

III

(Notices)

COMMISSION

CALL FOR PROPOSALS CONCERNING TRANSNATIONAL PROJECTS FOR INNOVATIVE
ACTIONS IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR FOR 2002

(2002/C 132/11)

Introduction

In addition to providing support for restructuring the sector, the Commission intends to reinforce mechanisms for dialogue and concertation between the different political, administrative, scientific and economic bodies in the sector, in order to improve relations between competing trades, communities and activities not only at local and regional level but also at national and Community level.

While it is not up to the Commission to act as a substitute for economic operators, it nonetheless has a role to play as a catalyst for change and a promoter of good business practice. To this end, it intends to encourage and provide support for the development of transnational projects in favour of the fisheries sector and areas dependent on fisheries as well as establish exchange networks between these areas.

FIFG

Article 22 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds provides that the Commission may finance innovative actions under the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG).

These include studies, pilot projects and exchanges of experience. Innovative actions contribute to the development of innovative methods and practices designed to improve the quality of assistance.

Those to which this call for proposals applies also have to comply with two essential criteria:

- they must be highly transnational in character or of interest to several Member States as it is this aspect which reflects the added value of and reason for Community financial assistance,
- their main goal must be the networking of those involved in fisheries and the regions dependent on fishing along with exchanges of experience, and the sharing of good practice and innovative practices.

Innovative actions, pilot projects and exchanges of experience

In order to identify relevant projects that come within the available funding, the Commission calls upon bodies interested in presenting proposals for projects, pilot actions and exchanges of experience on the following topics:

1. Socioeconomic diversification efforts in fisheries-dependent areas (for example, developing tourism activities associated with fishing, developing new services, using localities for other activities).
2. Enhancing the value of fisheries and aquaculture products, in particular by introducing traceability initiatives and alerting the industry and consumers to the need to combat illegal fishing.
3. Improving the image of the fisheries and aquaculture sector (e.g. linking up with actions to safeguard the heritage, the environment, the conservation and management of fish stocks, the territory, etc.).
4. Vocational and lifelong training in all skills in the sector, in particular as regards safety at sea.
5. Developing the role of women in the fishing industry and as partners in the areas dependent on fishing.

MethodsWorking methods

Projects have to be innovative and involve nationals in the fishing industry at the preparatory and/or implementation and/or monitoring stages of an activity. Projects may exploit the new media and information technology possibilities.

Partners concerned

Cooperation and networks will concern:

- professional organisations,
- training institutes,

- local and regional authorities,
- associations,
- one-man businesses.

Nature of projects

The projects must be operational, leading to concrete measures. The study phases (preliminary, feasibility, impact, etc.) must be limited to the necessary minimum and properly justified.

Selection criteria

Proposals will be selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- innovative interest of the project for improving the competitiveness of the fisheries sector and/or for the economic diversification of areas dependent on fisheries,
- transnational dimension (joint participation in the project of organisations from two or more countries),
- experience and capacity of potential tenderers to carry out the project,
- qualifications of the proposed experts.

Evaluation criteria

The Commission will decide to make a grant on the following bases:

- consistency with the priorities set out,
- the quality and consistency of the work plan for the projects,
- the consistency of the budget and the profitability of the proposed activities in the light of the expected results,
- other authorised efforts to part-finance the project.

Where applications are presented by organisations that have previously received a grant from the Commission under earlier EC Directorate-General for Fisheries programmes, the results of those projects will be taken into account. Candidates are reminded that the resources allocated to calls for projects are limited. For that reason applications will be assessed in comparison with other applications submitted. It may happen that good quality applications cannot be funded for lack of resources and the selection group will have to make a choice.

Selection procedure

The decision about the allocation of grants will be taken by a selection of panel made up of representatives of the European Commission. The selection meeting is chaired by a representative of unit C1 of Directorate-General for Fisheries.

Applicants will be informed of the decision of the Commission as soon as possible. The Commission's decision is final.

Financial contribution

Overall amount available: approximately EUR 1 million.

Community grants will be made in accordance with the principle of co-financing subject to an upper limit of EUR 150 000 per project.

The maximum rates of the Community contribution will be 50 % for pilot projects presented by industrial or commercial businesses, 75 % for projects for networking and exchanges of experience presented by public or not-for-profit bodies, and exceptionally over 75 % in duly substantiated cases.

The Commission reserves the right to make grants of an amount lower than requested by the applicant.

Grants higher than the amount requested will not be made. Charges against the budget referred to in the form for the submission of applications will include budget headings eligible for Community financing.

The budget must be balanced and sufficiently detailed to allow the proposed activities to be identified, monitored and verified. The following expenditure will not be eligible for Community funding:

- costs that do not give rise to real and effective expenditure,
- expenditure on luxury items or deemed to be excessive,
- expenditure for the acquisition of immovable capital items,
- contributions in kind,
- unforeseen costs.

The Vade-mecum on grant management setting out the general rules on grants made by the European Commission can be consulted at the following Internet address:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgc/info_subv/index_en.htm

Duration of project and admissible financing period

Owing to the nature of the call, the duration of projects must not exceed 18 months.

Preparation of contracts and payment of the grant

Where the Commission decides to make a grant, a standard contract duly signed by the legal representative of the beneficiary organisation and the representative of the European Commission and setting out the conditions and amount of the grant in euro will be sent to the beneficiary.

The payment procedure will be as follows:

1. For projects with a duration of more than one year: a first advance of 40 %, a second advance of 40 % upon receipt and acceptance of the interim report and payment of the remaining 20 % upon receipt and acceptance of the final report.
2. For projects with a duration of less than one year: a first advance of 60 % and payment of the remaining 40 % upon receipt and acceptance of the final report.

Reports

The beneficiary organisation will be required to present an interim report (for projects with a duration of more than one year) and a final report on the project on behalf of all the partner organisations.

Reports represent the main instrument for monitoring and evaluating the satisfactory implementation of projects and must therefore provide as complete an overview as possible of the project. They have to allow a qualitative and quantitative examination and evaluation:

- of the results obtained in comparison with the goals set (activities/impact/products, etc.),
- of the resources used to obtain those results, in the light of the budget authorised.

The Commission reserves the right to withdraw its support in full or in part if a project is not carried out in accordance with the description given in the application, or if changes are made without Commission authorisation, or if the reports state that the project is unsatisfactory.

The Commission has the right to utilise and diffuse the reports related to the actions financed.

General information

1. To be receivable, proposals must be:
 - submitted using the standard form which may be obtained from the European Commission by request to the following fax number: (32-2) 296 73 60;
 - submitted in triplicate,
 - received by the Commission not later than 5 p.m. (local Brussels time) on 13 September 2002 at the following address: European Commission, Directorate-General for Fisheries, J 99 2/11, B-1049 Brussels.
2. Further information is available on request at the above-mentioned address.