.

Reference information about social policy experimentation is available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=758&langId=en&eventsId=358&furtherEvents=yes>

It includes a methodological guide⁶ and examples⁷ of social policy experiments implemented in some of the Member States, as showcased in the Ministerial conference "Innovative responses to the social impact of the crisis" organised by the Polish Presidency (Wrocław, 26 September 2011).

2.2. Methodology

This call offers to applicants the possibility to develop social policy experiments according to the following two dimensions:

- **Design of a potentially relevant policy intervention:** a rigorous description of the target group, of the social needs addressed and of the set of actions envisaged should be provided. The expected impact of the policy intervention should also be

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/>

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm

⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=961>

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7102&langId=en>

⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7100&langId=en>

defined precisely in measurable terms and evidence given that the programme envisaged is likely to address the social needs identified. Other elements such as the context in which the policy is to be implemented, the feasibility, acceptability, relevance and timeliness of the proposed solutions in relation to strategic policy objectives, as well as to the operational, strategic and financial capacity of the policy actors should be taken into account.

- **Design of the evaluation method:** The evaluation protocol should be set up from the start of the project, in order to arrive at shared conclusions about the up-scaling potential of the tested policies, based on their measured impact.

Because the results they deliver are most reliable as regards the evaluation of the impacts of an intervention, preference will be given to randomized experimentation methods that randomly assign the members of a representative sample of the population targeted to either a treatment group or a control group. The applicants may choose to use any randomization method, such as described in "*Social experimentation: A methodological guide for policy makers*".⁸

A quasi-experimental design, like those in which potential sites are randomised to treatment and control group status, may also be considered if the impact of the interventions being tested is credibly ascertained.

2.3. Stakeholders

As this call focuses on public policy interventions, it is addressed to **public authorities** acting as policy-makers, at national, regional or local level. The role of the public authority consists not only in holding the applicant's legal responsibility but also in getting actively committed into the project. The Commission expects from the applicants that they do place the social policy experimentation into a policy perspective. Thus, the innovation implemented at small scale shall be able to pave the way for a more structural reform, if proved successful.

Given what social policy experimentation consists in, an **evaluator** has to be involved in the project. Expertise and experience in the field of impact evaluation will be absolutely necessary. The social policy experimentation protocol should be designed and implemented in conditions guaranteeing a functional independence of the evaluator from the policy-maker.

A good quality cooperation with beneficiaries and **stakeholders - including social partners, social service providers and civil society organisations** – will be instrumental in making the social policy experiment a successful process. It can only improve the relevance of questionnaires, the understanding of impacts and the rationale of the whole initiative.

Subcontracting some of the parts of the project is allowed. Reasons must be given for contracting out implementation work. Contracts must be awarded to the tender offering best value for money, that is to say, to the tender offering the best price-quality ratio, care being taken to avoid any conflict of interest.

⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7102&langId=en>

2.4. Scope

Selected projects have to contribute to developing and testing socially innovative approaches to policy priorities in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Open Method of Coordination on social protection and social inclusion. To be selected under this call, projects should focus on a relevant issue within the context of employment and social policies, keeping in mind in all cases the gender equality dimension of the issue and the link with the Country Specific Recommendations⁹ 2012-2013 applying to the participating countries.

The Commission invites potential applicants to consider in particular the following themes:

- **Promotion of youth activation measures** to tackle and prevent youth unemployment and exclusion, in particular for young people facing multiple barriers to labour market entry (e.g. those living in rural, deprived urban, remote and peripheral areas), in line with the Youth Opportunities Initiative,¹⁰ which is a multidimensional policy approach combining actions for preventing early school leaving, supporting skills development, facilitating transition from education to work and access to the labour market for the youth across the EU;
- **Provision of quality childcare services**, which requires a comprehensive approach in line with the Strategy for Equality between women and men (2010-2015)¹¹ and the Communication on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)¹² that focuses on the provision and quality of key services for improving child well-being, covering – among other things – accessibility, affordability, staff competences and quality assurance mechanisms. ECEC also has an impact on issues such as gender equality, poverty, women's labour market participation, birth rates and the development of human potential;
- **Promotion of active and healthy ageing**, which is underpinned by cross-sectoral actions aiming, among others, at improving the health status and the quality of life, supporting the sustainability and efficiency of health care and social services systems, ensuring decent working conditions and prolonging working lives, as well as at promoting social inclusion and independent living for all citizens, with a particular focus on older people, as outlined in the Strategic Implementation Plan of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing.¹³

Where appropriate, linking the definition of the project scope to the Country Specific Recommendations 2012/2013 applying to the participating countries is encouraged.

