



Learning networks

Summary information on latest developments and upcoming activities

The aim of this document is to inform about important developments in each of the Learning Networks¹ as of 15 February 2012 and also about upcoming activities. More information about each Learning Network can be found on their websites, at www.transnationality.eu or on the [DG EMPL website](#).

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¹ In the context of the Commission's Action Plan to support Transnational Cooperation at EU level, calls for proposals were launched in 2008 and 2009 to fund networking and learning projects that would facilitate and strengthen transnational exchange and cooperation between ESF managing and implementing bodies and strategic stakeholders. Thirteen Learning Networks were selected within these calls. There are an additional 3 Learning Networks which are financed solely by their members - Net@work, EURoma and Inclusive Europe.





Learning Network on Transnational Cooperation in ESF

Start date: 1 December 2009

End date: 30 November 2012

Objectives:

The overall aim is to stimulate learning and build capacity among ESF programme managers responsible for transnational cooperation. We develop a series of tools and organize face-to-face and online learning opportunities to ensure the successful implementation and promotion of transnational actions under ESF.

Participating countries:

Czech Republic, England & Gibraltar, France, Germany, Greece, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden

Main results achieved by 2011:

- Launch of the 'renewed' website www.transnationality.eu in July 2010
- Handbook for Transnational Cooperation project promoters prepared by Poland and published on-line
- Flashnews and Newsletter on transnationality in the EU circulated from July 2010
- Results of the Baseline Study on transnational cooperation in the EU are available at www.transnationality.eu
- Two Peer Learning Seminars were organized in Prague in 2010 and Berlin in 2011
- Two meetings of the Working Group on TNC post 2013 were held and various documents concerning proposals for implementing TNC post 2013 were prepared
- The following Working Papers were drafted and made available on-line for discussion among ESF programme managers:
 - TNC promotion
 - Identifying and building TNC partnerships
 - Evaluation and added value of TNC projects

All information is available at www.transnationality.eu

Planned activities for 2012:

- The third Peer Learning Seminar will be held in England in September 2012
- The remaining Working Papers will be completed on the following subjects:
 - Project selection
 - Designing, implementing and coordinating calls for proposals
 - Eligibility
 - Support to beneficiaries and monitoring of transnational projects
 - Selection of themes and actions for TNC
 - How TNC can support the social innovation/EU 2020
- Proposals for TNC implementation post 2013 will be finalised
- All 4 modules of the Training Tools on managing transnational cooperation will be completed





- Regular Flashnews and Newsletters on transnationality in the EU will be circulated

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ESF-Age Network

Start date: 1 February 2010

End date: 31 January 2013

Objectives:

The aim of the Network is to make more effective use of ESF opportunities for Age Management programmes and projects through networking and mutual learning. We want to link the world of ESF funding in member states and regions with the state of the art, but scattered knowledge on effective age management strategies. The network will deliver its key messages to the Commission and other stakeholders at European level, in their formulation of a new ESF programme, as well as more widely feeding into the EU 2020 vision. Results will also feed into the production of dissemination tools, including a learning curriculum, an e-learning tool and a 'travel guide' for good practice. These will be made available to the stakeholders in the member states and regions during the European Year 2012 of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

Participating countries, regions and other partners:

Core partners: Ministries and ESF Managing Authorities in 9 member states (Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland and Spain) and 6 regions (Andalusia, England, Flanders, Thuringia, Trento and Wallonia).

Strategic partners: ILC Netherlands, EIPA, ISFOL

Main results achieved by 2011:

- In 2010 the European Institute for Public Administration (EIPA) wrote a Baseline Study for the network comprising a description of demographic trends for labour markets in EU member states; concepts of age management; state of the art recommendations and areas for intervention and an inventory of interesting practice programmes and projects in EU member states and regions.
- In 2011, two working groups from the ESF Age network reviewed a number of good practice examples. Working Group I focused on 'employability and workability' while Working Group II addressed 'transitions from (un)employment to work'. Both shortlisted programmes and projects for review and five peer review meetings, involving the promoters, key stakeholders and European experts, were held.

