

Information communicated by Member States regarding state aid granted under Commission Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to training aid

(2003/C 64/06)

(Text with EEA relevance)

Aid No: XT 04/02.

Member State: Spain.

Region: Extremadura.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Grants for training, creation of associations and technical assistance in the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector.

Legal basis: Decreto autonómico nº 169/2001, de 6 de noviembre (DOE nº 131 de 13.11.2001).

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company: The scheme has an annual budget of some ESP 100 364 000 (EUR 603 199,79) to finance the different aid measures provided for in Decree 169/2001 of 6 November 2001. That instrument covers not only training aid but also other measures which are not exempted from notification to the European Commission, and so the aid scheme has been duly notified and registered as aid No 836/2000.

Maximum aid intensity:

Where the beneficiary is an association of cooperatives or worker-owned companies:

75 % of the cost of the operation, with a ceiling of 1 500 000 ESP.

Where the beneficiary is a cooperative or worker-owned company:

1. *Specific training*: 35 % in the case of large firms and 45 % in the case of small and medium-sized firms,
2. *General training*: 60 % in the case of large firms and 80 % in the case of small and medium-sized firms,

with a ceiling of ESP 1 000 000 in both cases.

Date of implementation: Aid may be granted in respect of operations carried out following the entry into force of the legal basis for the scheme, i.e. from 14 November 2001.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: The scheme is to expire on 31 December 2006.

Objective of aid:

1. Organisation by aid beneficiaries of conferences, seminars or presentations to be attended by members and employees of cooperatives, worker-owned companies or associations, provided that the topics covered by such events are relevant to the activities of the organisers and/or to the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector.
2. Attendance of members and employees of cooperatives, worker-owned companies or associations at conferences, seminars or presentations organised by public or private entities, provided that the topics covered by such events are relevant to the activities of the organisers and/or to the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector.

Economic sector(s) concerned: All economic sectors, provided that applicants possess the requisite legal status to qualify as beneficiaries.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Consejería de Trabajo de la Junta de Extremadura
Avenida de Extremadura, 43
E-06800 Mérida, Badajoz

Other information: As regards the documentation establishing that operations eligible for aid under this scheme are to be classed as general training, since grants are to be provided for both general and specific training (Article 6.1 of Decree 169/2001 of 6 November 2001) the circumstances prompting classification in one category or the other are to be assessed in each specific case in the light of the documents included in each application submitted. No applications have so far been processed.

Aid No: XT 10/02.

Member State: United Kingdom.

Region: Northern Ireland.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Training aid for business management in less-favoured areas.

Legal basis:

Agriculture Act 1949,

Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1970.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company:

2001/02: GBP 0,29 million,

2002/03: GBP 0,51 million,

2003/04: GBP 0,51 million,

2004/05: GBP 0,45 million,

total: GBP 1,8 million to cover 12 000 trainees.

No individual recipient will receive more than EUR 1 million.

The average aid per trainee amounts to GBP 150.

Maximum aid intensity: The actual aid intensity of the programme is 70 %. This is below the maximum allowable aid intensity of 80 %/90 %, based on:

- 70 % for general training for small and medium sized enterprises. All trainees come from SMEs as defined in Annex 1 of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001. The training is general as the qualification is transferable to other sectors and improves the employability of the individual. Eligibility of trainees will be monitored when they register for the course,
- 10 % regional aid. Northern Ireland qualifies for regional aid under Article 87(3)(a) of the Treaty,
- 10 % training aid support for 'disadvantaged workers'. Many of the trainees on this programme (> 70 %) will be over 45 years of age and will not have attained an upper secondary educational qualification or its equivalent. They could therefore qualify for an extra 10 % aid. However, this is not included because with the large number of trainees it is impossible to identify those who qualify for the aid.

Date of implementation: February 2002.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: February 2002 to March 2005.