2.5. Results

New social programmes and policies often contain some uncertainty and risks. This call offers opportunities for decision-makers to base their decisions on objective and rigorous results. It also aims to expand the knowledge-base on how policies work, support

⁹http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

¹⁰ COM(2011) 933 final, 20 December 2011

¹¹ COM(2010) 491 final

¹² COM(2011) 66 final, 17 February 2011

¹³ COM(2012) 83 final, 29 February 2012

evidence-based and participative policy-making and intensify the mutual learning among various actors in the PROGRESS participating countries.

The significance of a social policy experiment depends not only on whether it is used to improve or estimate the impact of new social policy measures, but also on the information it provides to improve existing or envisaged social policies or programmes.

At the final stage of the project, the promoter has to organise the dissemination of the results of the project in at least two other PROGRESS participating countries.

2.6. Indicative budget, minimum and maximum grants, rate of co-financing

The overall indicative amount made available for this call is 4 200 000 €. The grant requested should be 700 000 € minimum and 1 000 000 € maximum.

1 000 000 € will be allocated to projects focusing on youth activation measures. If the quality of the applications dedicated to this theme is not judged sufficient by the Evaluation Committee, the Commission reserves the right to reallocate this budget to the applications addressing other themes.

The grant will not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs of the action. The applicant has to guarantee the co-financing of the remaining 20%. The equivalent of no less than 20% of the total eligible costs is to be supported by the applicant's own resources or from other sources. Contributions in kind are not accepted as co-financing.

The Commission reserves the right not to distribute the funds available if the quality of the applications received does not warrant it.

2.7. Requirements on how the activities shall be carried out

The PROGRESS Programme aims to promote gender mainstreaming in all its five policy sections and supported activities. Consequently, the Beneficiary shall take the necessary steps to ensure that:

- Gender equality issues are taken into account when relevant for the drafting of the proposal by paying attention to the situation and needs of women and men;
- Implementation of proposed activities includes a perspective informed by a systematic consideration of the gender dimension;
- Performance monitoring includes the collection and gathering of data disaggregated by sex when needed;
- Its proposed team and/or staff respects the gender balance at all levels.

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

Finally, the Contracting Authority encourages the Beneficiary to promote equal employment opportunities for all its staff and team. This entails that the Beneficiary is encouraged to foster an appropriate mix of people, whatever their ethnic origin, religion, age, and ability.

The Beneficiary will be required to detail in its final activity report the steps and achievements made towards meeting these contractual requirements.

2.8. Communication and dissemination plan

Adequate communication and dissemination of results is essential in ensuring the EU added value of the action and its sustainability after the funding has ended. Information-giving and awareness raising are key activities to ensure that other interested parties benefit from the project and can create new opportunities to extend it or develop new partnerships. The proposals must therefore include a detailed plan for communication and dissemination of the projects' results. In particular, such a plan must include information on dissemination activities and targeted audiences.

At final report stage, the Beneficiary will be required to provide details about how and to whom the results, best practices and findings have been disseminated and how interested parties have been involved in the project.

2.9. Publicity and information requirements

In accordance with the General conditions, all beneficiaries are under the obligation to acknowledge that the present activity has received funding from the Union in all documents and media produced, in particular final delivered outputs, related reports, brochures, press releases, videos, software, etc, including at conferences or seminars. In the context of the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS, the following formulation shall be used:

This (publication, conference, training session etc) is supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - PROGRESS (2007-2013).

This programme is implemented by the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities area, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>

For publications it is also necessary to include the following reference: "The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission".

With regard to publication and any communication plan linked to the present activity, the Beneficiary will insert the European Union logo and mention the European Commission as the Contracting Authority in every publication or related material developed under the present grant agreement.

