



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

Social protection and social integration

Free movement of workers and co-ordination of social security schemes

BUDGET HEADING 04.03.0500

**MODERNISED COORDINATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES :
TRANSNATIONAL ACTIONS FOR COOPERATION AND INFORMATION**

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

VP/2010/004

In view of the large number of enquiries, please do not telephone. Questions should be sent by email only to: EMPL-E3-CALLS-PROPOSALS@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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1. GENERAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Ensuring that people have access to social security protection when they travel or work abroad is an important factor in promoting free cross-border movement of persons. The EU approach involves the coordination of Member States' social security schemes as a key to encouraging free movement of workers.

The Treaty basis for the coordination of social security schemes is Article 48 TFEU (governing social security matters). Community coordination was originally established by a 1959 Regulation which introduced the principle of international social security coordination in Community law. This was replaced by Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 and implementing Regulation (EEC) No 574/72. They have been further developed by the case-law of the European Court of Justice.

A modernised coordination system will start applying in May 2010 under Regulation (EC) No 883/04 and its implementing Regulation¹. It will apply to all EU citizens who are insured under national law, whether they work or not. It will enhance cooperation between social security institutions, enabling speeding up the provision of benefits to citizens. There is provision for transitional periods for the introduction of the system for electronic data exchange (EESSI²). The shift from paper to electronic data exchange calls for enormous preparation in the Member States, which will have to familiarise their institutions with the new rule and provide proper information and active assistance to the public.

The European Report 2009 produced by the network of national experts "Training and reporting on European Social Security" (trESS) confirmed that the dissemination of information is considered as one of the most important challenges. The wider public, but also the administrations dealing with the implementation of the Regulation have to receive the necessary information on the novelties and instruction for the national implementation of these texts. This is indeed a shared task where the social security institutions, the member states administrations and the social partners can play an important role in improving citizens' knowledge of their rights.

Article 79 of Regulation 883/2004 provides that "In connection with this Regulation and the Implementing Regulation, the Commission of the European Communities may fund in full or in part: (a) activities aimed at improving exchanges of information between the social security authorities and institutions of the Member States, particularly the electronic exchange of data; (b) any other activity aimed at providing information to the persons covered by this Regulation and their representatives about the rights and obligations deriving from this Regulation, using the most appropriate means".

¹ Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems (OJ L 166, 30.4.2004, p. 1) and Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems (OJ L 284, 30.10.2009, p. 1).

² Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (see Article 4(2) of Regulation (EC) No 987/2009).

The call for proposals will be funded by Article 04.03.05.00 of the EU Budget - Free movement of workers and co-ordination of social security schemes.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

This objectives of this call is to support transnational actions:

- promoting the administrative exchange of social security information among Member States, with a view to assisting them in their implementation of Regulations (EC) No 883/2004 and 987/2009;
- promoting transnational cooperation between institutions dealing with social security, transnational exchanges of experience, dissemination of best practice and training initiatives developed at national level;
- aimed at providing a better service and raising awareness to the public, including measures aimed at identifying migrants' social security problems and measures speeding up and simplifying administrative procedures, analysis of the barriers to free movement and lack of coordination of social security systems, including adaptation of administrative procedures to new information processing techniques following the introduction of the system for electronic data exchange (EESSI);
- improving knowledge of public about their rights on free movement and coordination of social security schemes.

2.1 Eligible types of actions and initiatives

On the basis of the objectives as described above, two sub-programs have been defined:

I	Support for development of transnational cooperation between Institutions
II	Information to the public about the access to social security protection when exercising the right of free movement

I. Support for development of transnational cooperation between Institutions

The following actions may be co-financed:

- strengthening and improving the administrative operation of the Regulations (at national and institutional level) by means of exchanges of experience on training, exchanges of public servants between Institutions, exchanges of best practices and experiences on the coordination, and any other action that will develop transnational cooperation;
- publications, conferences, studies.

II Information to the public about the access to social security protection when exercising the right of free movement

The following actions may be co-financed:

- initiatives to further the collection, use and dissemination of information on the citizen's rights concerning free movement and the new Regulations, such as websites, publications, newsletters and others means for the dissemination of information,
- seminars or other tools of information on rights,
- publications, studies.

2.2 Indicative amount and maximum possible rate of co-financing

The budget earmarked for the co-financing of the projects selected under this call for proposals is one million Euros (€1,000,000) with a maximum amount of €400,000 for an individual project.

The European Community co-financing percentage will be limited to a maximum of 80% of the total eligible costs of the action.

The applicant has to guarantee the co-financing in cash of the remaining 20%. Contributions in kind will not be taken into account.

Applications which request a grant of more than 80 % will be excluded automatically from the selection.

3. SUBMISSION AND EXAMINATION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

3.1. Submission and implementation dates

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

17/05/2010

for actions **commencing** no earlier than **17/07/2010** and no later than **20/12/2010**.

The maximum project duration is 24 months. Applications for projects with duration in excess of 24 months will not be considered. Extensions after the maximum duration will *not* be granted, except in very exceptional circumstances.