Objective of aid:

- To provide 'general training' in business management to improve the competence of the trained individual and provide a stepping stone to higher qualifications.
- to provide business management training (NVQ 2/3) integrating use of a simplified business recording system.
- to encourage businesses to adopt basic business management practices such as financial management and record keeping.
- the programme will be targeted at farmers and members of the farming family in small and medium-sized enterprises within less-favoured areas and will provide the following number of training places:
 - 2001/02: 1 500,
 - 2002/03: 3 500,
 - 2003/04: 3 500,
 - 2004/05: 3 500.
- Total training places: 12 000.

Economic sector(s) concerned: Agriculture, including forestry and land-based businesses.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Mr Ian Duff, Head of Technical Support, Agri-Food Development Service, Education and Finance Division, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Room 544, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Rd, Belfast BT4 3SB, Northern Ireland.

Other information: The 'Training aid for business management in less-favoured areas' initiative will improve the business management and enterprise skills of farmers and members of the farming family. It will raise and broaden the skill levels of the workforce and hence improve the employability of the trainees. The aim of the programme will be to encourage businesses to adopt basic business management practices through integrating the use of a simplified business recording system.

Those who successfully complete the course will be awarded a certificate and will be offered the opportunity to undergo assessment and receive accreditation through the Northern Ireland Open College Network. On completion of this initial course participants will be able to progress on to an intermediate level programme within their local areas.

Participants applying for the programme provide farm registration details that enable us to verify that trainees are from small and medium-sized enterprises within the LFA and qualify for general training.

Throughout the training DARD staff will monitor the programme and ensure it is being delivered in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 and within the permissible aid intensities for general training in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Aid No: XT 11/02.

Member State: United Kingdom.

Region: Northern Ireland.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Training in environmental best practice in less-favoured areas.

Legal basis:

Agriculture Act 1949,

Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1970.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company:

2001/2002: GBP 0,29 million,

2002/2003: GBP 0,82 million,

2003/2004: GBP 0,74 million,

2004/2005: GBP 0,75 million,

Total: GBP 2,6 million to cover 12 000 trainees.

No individual recipient will receive more than EUR 1 million.

The average aid per trainee amounts to GBP 216.

Maximum aid intensity: The actual aid intensity of the programme is 79 %. This is below the maximum allowable aid intensity of 80 %/90 %, based on:

— 70 % for general training for small and medium-sized enterprises. All trainees come from SMEs as defined in Annex 1 of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001. The training is general as the qualification is transferable to other sectors and improves the employability of the individual. Eligibility of trainees will be monitored when they register for the course,

— 10 % Regional Aid. Northern Ireland qualifies for regional aid under Article 87(3)(a) of the Treaty,

— 10 % training aid support for 'disadvantaged workers'. Many of the trainees on this programme (> 70 %) will be over 45 years of age and will not have attained an upper secondary educational qualification or its equivalent. They could therefore qualify for an extra 10 % aid. However, this is not included because with the large number of trainees it is impossible to identify those who qualify for the aid.

Date of implementation: February 2002.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: February 2002 to March 2005.

Objective of aid:

— To provide 'general training' to increase environmental management competences and skills that potentially improve the employability of the trainees and provide a stepping stone to higher qualifications.

— to increase competences relating to environmental issues such as biodiversity, water quality (including eutrophication) and the protection of Northern Ireland's land-based heritage.

— to encourage and enable participants to take informed decisions about the future of their businesses based on objective information.

— the programme will be targeted at farmers, family members and farm employees from small and medium-sized enterprises within the LFA and will provide the following number of training places:

— 2001/2002: 1 500,

— 2002/2003: 3 500,

— 2003/2004: 3 500,

— 2004/2005: 3 500,

— Total training places: 12 000.

Economic sector(s) concerned: Agriculture, including forestry and land-based businesses.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Mr Ian Duff, Head of Technical Support, Agri-Food Development Service, Education and Finance Division, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Room 544, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Rd, Belfast BT4 3SB, Northern Ireland.

