

Budget heading B2-1630 — Innovative measures under Article 6 of the European Social Fund Regulation

Call for applications No AC/2003/001, for inclusion on a list of experts to evaluate the proposals received pursuant to the call for proposals VP/2003/21 'Innovative approaches to the management of change'

(2003/C 242/09)

1. Purpose of the call for applications

Within the framework of the implementation of Article 6 of Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 1999 on the European Social Fund ⁽¹⁾, the Commission has scheduled for the second half of 2003 the publication of a call for proposals which will feature three rounds of applications, namely in 2004, 2005 and 2006. The overall theme will be 'Innovative approaches to the management of change'.

In this context, the Commission is inviting calls for applications for inclusion on a list of experts who may be called upon to evaluate the proposals received further to the abovementioned call for proposals.

The task of the experts will be to assist the Commission in evaluating the proposals, with reference to the objectives of the programme, the priorities and the criteria laid down in the call for proposals and in the Guide for Applicants.

NB: This call for applications is specific and separate from the call for expressions of interest AMI/INT/2003 published by DG Employment and Social Affairs in OJ 2003/S 132-02604 of 12.7.2003. Experts who are interested must respond ad hoc.

2. Objective of the call for proposals VP/2003/21

The general objective of Article 6 is to support innovative measures that seek to promote new approaches and identify examples of good practice which can subsequently improve the implementation of the operations supported by the ESF.

Specifically, Article 6 supports innovative measures to assist in the development of future policy and programmes by exploring new approaches to the content and/or organisation of employment, including vocational training and industrial

adaptation. The measures include pilot projects, studies, exchanges of experience and information activities.

Against this background, 'Innovative approaches to the management of change' was considered a timely and relevant theme for Article 6 during 2004-2006. Under this heading, Article 6 can contribute to support the development and testing of innovative measures to anticipate and manage change.

Under the over-arching theme of 'Innovative approaches to the management of change' innovative measures will focus on two more specific issues:

1. **management of demographic change**, with the aim of supporting innovative initiatives to promote active ageing and to raise the employment rate of older workers, and
2. **management of restructuring**, with the aim of supporting innovative solutions to restructuring by enhancing the capacity for adaptation and anticipation of workers, enterprises and public authorities.

Under the first strand of the call for proposals, priority will be given to concrete initiatives that address one or more of the following issues:

- Anticipation of ageing and employment trends in a specific context (e.g. sectoral or geographic/territorial) to identify time and scale of possible bottlenecks and to develop appropriate strategies for retention and/or re-integration of older workers.
- Development of strategies for age-management and investment in human resources to increase the adaptability and flexibility of older workers as well as the workplace.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 213 of 13.8.1999 and COM(2000) 894 of 12.1.2001.

- Development and piloting of alternative working arrangements at enterprise level to improve the quality of work for older workers and to make the best use of older workers' skills and experience.
- Development and testing of new ways of delivering training to older workers with the aim of maintaining and further enhancing their skills and qualifications in order to improve their employability.
- Raising the awareness of the potential of older workers and changing the attitudes and behaviour of both employers and older workers.
- Development of alternative strategies to change the practice of using early retirement schemes as a solution to corporate restructuring by breaking the age bias in adjustments to the size of the workforce.

Under the second strand of the call for proposals, priority will be given to concrete initiatives that address one or more of the following issues:

- Development of anticipation mechanisms and systems at territorial level that can support the management of crises and restructuring processes by regional and local authorities.
- Development of anticipation mechanisms and systems to better manage restructuring in a specific context (e.g. at enterprise or sectoral level), including forecasting methods & systems, benchmarking & indicators, stakeholder consultation mechanisms, etc.
- Development of integrated approaches to confronting the implications of restructuring processes that can generate specific results in terms of reducing or alleviating the negative effects such as the provision of (re-)training and skills updating, guidance and outplacement services, business support and regeneration actions, etc.
- Development and piloting of specific systems and tools for supporting restructuring processes in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- Capacity building for the stakeholders concerned — company management, workers, worker representatives, the social partners, territorial authorities, and other relevant actors — in order to strengthen their ability and readiness to constructively intervene in restructuring processes.

The text of the call for proposals, the Guide for Applicants and all relevant supplementary information will be available on the following websites from the end of October 2003:

- Site Article 6 ESF:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/esf2000/article_6-en.htm

- Site for the call for proposals:

http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/empl/vp_2003_021/library

3. Eligibility criteria

Subject to compliance with the conditions laid down in Articles 93 and 94 of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities ⁽¹⁾, any natural or legal person with the nationality of one of the Member States of the European Union may apply to be considered as a potential independent expert.