2.10. Reporting requirements

PROGRESS is implemented through a results-based management (RBM). The Strategic Framework, developed in collaboration with the Member States, social partners and civil society organisations, sets out the intervention logic for PROGRESS-related expenditure and defines PROGRESS' mandate and its long-term and immediate outcomes. It is supplemented by performance measures which serve to determine the extent to which PROGRESS has delivered the expected results. See in Annex the overview of PROGRESS performance measurement framework. For more information on the strategic framework, please visit PROGRESS website <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=659&langId=en>.

The Commission regularly monitors the effect of PROGRESS-supported initiatives and considers how they contribute to PROGRESS outcomes as defined in the Strategic Framework. In this context, the Beneficiary will be asked to dedicatedly work in close cooperation with the Commission and/or persons authorised by it to define the expected contribution and the set of performance measures which this contribution will be assessed against. As a direct contribution to the PROGRESS Annual Performance Monitoring Report, the Beneficiary will be asked to submit a short quantitative questionnaire on the outputs produced over the course of a given calendar year. At the end of the action, the Beneficiary will also be asked to report on its own performance to the Commission and/or persons authorised by it against a template which will be annexed to the grant agreement.

2.11. Information on partners in PROGRESS funded projects

In order to increase the visibility of transnational partnerships established under PROGRESS and to facilitate networking between organisations involved in actions covered by PROGRESS grants, the Commission intends to publish the name and address of partners in PROGRESS-funded projects together with the name and address of the beneficiary, the reference of the call for proposals and the title and description of the project. To that purpose, the Beneficiary will be asked to seek the partners' agreement to authorise the Commission to publish this data. This written agreement should be included in the letters of commitment sent to the Commission with the application form.

3. EXCLUSION, ELIGIBILITY, SELECTION AND AWARD CRITERIA

3.1. Exclusion and eligibility criteria

Exclusion criteria

The applicant should certify that they are not in one of the situations listed in the articles 93(1), 94 and 96(2)a of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities¹⁴.

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/regulations/regulations_en.cfm. 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

Eligibility of the applicant

The applicant should meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. The applicant must be established in one of the PROGRESS participating countries¹⁵;
2. The applicant must be a public authority, at central, regional or local level, or a body governed by public law;

Eligibility of the proposal

The proposal should meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Be complete and submitted in the online application SWIM before the deadline;
2. Be submitted on paper and sent by post or notified by personal delivery in one original before the deadline;
3. Be a social policy experiment as defined in the sections 2.1 and 2.2;
4. Only seek funding for activities in PROGRESS participating countries;
5. Include an evaluation done by an evaluator identified in the proposal. The evaluation should be carried out in conditions allowing the independence of its results from the applicant;
6. Include partners from at least two other PROGRESS participating countries in the dissemination phase of the project at the latest;
7. Contain a description of how the scaling-up of the experiment could occur, so that there is an actual perspective that the test, if successful, is transformed into a policy reform;
8. Respect the maximum limit for EU co-financing, namely maximum 80% of the total eligible costs of the action;
9. The duration is between 24 months and 36 months;
10. The requested grant is between 700 000 € and 1 000 000 €.

3.2. Selection criteria

Only proposals which comply with the requirements of the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be eligible for further evaluation.

Only organisations with the necessary operational capacity may be awarded a grant.

The applicant must have the operational resources (technical, management) and the professional skills and qualifications needed to successfully complete the proposed action.

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 European Union's budget; subject to conflict of interest; guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the required information.

¹⁵ EU27, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Serbia

This operational capacity must be attested by the provision of the following items:

1. A declaration on honour concerning the operational capacity to carry out the activity;
2. A declaration on honour signed by the applicant stating that the policy issue addressed is within its legal area of competence.
3. Detailed CVs (educational and professional qualifications) and job specifications of the project manager, experts, the evaluator and of all the persons who will perform the main tasks;
4. The list of the main relevant projects carried out by the applicant and partner in charge of the evaluation in the last three years.
5. The list of the main relevant projects carried out by the evaluator in the last three years.

3.3. Award criteria

An Evaluation Committee will assess the project proposals according to the criteria listed below. The maximum rating for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. The maximum total points that a proposal may obtain is 100. Proposals which do not receive 70 points will not be considered for funding.