Other information: The 'Training in environmental best practice in less-favoured areas' programme aims to enhance competences in the application of management practices relating to environmental issues. This initially centres on environmental requirements such as biodiversity, water quality and the protection of land-based heritage. Central to the programme are the key skills of interpreting and applying concepts within existing environmental legislation, auditing, benchmarking and problem solving. While the training is demonstrated on farms, the environmental skills acquired by the trainees can be easily transferred to other sectors such as local councils, environmental organisations and private environmental companies.

Good environmental practice is an EU requirement for Member States, forming an integral part of the new LFA support and agri-environment schemes within the Northern Ireland Rural Development Regulation Plan.

Participants applying for the programme provide farm registration details that enable us to verify that trainees are from small and medium-sized enterprises within the LFA and qualify for general training. Those who successfully complete the course will be awarded a certificate and will be offered the opportunity to undergo assessment and receive accreditation through the Northern Ireland Open College Network.

Throughout the training DARD staff will monitor the programme and ensure it is being delivered in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 and within the permissible aid intensities for general training in small and medium-enterprises.

Aid No: XT 21/01.

Member State: Italy.

Region: Tuscany.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Aid for firms operating in Tuscany in sectors exposed to international competition in connection with initial training, retraining and refresher training for their employees.

Legal basis: Delibera della giunta regionale della Toscana n. 383 del 13 aprile 2001. Modificata con deliberazione della giunta regionale della Toscana n. 909 del 6 agosto 2001.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company: EUR 9 726 604,933 per year in the period 2001-06, amounting in total to EUR 58 359 629,597 in the form of reimbursements of eligible expenditure actually incurred in respect of training programmes and supported by documentary evidence.

Maximum aid intensity: In accordance with Article 4(2) to (6) of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001, the maximum admissible aid intensities (as %) are:

Large enterprises	Specific training	General training
Non-assisted areas	25	50
Assisted areas under Article 87(3)(c)	30	55

SMEs	Specific training	General training
Non-assisted areas	35	70
Assisted areas under Article 87(3)(c)	40	75

The above intensities are increased by 10 percentage points if the training is given to disadvantaged workers, as defined in Article 2(g) of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001.

Where the aid is granted in the maritime transport sector, it may reach an intensity of 100 %, regardless of whether the training project concerns specific or general training, provided that the following conditions are met:

- the trainee may not be an active member of the crew but must be supernumerary on board, and
- the training must be carried out on board ships on Community registers.

Date of implementation: 13 April 2001.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: Until December 2006.

Objective of aid: The aid scheme covers general and specific training.

General training within the meaning of Article 2(e) of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 involves training which is not applicable only or principally to the employee's present or future position in the assisted firm but which provides qualifications that are largely transferable to other firms or fields of work and thereby substantially improve the employability of the employee.

For the purposes of implementing this aid scheme, 'general' training means:

- inter-enterprise training, i.e. training organised jointly by different independent enterprises (under the Community rules defining SMEs) or in which employees of different enterprises may take part. Checks are made on supporting documents during the project selection procedure to ensure that these requirements are fulfilled (the training is inter-enterprise and the enterprises are independent);

— company training relating to job profiles included in the regional classification or training relating to profiles for which inclusion in the catalogue is requested. The relevant certificate is issued by the region or province concerned. The legal basis for the certification system is Regional Law No 70 of 31 August 1994 (new rules on vocational training), and more specifically Article 11 thereof, which provides for the issue of a vocational training or specialisation certificate for certain training activities following an aptitude test, and Article 18 thereof, which confers on the Regional Council the powers to determine the job profiles included in the regional classification and in respect of which the vocational training or specialisation certificate is issued.

Economic sector(s) concerned:

- Farming,
- fisheries and aquaculture,
- coalmining,
- steel,
- shipbuilding,
- synthetic fibres,
- motor vehicle industry,
- other manufacturing industries,
- all services.