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 approved, 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.

3.2 Eligibility criteria

The budget heading is intended to finance specific transnational actions, projects or initiatives. Therefore grants are not intended to finance the normal operations of the bodies presenting applications; they are intended only to cover additional expenditure linked directly to projects.

Eligible applicants

- i. Applicants must not be in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93(1), 94 and 96(2)(a) of the Financial Regulation³
- ii. The applicant must be a properly constituted and registered legal entity, having their registered office based in one of the Member States of the European Union. In derogation from this requirement and pursuant to Article 114 of the Financial Regulation, the organisations of social partners without legal personality under the applicable national law are also eligible provided that their legal representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf and assume financial liability.⁴
- iii. Applicants must fall within one of the following categories: national social security institutions, social partners organisations, non-governmental organizations in the field of free movement.
- iv. Applicants must have active partners from two or more Member States.

A project applicant cannot be an individual.

Eligible actions

To be eligible, actions must:

- i. be linked to at least one objective of the call for proposals;
- ii. be carried out in cooperation between partners from at least two different Member States. This must be demonstrated in the application by signed letters indicating the active involvement;

³ 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 EU budget; subject to conflict of interest; guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the required information.

⁴ See Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities as amended by Council Regulation No 1995/2006 of 13 December 2006 amending Regulation: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/consleg/2002/R/02002R1605-20070101-en.pdf>

iii. be fully carried out in the Member States of the European Union.

Eligible applications

To be eligible, applications must:

- i. be sent by the submission deadline;
- ii. be submitted according to the set requirements. Application forms must be compulsorily submitted on-line as set below and their respective detailed and signed print-outs must be submitted as set at point 4.2 hereinafter;
- iii. be complete, detailed and include all the documents indicated in the checklist below;
- iv. comply with the European Community co-financing percentage of maximum 80 %.

Checklist

The Evaluation Committee will not examine applications lacking one or more of these documents :

1	Official covering letter of application quoting the reference number of the call for proposals (VP/2010/004), with the original signature of the legal representative of the applicant organization.
2	Print-out of the duly completed and submitted on-line application form including estimated budget (see point 4.1), dated and with the original signature of the legal representative. NOTE: The on-line form must first be electronically submitted before printing. After the electronic submission no further changes to the application are possible. The detailed and signed print-out must be submitted as set at point 4.2.
3	A signed declaration of honour (to be found on-line as annex E1 to the application form), certifying that the applicant is not in one of the situations listed in Article 93 §1, 94 and 96 §2 point a) of the Financial Regulation and his financial and operational capacity. This must have the original signature of the legal representative of the applicant organization.
4	"Financial identification" form duly completed with the original signature of the account holder and the original signature and stamp of the bank. The financial identification form can be found annexed to the on-line application form. NOTE: 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.
5	"Legal entities" form duly completed with the original signature of the legal representative. The legal entities form can be found annexed to the on-line application form. Applicants must also provide:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a copy of the certificate of official registration or other official document attesting to the establishment of the entity (where this exists) – not necessary for public bodies and international organizations; ▪ a copy of the articles of association/statutes or equivalent, proving the eligibility of the organization; ▪ a copy of a document confirming the applicant's tax or VAT number, if available; ▪ in the case of social partner organizations without legal personality, a letter of the representative with the capacity to undertake legal obligations.
6	<p>Detailed description of the action and work programme for the project signed by the legal representative.</p> <p>a) The full description of the action and the main objectives must be provided in Annex E5 of the on-line application form</p> <p>b) The detailed work programme must provide a detailed description of the implementation of the action (methodology, approach, use of external expertise) and of the workplan (a timetable for the activities, the names of all members of staff involved in the project, their positions and employment status). It should be included in Annex E6 of the on-line application form.</p> <p>The detailed description of the action and work programme should be submitted in English, French or German.</p>
7	<p>Each active partner involved in project management, for example providing technical support and/or financing, should provide an official version of the letter of commitment/partnership (see Annex E2 of the online application form) 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 provided.</p> <p>Work and tasks carried out by the project partners (as described in the letters of commitment/partnership) are not subject to the rules on subcontracting listed in Financial Guidelines for applicants. However, it is not permissible to include normal commercial suppliers of goods and services as project partners in order to avoid these rules. By way of example, and without limiting the exclusions to the examples listed, the Commission does not find it appropriate to include as project partners independent consultants, conference organisers, etc.</p>
8	<p>A written declaration signed by the project manager certifying the professional competence of the team performing the tasks associated with the action for which funding is requested.</p> <p>This declaration shall be accompanied by the Curriculum vitae of the project manager indicating clearly the current employer with whom there exists either a permanent or temporary contract of employment. Where applicable, the declaration will include also the curriculum vitae of the persons who will perform the tasks associated with the action for which funding requested.</p>
9	<p>Information on subcontracting for external expertise: The nature and value of all activities to be subcontracted must be compulsorily described with an explanation of</p>