Policy criteria (60 points)

1. Relevance of the project : the extent to which the proposal presents a well-supported diagnosis of the social needs to be addressed and demonstrates the relevance of the proposed social policy experiment to advancing social policies, in particular in relation to the Country Specific Recommendations 2012-2013, where relevant, and its ability to be implemented on a larger scale. Target group, envisaged set of actions, gender dimension relevance (if any) and expected impact must be clearly defined (30 points);
2. Ability of the evaluation framework to deliver robust information on the impact of the tested policy intervention: relevant and clear objectives, robust methodology and precise indicators (30 points);

Organisational criteria (25 points)

1. Organisational capacity to achieve the objectives through the proposed activities within realistic deadlines (9 points);
2. Quality of the set-up: extent of the involvement of other organisations and balance between organisations. Including relevant stakeholders from the same country and stakeholders from other PROGRESS countries in the wider partnership is strongly encouraged (8 points);
3. Quality and extent of the dissemination strategy (8 points).

Financial criteria (15 points)

1. Adequacy of the allocated resources (human and financial) to the planned activities (cost-effectiveness) (10 points);
2. Overall quality, clarity and completeness of the budget (5 points).

4. SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

4.1. Start and duration of projects

The projects should start after signature of grant agreements, expected within six months of the date of submission. The planned duration of the project may not be less than 24 months nor exceed 36 months.

In view of the time required to evaluate applications, actions should not start before the deadline given above.

Applicants should note that if their project is selected, they will not necessarily receive the grant agreement prior to the action starting date indicated and should, therefore, take this into account in programming the timing of their project. Any expenditure incurred before the signature of the grant agreement is at the applicant's risk.

4.2. Deadline for submission of proposals

The proposals must be submitted electronically online and sent by post or by personal delivery in one original to the Commission, by **15 February 2013** at the latest.

Proposals which do not respect the date of submission will not be considered by the Evaluation Committee.

4.3. Rules of submission

Applicants are invited to fill in the application form online, on the SWIM secure website: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim/displayWelcome.do>. Annexes, which are compulsory, must be also filled in and uploaded online (see part E of the online application form).

Before starting, please read carefully the "User's guide". You will find it at the top of the page ("Help on SWIM").

The electronic application in the online application SWIM must be "valid". Invalid electronic applications are automatically excluded from further evaluation.

After filling in the form, **applicants must submit it both electronically and in hard copy:**

- Electronic submission: in order to validate the application, click on the "send" button. This step is irreversible and must be carried out before the deadline.
- Hard copy submission: a duly completed application accompanied by the annexes and all the required documentary proof should also be sent to the addresses below by the deadline

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

- a) By post to the following **postal address**:
- European Commission
DG EMPL D/4
Call for proposals VP/2012/007
B-1049 Bruxelles
Belgium
- b) Or by **personal delivery** against an acknowledgement of receipt from the Commission's central mail service **by 16.00 hours on 15 February 2013** at the latest to the following address:
- European Commission
DG EMPL D/4
Call for proposals VP/2012/007
Central Courier Service
Avenue du Bourget, 1
B-1140 Evere
Belgium

The applicant is requested to number the accompanying documents to be submitted with the application as shown below and send **one original**. Documents will be printed double-sided, if possible. Only two-hole folders will be used. The dossier should not be bound or glued.

Please do make sure that the full set of the application form and all accompanying documents are included in your sending by post by the deadline. **The absence of any of these documents may invalidate the application as specified in section 4.4.**

Order	Documents composing the paper application	Available in SWIM
1	Cover letter of application quoting the reference number of the call (VP/2012/007), signed and dated by the legal representative of the applicant organisation.	No but <u>please upload</u>
2	Submitted on-line application form . The print-out should be dated and signed by the legal representative. The on-line form must be electronically submitted before printing. Once the electronic application is submitted, no further changes will be possible.	YES
3	Declaration on honour signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation.	YES (annex E.1 with compulsory template)
4	Letters of commitment signed by the legal representatives of all partner organisations, specifying the amount of their financial contribution when relevant.	YES (annex E.2 with compulsory template)
5	Financial identification form duly completed and signed by the account holder of the applicant organisation and bearing the stamp and signature of the bank. It is also possible to attach a copy of a recent bank statement to the financial identification form, in which event the stamp of the bank and the signature of the bank's representative are not required. The signature of the account holder is obligatory in all cases.	YES (annex E.3 with compulsory template)