The following applicants will be excluded:

- those who are bankrupt or being wound up, have ceased or suspended activity, have their affairs administered by the court, have entered into an arrangement with creditors or similar measure or have been the subject of such proceedings;
- those who have been found guilty, with no further right of appeal, of professional misconduct;
- those in an irregular tax or para-fiscal situation;
- those providing incomplete or erroneous information.

4. Selection criteria

- (a) Applicants must provide evidence, via the application form and their Curriculum Vitae, of the following:
- a detailed knowledge of the general objectives and operational content of the European Social Fund and the European Employment Strategy,
 - a sound knowledge of European policy and legislation in the field of social dialogue,
 - a direct, in-depth knowledge of the national situations of the countries in which the projects selected will be implemented, as regards the themes covered by the call for proposals 'Innovative approaches to the management of change'.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 248 of 16.9.2002.

(b) Applicants must additionally have:

- practical experience in the analysis, pre-selection and evaluation of projects, in particular transnational cooperation projects designed to facilitate exchanges of experience and good practice and the development of innovation,
- the skills required to undertake financial and budgetary analysis of proposals,
- experience of working in a European context,
- a very good knowledge of at least two official EU languages (at least one of which must be English or French),
- sufficient experience in using PCs to be able to evaluate proposals on-line, if requested.

Applicants must clearly indicate the precise fields of their expertise on the application form. They must state which languages they can read and write. The experts selected will be required to draft part of their evaluations in English or French.

5. Application procedure

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the rules set out below, using the application form available on the following Internet site:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/calls/2003/ac_2003_001/manex_en.htm

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/calls/2003/ac_2003_001/manex_de.htm

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/calls/2003/ac_2003_001/manex_fr.htm

To respond to this call for applications applicants must, after having completed each successive page of the form and submitted it electronically, also send a dossier containing the following documentation on paper:

- a printout of the electronic application;
- a Curriculum Vitae;
- an original or certified photocopy confirming the legal existence of the applicant (articles of association);
- a document listing the names and titles of persons comprising the executive bodies if the applicant is a legal person;

- proof of entry in a professional register under the conditions laid down by the legislation of the Member State in which he is established;
- documentary proof (annual balance sheet and profit and loss account for the last two financial years) of the applicant's financial viability;
- references relating to work previously carried out in each declared area of competence;
- specifications of studies, service contracts, consultations and other work previously carried out;
- a signed declaration that the applicant is not in one of the situations described in point 3., also certifying that all attached documents are true and accurate, and undertaking to keep the Commission informed of any change in the applicant's situation, so that the application dossier can be kept perfectly up-to-date.

This duly completed dossier must be sent by private courier service or delivered by hand, in return for an acknowledgement of receipt, to the following address:

European Commission
 DG Employment & Social Affairs
 Unit C/4
 J 27 00/115 (Rue Joseph II/Jozef II-straat 27)
 B-1049 Brussels.

Envelopes must be marked 'Call for applications for expert evaluators N° AC/2003/001'.

As the final evaluation exercise within the framework of the call for proposals 'Innovative approaches to the management of change' will take place at the start of 2006, the final deadline for submitting an application pursuant to this call for applications will be October 2005.

The Commission wishes to be in contact before the end of 2003 with the experts who will be responsible for the evaluation of the proposals received under the call VP/2003/021. It is therefore strongly recommended that applications are submitted immediately.

6. Selection procedure

Each application will be examined on the basis of the criteria set out in section 4 of this call for applications. The Commission will inform applicants as to whether or not they are being included in the list of potential experts. This list can be used for the three evaluation exercises associated with the call for proposals 'Innovative approaches to the management of change', i.e. in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

7. Organisation of the evaluation exercises

For each evaluation exercise the Commission will invite bids from a number of experts chosen from the list drawn up following this call for applications (the number invited to bid will be greater than the number of evaluators who will actually be required), taking into account the number and geographical distribution of the proposals to be evaluated. The final selection will be made on the basis of bidders' specific expertise in the subjects indicated as 'priority issues' at point 2, and on price and availability during the period required.

The proposals will normally be evaluated in the period April-June, and evaluators will be required to attend at least two coordination meetings in Brussels.

Experts invited to participate in an evaluation exercise will sign individual contracts with the Commission.

8. Conflict of interest and confidentiality

To ensure the independence of proposal evaluations, the experts selected will be required to sign a declaration certifying that there is no conflict of interest between the proposals they will evaluate and the posts they occupy, and that they have no personal involvement in the projects to which the proposals refer. Throughout the evaluation process they must also apply the highest standards of professionalism and observe the confidentiality of the information and documents which come to their attention during the process.