	<p>why subcontracting is necessary. The planned selection and award criteria must be compulsorily explained in Annex E7 of the on-line application form.</p> <p>Applicants wishing to recruit the services of external experts for an amount above 60.000 Euros must provide a copy of the draft tender specifications. To assist applicants a model for tender specifications is included as Annex E8 of the online application form. This requirement does not apply to public authorities which are already governed by a system of public procurement rules.</p> <p>Additional information about subcontracting can be found in the Financial Guidelines for Applicants.</p>
10	<p>The balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed, demonstrating the financial capacity of the applicant. The applicant should specify which currency is being used in the balance sheet. The Commission reserves the right to request balance sheets from previous years, if necessary.</p> <p>Not necessary for public bodies and international organisations.</p>
11	The most recent activity report of the applicant's organisation (if available);
12	A list of the main projects carried out in the last three years relating to the objective of the call. In the case of work done for the Commission, the applicants must also indicate the reference number of the contract and the department for which the contract was performed.

If an Applicant submits more than one proposal, each application must be submitted separately.

3.3 Selection criteria

Only organizations with the necessary financial and operational capacity may be awarded a grant.

Financial capacity

The applicant must have access to solid and adequate funding to maintain its activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary.

The financial capacity shall be proven, inter alia, by the annual balance sheet and declaration of honour mentioned above.⁵

The verification of financial capacity will not apply to public bodies.

⁵ To give 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 total project budget should be higher than 0.70).

Operational capacity

The applicant must 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.

In order to demonstrate his operational capacity the applicant shall provide, inter alia:

- the most recent activity report of the applicant's organisation;
- a written declaration signed by the project manager certifying the professional competence of the team performing the tasks associated with the action for which funding is requested. This declaration shall be accompanied by their curriculum vitae (educational and professional qualifications) and job specifications;

3.4 Award criteria

Proposals which fulfill the eligibility and selection criteria indicated above will be assessed according to the following award criteria (*in parentheses weight of each criterion is indicated*):

Policy Criteria

- i. the extend to which the action meets the objectives and priorities of the budget heading (15 %);
- ii. the extend to which there is a clear and well-supported diagnosis of the issues addressed in the proposal, the methods used for addressing these issues and a clear indication of the proposal's contribution to the objectives of the call (15 %).

Organisational Criteria

- iii. the clarity and feasibility of the proposed work plan, including timetable and methodology, and in particular its capacity to achieve the planned objectives through well-identified and well-planned activities with clear and attainable timelines (25 %);
- iv. the quality of partnerships, the extent to which the project, action or initiative has a genuine transnational dimension and/or requires joint participation of different stakeholders and multiplier effect of the action (25 %).

Financial Criteria

- v. the financial quality of the proposal including a reasonable and realistic budget, its likely value for money and a sound cost-efficiency ratio (10 %);
- vi. the quality, clarity and detail of budgetary presentation (10 %).

4. PRACTICAL PROCEDURES

4.1. Where can the application form be found?

The compulsory on-line grant application form is an electronic form which must be filled by using the Internet Web system "SWIM" at the following internet address: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim/external/displayWelcome.do>

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 4.2. After submission of the application electronically no changes are possible.

At the above quoted web site other requested forms and other useful documents can be found.

4.2. Where does the application need to be sent?

Please send your covering letter of application, together with all the documents listed in the checklist, as signed **originals** as well as **one copy of all these documents (in total: 2 sets of documents)** by the deadline, to the following address:

*Call for proposals VP/2010/004
European Commission – DG EMPL/E.3
J27 02/241
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium*

Please send your application by registered mail or express courier service only and keep proof of the date of sending. The date of post office stamp or express courier receipt will be considered as proof of the date of sending.

Hand-delivered applications must be received by the European Commission on the last day for submission. The address for hand deliveries of documents for the European Commission is: Avenue du Bourget n° 1, B-1140 Evere, Belgium. Proof of delivery is a signed receipt from the Commission's Archives Service stamped with the date of the last day for submission or earlier.

Regarding the presentation of the application file, it is recommended to:

- Follow the order of documents as listed in the checklist
- Print the documents double-sided, where possible
- Use only 2-hole folders (please do not bind or glue)

If an applicant submits more than one proposal, each one must be submitted separately.

ALL ENQUIRIES MUST BE MADE BY E-MAIL ONLY AT:

EMPL-E3-CALLS-PROPOSALS@ec.europa.eu

- PLEASE DO NOT TELEPHONE -

4.3. Accepted and rejected applications

Applications will be examined by an Evaluation Committee, which will meet, in principle, within 40 working days following the deadline for submission indicated at point 3.1.

Only proposals which will satisfy the eligibility and selection criteria will be assessed against the award criteria.

The Evaluation Committee will draw up a list of proposals recommended for funding.

Rejected applications

The European Commission will notify unsuccessful applicants in writing no later than one month after the meeting of the Evaluation Committee at which the application was examined. Requests concerning the progress of dossiers sent prior to the elapse of this time periods will not be answered.

Selected applications

Successful applicants 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.