6	Legal entity form , completed and signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation.	YES (annex E.4 with compulsory template)
7	Document " Description of the action "	YES (annex E5 with compulsory template)
8	Document " Contracts for implementing the action " for subcontracting	YES (annex E.6 with compulsory template)
9	Document " Summary of Quantitative Information on Planned Deliverables/Outputs "	YES (annex E.7 with compulsory template)
10	Detailed CVs (educational and professional qualifications) and job specifications of the project manager, the experts, evaluators and of all the persons who will perform the main tasks.	Annex E.8. No but <u>please upload</u>
11	Declaration of the Applicant that the policy issue addressed is within its legal area of competence quoting specific provisions of law/statutes or equivalent.	Annex E.9. No but <u>please upload</u>
12	A list of the main projects carried out by the applicant and evaluator in the last three years relating the objectives of the call. In case of work done for the Commission, applicants must also include the reference number of the contract and department for which the contract was performed.	Annex E.10. No but <u>please upload</u>

If an organisation wants to submit more than one proposal, each application must be submitted separately.

4.4. Evaluation process

Applications are assessed by an independent Evaluation Committee.

The work of the Evaluation Committee consists in assessing each of the applications against the exclusion, eligibility, selection and award criteria.

Applications which are not submitted by the deadline will automatically be rejected.

After the deadline for submission of proposals, the Commission may contact the applicant to provide clarification. Failure to reply to the clarification request will invalidate the application.

If any document listed in section 4.3 of the Call is missing, incorrect or open to further interpretation or negotiation, the application may be rejected on that sole basis.

Only proposals which satisfy the exclusion and eligibility criteria will be evaluated further against selection and award criteria.

The Evaluation Committee will deliver an opinion recommending a number of proposals for funding. The list will take into consideration the results of the evaluations within the remains of the budget available.

The Commission will inform each applicant of the final decision taken.

Successful applicants will receive two original copies of the grant agreement detailing the conditions and level of funding for acceptance and signature. Both copies must be sent back to the Commission which will return one to the applicant once it has been signed by both parties.

Applicants whose proposals have not been selected for funding will be informed of the results of the evaluation process, including the reasons for rejections, in writing.

4.5. Indicative timetable

	Date
Deadline for submitting the applications	15 February 2013
Requests of further information from the Commission to the applicants (when needed)	March - April 2013
Notification of results	June 2013
Signing of contracts	July 2013

4.6. Contact

Contacts between the contracting authority and potential applicants can only take place in certain circumstances and under the following conditions:

Before the final date for submission of proposals, at the request of the applicant, the Commission may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the call. Any requests for additional information must be made in writing to empl-vp-2012-007@ec.europa.eu

In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Commission cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner or an action or on the outcome of the call before the official publication of results.

The Commission may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or other clerical error in the text of the call for proposals. Any additional information including that referred to above will be published on the internet in concordance with the various call-for-proposals documents.

Contact coordinates for the call:

ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY E-MAIL ONLY, CLEARLY INDICATING THE REFERENCE VP/2012/007, TO:

empl-vp-2012-007@ec.europa.eu

Applicants are hereby informed that in the interest of transparency and equal treatment of applicants, no queries will be dealt with by telephone.

4.7. Informative Seminar

The Commission will invite the project leaders of the awarded projects to participate in a kick-off informative seminar. Applicants are therefore invited to plan in the budget relevant costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence allowances (2 persons for 2 days in Brussels).

5. FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

For more detailed information on the financial and administrative aspects of the call please see Annex I which is available on the call website:

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

Only eligible costs can be taken into account for determining the amount of grant. The categories of costs considered as eligible and non-eligible are indicated in the section 3.2 of the above Guidelines.

In addition to costs specified in article 3.2.4 of the Financial Guidelines following costs are ineligible for funding under the present Call:

- direct financial support to the participants in the target groups;
- acquisition of immovable property and/or vehicles.