Comments: The aid scheme applies to all sectors covered by Regulation (EC) No 68/2001. Secondly, it does not apply to aid for the training or retraining of workers of firms 'in difficulty' within the meaning of the Community guidelines on State aid for rescuing and restructuring firms in difficulty (OJ C 288, 9.10.1999), as part of rescuing and restructuring measures. Such aid will be assessed in the light of the above guidelines. Thirdly, the aid scheme does not apply if the amount of aid granted to one enterprise for a single training project exceeds EUR 1 million, in which case the individual aid grant must be notified to the Commission for its approval.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Regione Toscana
Dipartimento delle Politiche formative e dei beni culturali
Servizio FSE e sistema della formazione professionale
Piazza della Libertà 15
I-50129 Firenze.

Aid No: XT 32/02.

Member State: Italy.

Region: Autonomous Province of Trento.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Funding for company, sectoral and regional training schemes — 2002.

Legal basis: Deliberazione della Giunta provinciale n. 480 del 15 marzo 2002 avente ad oggetto «Procedure e criteri di attuazione, gestione e rendicontazione dei piani formativi aziendali, settoriali e territoriali riferibili alla gestione dei fondi di cui all'articolo 9, comma 3, della legge 19 luglio 1993, n. 236 — anno 2002.» (pubblicata sul BURATAA n. 14 del 2.4.2002), in attuazione decreto direttoriale n. 511/V/2001 «Interventi di promozione di piani formativi aziendali, settoriali, territoriali e sviluppo della prassi di formazione continua per l'esercizio finanziario 2001, di cui all'articolo 118 della legge n. 338 del 23 dicembre 2000» (GU 12 del 15.1.2002) che ripartisce tra le Regioni italiane le risorse derivanti dal contributo integrativo di cui all'articolo 25 della legge 21 dicembre 1978 n. 845.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company: EUR 1 394 433,63 for the Autonomous Province of Trento.

Maximum aid intensity:

- Specific training for large enterprises: Intensity not exceeding 25 %,
- Specific training for SMEs: Intensity not exceeding 35 %,
- General training for large enterprises: Intensity not exceeding 50 %,
- General training for SMEs: Intensity not exceeding 70 %.

The above intensities are increased by ten percentage points where the training is given to disadvantaged workers as defined in Article 2(g) of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 of 12 January 2001.

Date of implementation: 15 March 2002.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: 31 December 2002.

Objective of aid: The aid is intended for general and special training.

The definition of general training given in Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 has been adopted as it is considered sufficiently clear and exhaustive: "general training" shall mean training involving tuition which is not applicable only or principally to the employee's present or future position in the assisted firm, but which provides qualifications that are largely transferable to other firms or fields of work and thereby substantially improve the employability of the employee'.

Economic sector(s) concerned: All sectors.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Provincia Autonoma di Trento — Servizio Addestramento e Formazione professionale, via Gilli, 3 — I-38100 Trento.

Other information: Since this is an aid scheme, it is not possible to give a description of the content of each project in order to confirm that it corresponds to the definition of general training.

The prior verification procedure applied by the Province to ensure that the highest aid intensity is granted only to general training projects comprises the following steps:

- on submitting the project, the applicant declares whether it involves general or specific training;
- as provided for by point 5 of the operative part of Decision No 480 adopted by the Provincial Council on 15 March 2002, a committee makes a prior assessment of whether individual projects are to be classed as general or specific training; its findings are set out on an assessment grid signed by the experts and attached to the minutes of the committee meeting;
- on the basis of the above assessment, the Province determines the intensity of the funding to be granted to each individual project;
- the Province then adopts the project-funding decision, which also reproduces the committee's assessment of the nature of each project (general or specific training);
- the Province notifies the individual applicants of the outcome of the committee's assessment and, consequently, the intensity of the funding allocated to them.

