

Newspaper ad 19th May 2010

Open call for tenders in Priority 4 of the Finnish ESF Programme

Transnational and Inter-regional co-operation in ESF activities in seeking and disseminating best practices

May 19th - July 1st 2010

The objective of ESF Priority 4 during the programming period 2007-2013 is to create added value into Finnish employment, economic and educational policies through transnational cooperation. Ministry of Employment and the Economy (TEM) opens a call for tenders in Priority 4 within the Finnish national ESF Programme. The call is open for transnational partnership projects related to finding and disseminating best practices in following themes:

1. Abrupt structural change
2. Demographic changes

The projects are expected to have at least one partner from another EU country.

Projects may not last more than three years.

Tenders must be submitted electronically to EURA2007-system (www.eura2007.fi) and printed and officially signed to the address TEM, Kirjaamo, 00023 Valtioneuvosto until July 1st 2010 at 4:15 PM. Marking "ESR kv-haku / Varpu Taarna" on the envelope is required.

Additional information of themes mentioned above and issues related to this open call is available through the website www.rakennerahastot.fi

You may also contact the following officers at TEM (Ministry of Employment and the Economy):

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Instructions for applicants at the website

Open call in Finnish National ESF Programme, Priority 4

Transnational and Inter-regional co-operation in ESF activities in seeking and disseminating best practices

Open call for tenders from May 19th to July 1st 2010

Priority 4 of the ESF Programme in Finland enhances transnational cooperation between regional and national authorities as well as transnational cooperation within regional, thematic and national networks of expertise. The main objective of Priority 4 is to increase European level cooperation in fields of employment, educational policy and economic policy. Priority 4 has two main lines of activities: improving conditions for job based immigration and finding and distributing best practices in the policies mentioned above.

Transnational cooperation within finding and distributing best practices may continue e.g. work made within the EQUAL Programme of the previous programming period. The objective is to find new approaches and solutions to common challenges met in the member states. Also creation of official and unofficial networks as well as development of working skills and capabilities of experts may be seen as a target for cooperation project. All objectives are in line with the targets of the Lisbon Strategy.

Total funding for the cooperation projects is 3.5 Meuro. The projects may last at the most 3 years.

Finding and distributing best practices must be linked to national ESF work. Best practice means a new type of action which is expected to be more efficient than the previously used ones. Best practices may be searched from a Finnish point of view but the objective may also include delivering Finnish practices to other EU countries.

The target groups are networks and partnerships on central and regional levels of administration as well as regional, thematic and national networks. The activities should not be targeted directly to individuals – but rather to networks and administrative organizations. The projects may include both regional and thematic networks. Each project must have at least one partner from another EU country. The benefits of transnational cooperation as well as finding and distributing best practices must be emphasized in the projects.

At the application phase the projects are not expected to have partnership agreements. However, it is highly recommendable to present a Letter of Intent (or equivalent) signed by the international partners to prove the existence of a transnational cooperation network. The tender is expected to include a description of the international partners, their role in the project and the added value of the transnational cooperation.

Themes

All projects must be based on solving the problems related to at least one of these themes:

1. Abrupt Structural Change and/or
2. Demographic Change

1. Abrupt Structural Change

A region struck by rapid structural change means here a region or sub-region where the traditional economic activity has decreased rapidly. Structural change may also include sector or cluster based transformations of economic activity. This means e.g. declines in certain lines of business.

In addition to traditional livelihoods like agriculture the structural change has recently affected knowledge based companies and regions which have been important to competitiveness of the Finnish economy. In order to react to this change we need to take actions quickly and efficiently.

Possible actions might be

- improving anticipation systems for regional or cluster-based analyses
- improving models for educational and service systems related to challenges of structural change
- development and evaluation of actions taken to cope with the problems mentioned above.

2. Demographic Change

The age structure of population in Finland is changing rapidly. This will affect the availability of labour force in many regions. Immigration, internal migration and increasing retirement from working life do not affect the regions in the same way. As some areas suffer from unemployment, some other areas have shortage of labour force. In some regions both these problems may occur at the same time.

In order to solve these problems the working careers should be lengthened and young adults should be brought to labour market as soon as possible. It would also be important to activate the existing labour reserves like unemployed people with foreign background. Finland should also learn from countries that might have experience of similar kinds of problems and finding solutions to them.

Possible actions might be

- mapping possible actions to age management, flexible working organization, longer careers etc.
- mapping and development of actions taken to improve employability of e.g. disabled and immigrants
- development of actions taken in preventing youth unemployment
- improving anticipation systems in order to foresee the outcomes of demographic change.

Attention

- Main issue is finding and delivering best practices
- A wider perspective is required: cooperation between wider networks is recommendable
- Cooperation may be either regional or based on sectors of the economy
- Partners from other countries must cover their own expenses (not necessarily ESF)
- Letter of Intent or equivalent is required from each partner
- Total funding 3,5 Meuro
- Project funding may not last more than 3 years

Evaluation of project plans

Project plans will be evaluated based on general requirements and specific requirements.

The general ESF requirements include issues like need for planned action, general possibilities to implement the project, economic and professional resources of the applicant, networks and connections to interest groups and expected outcome of the project and its impact on labour market.

The specific requirements in this open call are quality of the partnerships, created added value of the transnational cooperation and projects efficiency in delivering best practices.

Search for transnational partnerships

The website www.rakennerahastot.fi includes some information about other member states and open ESF calls in and partner search possibilities in each country. Also the Transnationality Network website www.transnationality.eu includes additional information of transnational cooperation. It also offers a list of national contact points. Also some data bases like www.transnational-toolkit.eu might be useful in partner search.

Additional information

Additional information is available at the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Please contact either Ms. Varpu Taarna, phone +358-50-3960082, e-mail varpu.taarna@tem.fi or Ms. Ritva Hakkarainen, phone +358-50-3960080, e-mail ritva.hakkarainen@tem.fi.