Before awarding a grant, the Commission will check whether the budget does not contain problems such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs or other ineligible costs. The check may give rise to a request for clarification and may lead the Commission to ask for modifications or reductions of some budget items before delivering the grant. The amount of the grant and the percentage of EU co-financing should never be increased as a result of these corrections.

An external audit report produced by an approved auditor or by a competent and independent public officer is required by the authorising officer in respect to final payment request.

Auditor's task is to certify that the request for payment based on the financial statements and underlying accounts relating to the action or work programme which he has audited is

reliable and consistent with the provisions of the agreement/decision and that the costs declared by the beneficiary in the financial statements on which the request of payment is based are real, accurately recorded and eligible and that all receipts have been declared in, in accordance with the agreement.

Audit methodology and template of the certificate on the action's financial statements and underlying accounts will be provided by the Commission after the signature of the Grant Agreement.

ANNEX II MODEL GRANT AGREEMENT

For more detailed information on payment arrangements, general legal and administrative provisions please see the model grant agreement which is available on the call website.

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

The model grant agreement is published for information only. The Grant Agreement which selected organisations will sign in 2013 will take into account the new provisions of the Financing Regulation regarding payment deadlines and interests on pre-financing.

PROGRESS Ultimate Outcome
Member States implement laws, policies and practices in a manner that contributes to the desired outcomes of the Social Agenda

PROGRESS works towards its ultimate outcome by helping strengthen the EU's support for Member States' efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. PROGRESS seeks to contribute to (i) an **effective legal regime** in the EU in relation to the Social Agenda; (ii) **shared understanding** across the EU with regard to Social Agenda objectives; and (iii) **strong partnerships** working towards Social Agenda objectives.

In operational terms, support provided by PROGRESS facilitates (i) provision of analysis and policy advice; (ii) monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies; (iii) policy transfer, learning and support among Member States; and (iv) relaying to decision-makers the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

Legal Regime Outcome: <i>Compliance in Member States with EU law related to PROGRESS areas</i> Performance Indicators 1. Transposition rate of EU law on matters related to PROGRESS policy areas 2. Effectiveness of application in Member States of EU law on matters related to PROGRESS policy areas. 3. EU policies and legislation are grounded in thorough analysis of situation and responsive to conditions, needs and expectations in Member States in PROGRESS areas 4. Extent to which PROGRESS-supported policy advice feeds into the development and implementation of EU legislation and policies 5. Cross-cutting issues are addressed in PROGRESS policy sections 6. EU policies and legislation display a common underlying logic of intervention in relation to PROGRESS issues 7. Gender mainstreaming is systematically promoted in PROGRESS	Shared Understanding Outcome: <i>Shared understanding and ownership among policy decision-makers and stakeholders in Member States, and the Commission, of objectives related to PROGRESS policy areas</i> Performance Indicators 1. Attitudes of decision-makers, key stakeholders and general public regarding EU objectives in PROGRESS policy areas 2. Extent to which national policy discourses or priorities reflect EU objectives 3. Extent to which principles of good governance (including minimum standards on consultation) are respected in policy debate 4. Extent to which the outcomes of policy debates feed into the development of EU law and policy. 5. Greater awareness of policy-and decision-makers, social partners, NGOs, networks regarding their rights/obligations in relation to PROGRESS policy areas 6. Greater awareness of policy-and decision-makers, social partners, NGOs, networks regarding EU objectives and policies in relation to PROGRESS policy areas	Strong Partnerships Outcome: <i>Effective partnerships with national and pan-European stakeholders in support of outcomes related to PROGRESS policy areas</i> Performance Indicators 1. Existence of common ground/consensus among policy and decision-makers and stakeholders on EU objectives and policies 2. Identification and involvement by the EU of key actors in a position to exert influence or change at EU and national levels 3. Effectiveness of partnerships in relation to outcomes related to PROGRESS policy areas. 4. Number of individuals served or reached by networks supported by PROGRESS 5. Extent to which advocacy skills of PROGRESS-supported networks have improved 6. Satisfaction of EU and national authorities with the contribution of networks 7. Extent to which PROGRESS-supported networks take a cross-cutting approach
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