Planned activities for 2012 – European Year of Active Ageing:

In 2012 the ESF Age Network will make available recommendations, guidelines and other tools. These are intended to support policy makers at ministries, ESF Managing Authorities and other stakeholders in the preparation, development and implementation of age management programmes in the new ESF programming period 2014-2020:

- Guidelines on the role which ESF funding can play in the promotion of longer, healthy and productive working lives
- Two reports on the programmes, reviewed in 2011
- Good practice guide based on reviewed programmes
- Tool box based on an international inventory of films, campaigns and tools
- A tested training curriculum





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SaviAV – a Social inclusion and vocational integration of Asylum seekers and Victims of human trafficking

Start date: 1 February 2010

End date: 31 January 2013

Objectives:

The aim of the Network is to enforce the human rights of trafficked people and contribute to a dignified standard of living for asylum seekers by identifying emerging issues and policy gaps and influencing policy take-up and structures in this field. The platform has two separate strands for asylum seekers and victims of human trafficking, as well as one common strand. This allows for exploring the specifics of each of the target groups, while at the same time highlighting synergies and commonalities. Advice, education and vocational training are themes under the asylum seeker strand. The Network intends to map studies on forced labour in relation to human trafficking and research the demand for cheap labour. Prevention and integration support structures are further themes. Across both strands is the need to collect information to 'make the case' and raise awareness and understanding.

Participating countries and regions:

ESF-partners: Germany (federal level), Belgium (region Flanders), Greece, Italy (regions – Calabria, Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Lombardy, Piedmont, Sicily), Spain, Sweden

Non-ESF Partners: Oravais Flyktingförläggning Finland (Oravais Reception Center for Refugees), Germany (regions Hamburg and Berlin), Tecnostruttura Italy, MTÜ Eesti Pagulasabi Estonia (Estonian Refugee Council)

Latest news:

- The first SaviAV learning seminar focused on the transfer of ideas between institutions, regions and Member States, and was held on 13 - 14 December 2011, attended by 90 participants. The themes of the four workshops were selected according to the Network's main objectives, and focused on "Labour market integration for asylum seekers", "Integration for victims of human trafficking", "Unaccompanied minors" and the "Win-win situation for both the host society and asylum seekers". The participants were involved in discussion groups and formulated recommendations, drawing from the information and/or evidence gathered during the Study Visits. The seminar presented an opportunity to take stock of the knowledge generated through the Study Visits organised during 2011 by the Network, and to identify the specific good practices which have the potential to be transferable to other contexts, and which could be mainstreamed. The recommendations of the participants will be disseminated to a wider audience of policy makers and practitioners in order to inform them about the work carried out by the SaviAV Network, and to raise awareness of the added value and benefits of including asylum-seekers and victims of human trafficking as specific target groups in ESF Operational Programmes.
- 45 Participants (partners and stakeholders) from the partner regions visited the ARIADNA network in Spain on 28-29 February 2012. The ESF-funded network showed its promising practices in terms of integration measures for asylum seekers. The framework of integration policies and an "integration idea bourse" of the refugee centers in Spain have been presented in Madrid. The second day the participants visited different approaches of vocational training and labour market insertion in Sigüenza.





Planned activities for 2012 and 2013:

Overall, the planned activities of the SaviAV Network in 2012 and 2013 include:

- *Study visits* (projects, institutions) in all core partner regions;
- *Learning seminars*, to capture the main lessons and good practices emerging from the study visits;
- *Individual practical trainings/internships* of 3 - 4 weeks, to allow practitioners to learn about the different contexts and approaches in other Member States

In the Asylum Seekers Strand, the following study visits and themes are planned:

- Health care provision for asylum seekers and international healthcare advisors, Sweden (September 2012)
- Matching asylum seekers with known labour market skills shortages; and schools for unaccompanied minors, Munich, Germany (October 2012)

Planned activities in the Victims of trafficking strand: study visits & themes include:

- The transfer of results concerning improved services for victims of human trafficking, Lombardy, Italy (June 2012)

The second SaviAV network learning seminar will also be held in 2012:

- Implementing integration concepts and strategies for asylum seekers at the regional level, Hamburg, Germany, end 2012/beginning 2013.

The good practices and lessons learnt, identified on the basis of the activities above, will be fed into the **Policy Forum**, which will be SaviAV's final, EU-wide event, planned to take place in December 2012 or January 2013.