The committee is composed of:

- three experts on training and the assessment of training activities from outside the Province (all highly qualified university lecturers),
- one official from the Province, appointed by the Provincial Council.

Aid No: XT 33/02.

Member State: United Kingdom.

Region: West Midlands.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Alstom Transport Limited 2002.

Legal basis: Employment Act 1973 Section 2(1) and 2(2), as substantiated by Section 25 of the Employment and Training Act 1998 and the Industrial Development 1982, Section 11.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company: Total public assistance will be GBP 70 000 under this scheme.

Maximum aid intensity: 25 %.

Date of implementation: April 2002.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: 11 months.

Objective of aid: The objective of the aid is to encourage the company to give individually targeted training to meet the needs of the individual employees of the company rather than general training plans. The company has 1 200 employees and undertakes regular training. However, the funds will provide individual skills diagnostics and individual training plans so that employees can choose which nationally agreed national vocational qualifications (NVQs) would be most beneficial to them. This service will also be provided to the employees of SMEs in the company's supply chain. The company will then support in the delivery of the NVQs, but will provide most of the cost of the training delivery themselves.

Economic sector(s) concerned: Transport services.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Birmingham and Solihull Learning Skills Council,
Chaplin Court,
80 Hurst Street,
Birmingham B5 4TG.

Other information:

Contact officer:

Paul Cornick.

Aid No: XT 38/01.

Member State: Spain.

Region: Basque Country.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Training aid scheme for undertakings in the Álava Province.

Legal basis: Decreto Foral nº 45/2001 del Consejo de Diputados de la Diputación Foral de Álava de 3 de abril, publicado en el *Boletín Oficial del Territorio Histórico de Álava* (BOTH) nº 41 de 9 de abril de 2001.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company: The expenditure scheduled for 2001 is EUR 601 012,1.

Maximum aid intensity: The aid provided for under the present scheme may be awarded up to the following limits:

Retraining courses:

- (a) for SMEs: up to a maximum of 75 % and 40 % of the approved expenditure on general training and specific training measures respectively.
- (b) for all other undertakings: up to a maximum of 55 % and 30 % of the approved expenditure on general training and specific training measures respectively.

The maximum total grant that may be awarded to any one applicant for the range of retraining courses offered is EUR 30 050,61.

Work-related training courses: up to a maximum of 85 % of approved expenditure, with a limit of EUR 30 050,61 per applicant and range of courses offered, although this figure may be exceeded for those projects judged to be of particular interest.

Exploratory studies: the aid granted may amount to 50 % of approved expenditure, with a limit of EUR 6 010,12 per

applicant for the study itself. This figure may be increased to EUR 18 030,36 in the case of a group of undertakings.

The percentages referred to may be increased by a further 10 % for courses involving certain disadvantaged groups or with particular difficulties entering the labour market, although the total amount granted in aid may not exceed 100 % of approved expenditure. The aid will be increased in proportion to the number of people from the disadvantaged groups on the courses.

Date of implementation: Aid was first granted under the present scheme on 14 September 2001.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: Aid may be granted under the present scheme until 31 December 2001.

Objective of aid: The scheme applies to both general and specific training.

As laid down in Commission Regulation (EC) No 68/2001, the training aid scheme for firms in the Álava Province 2001 has taken general training to cover training relating to quality control, management and administrative systems, IT, occupational safety and health, etc. This is because the training provided is relevant outside the undertaking in question, and can be applied throughout the sector concerned and even beyond.

By contrast, specific training has been deemed to cover courses on subjects that are highly particular to the recipient, such as internal training, i.e. training provided by in-house experts in areas directly related to the business.

Economic sector(s) concerned: All industrial sectors.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Diputación Foral de Álava
Dirección de Economía
Plaza de la Provincia, 4, 3ª planta
E-01001 Vitoria-Gasteiz, Álava.