- Furthermore SaviAV aims to develop two specific 'products in 2012: a labour market information system to support asylum seekers and victims of trafficking, and an awareness-raising campaign to improve understanding of the issues faced by the target groups, but also what they can bring to communities and the labour market. Two Working Groups have been established, to oversee the effective implementation of these tools, and work has already begun, with the drafting of contractual specifications to launch public procurement processes in spring 2012. Work will also be undertaken by the Network on a 'vademecum' for the integration of asylum seekers and victims of human trafficking into ESF actions.

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Communities of Practice on Inclusive Entrepreneurship (COPIE)

Start date: 1 February 2009

End date: 31 May 2012

Objectives:

In 2009, 'necessity entrepreneurs' made up 2 million people in the EU-27. In many European countries, this number is increasing. The economic and social impact of necessity entrepreneurship is significant: according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, about one third of the companies questioned responded that they had created between one and five new jobs between 2008 and 2010. However, the entrepreneurial potential in Europe is far from being fully exploited. People interested in becoming self-employed and those starting or running small businesses still face a number of structural and administrative challenges.

Entrepreneurship is thus at the heart of the Europe2020 strategy and will play a significant role in achieving the employment target of 75% for 2020. Using EU Structural funds effectively to support entrepreneurship can serve as a crucial strategy for European Member States and regions to exploit their full economic and employment potential. The COPIE partners share a common concern to widen entrepreneurship and have demonstrated that it is possible to make it easier for people from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds or places to engage in setting up businesses.

Participating countries, regions and other partners:

Belgium (Flanders), Belgium (Wallonia), Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Spain, Spain (Andalusia), Spain (Asturias), Spain (Extremadura), Spain (Galicia)

Latest news:

- In five decentralised thematic working groups, the COPIE partners have developed and tested a set of tools to analyse and improve their support structure for inclusive entrepreneurship. The tools will now be put together as a COPIE Toolkit which will help policy makers and regional and national ESF and ERDF Managing Authorities from across Europe to design and deliver successful inclusive entrepreneurship support.
- In line with the policy development cycle, the COPIE Toolkit cover the stages of diagnosis, strategic action planning and targeted intervention in specific entrepreneurship policy areas, including quality management, access to finance and entrepreneurship education.
- The individual tools are available on the COPIE website: www.cop-ie.eu.

Planned activities for 2012:

- Publication of COPIE Toolkit document
- Joint policy document on youth entrepreneurship with other ESF Learning Networks and transnational projects
- COPIE Policy Forum on April 16-17, 2012 in Berlin, Germany
- Evaluation is currently being initiated

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European Network on Empowerment and Inclusion

Start date: 1 September 2009

End date: 31 August 2012 (applied for extension)

Objectives:

The aim of the Network is to take forward the work we have already started (learning from [EQUAL](#), benchmarking current best practice in the areas of Empowerment and Inclusion, piloting new initiatives, exchanging experience and know-how through peer reviews and study visits) and to produce tools that will help us measure empowerment at the following levels:

- Beneficiaries;
- Intermediary Agencies; and
- Employers.

The beneficiary and intermediary agency tools will be tested over the course of two years by the partners of the Network. At employer level, we will develop an assessment tool that will allow employers to assess the extent in which their workplace is empowering and inclusive and to make improvements. We intend to combine this tool with a recognition/award scheme for which we would hope to gain endorsement from the Commission. In addition, a handbook for ESF Managing Authorities and project promoters will be produced, the purpose of which is to provide guidance on how to incorporate empowerment into their work. The tools and the handbook will be presented at a Final Conference concluding the project.

Participating countries and regions:

Northern Ireland, Belgium (region Flanders), Spain, Greece, Sweden, Slovenia

Latest news:

- In January 2012 we completed the second piloting exercise of the beneficiary tool, the data of which is currently being analysed.
- At the beginning of February 2012 we conducted employer focus meetings in Northern Ireland bringing together public, private and voluntary sector employers. The discussions will feed into the development of the assessment tool and recognition scheme. We also met with Natalie Beckx who has developed an employer recognition scheme in Flanders and who is interested in working with us.

Planned activities for 2012:

- At the end of February 2012 a number of workshops will be held in Brussels, the purpose of which is to share experience of the implementation of empowerment and inclusion at both project and organisation level and to identify examples of best practice for inclusion in the Handbook.
- Finalisation of both the beneficiary and intermediary agency tools following the analysis of data from the second beneficiary tool pilot scheme.
- Further liaison with employers and assessment tool/recognition scheme providers and development of a generic assessment tool.
- Production of the handbook for ESF Managing Authorities and Projects.
- Hosting of a meeting of all European Learning Networks on 29 May 2012 in Belfast. This event will be combined with a publicity event featuring the current Northern Irish ESF projects.





- Hosting of the final conference and dissemination of the Network's tools, handbook and findings.

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Ex-offender Network

Start date: 1 April 2009

End date: 30 June 2012

Objectives:

Structures and strategies focusing on the politics of reintegration were developed during the two phases of the EQUAL Community Initiative. A policy forum on the penal system formed, attended by representatives of both the justice and labour sector. At the same time, thematic networks and transnational networking facilitated the exchange of ideas and experiences across the participating countries. This network aims to carry forward and expand the European debate on the relevant political and support strategies necessary for the reintegration of offenders, which was started during the EQUAL programme. The network will hold 18 expert meetings on education, training, employment and resettlement, followed by 5 seminars and a policy forum. The main products should be:

- recommendations relating to the Council of Europe (CoE) European Prison Rules, European Council, European Commission and the member states;
- achieve infrastructural ETE improvements and collaborations at all administration levels
- a framework for evaluation of regime-based education, training and employment (ETE);
- a design for evaluations of ESF-funded projects and measures relating to regime-based ETE; and
- the establishment of an e-portal on knowledge management, focussed on ETE
- intensive cooperation with the national thematic networks in several partner Member States

Participating countries, regions and other partners:

ESF authorities of Belgium (region Wallonia and Federal department), Germany (Federal level and Bremen), Greece, Hungary, Italy (national level and regions Emilia Romagna, Lombardy, Lazio and Tuscany), Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia, Spain (national level and Catalonia), UK (England and Northern Ireland)

Justice Departments or Prison Administrations of: Belgium, Germany (Federal level, Berlin, Schleswig Holstein, Bremen (representing the Northern Alliance), Hessen, Rhineland-Palatine and Saarland (Southwest Region Network)), Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, UK (England)

The network cooperates with the following professional organisations: European Offender Employment Forum – EOEf, European Prison Regime Forum – EPRF, European Prison Education Association – EPEA, International Observatory Juvenile Justice/European Branch – IOJJ/EJJO, International Prison and Correctional Association – ICPA, Permanent Conference de Probation – CEP

Latest news:

- The network succeeded in organising its 18 workshops and 5 Seminars. It is now in the phase to formulate its results, recommendations and reports.





Planned activities for 2012:

- writing results, recommendations and reports
- supporting the new application round
- European Policy Forum on the Reintegration of Ex-offenders will take place in Berlin on 18. – 19. June 2012

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The European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming

Start date: 1 February 2010

End date: 31 January 2013

Objectives:

Over the years much has been written about why and how Gender Mainstreaming (GM) should be integrated into the European Social Fund. The aim is now to take Gender Mainstreaming one step further and to find ways to outline a European standard on how to gender mainstream ESF management in order to improve ESF management and the possibilities to reach gender equality objectives set by the EU, national governments and the Managing Authorities.

The network supports Managing Authorities and intermediary bodies to make better use of the Gender Mainstreaming strategy in improving the implementation of the ESF priority axes. The network will carry out a base-line study to provide a solid ground for its work. Other main activities are: Training and capacity building programmes on GM in relation to the ESF (policy, programme and project) cycles, strategic work for policy impact, develop plans and guidelines for sustainable GM work, create a European Network of GM Contact Points in the ESF, networking with relevant stakeholders on GM. The network will have a special focus on clarifying the *Why* and *How*, of working with GM within the ESF.

Participating countries, regions and other partners:

Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia), Germany (Federal level and Bremen), Spain, Spanish Women's Institute, Estonia, France, Austria, Italy, Greece, Czech Republic, Finland, Poland, Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (Portugal), and ISFOL (Italy).

Main results achieved by 2011:

- Consultation on the Cohesion Report, January 2011 (<http://www.gendercop.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Gender-CoP-Fifth-Progress-Report-on-Economic-and-Social-Cohesion.pdf>)
- Hearing in the European Parliament, April 2011 (<http://www.gendercop.com/gender-cop-in-the-european-parliament/>)
- Gender Pay Gap conference, Tallinn, May 2011 (<http://www.gendercop.com/30-3-gender-pay-gap-remains/>)
- Conference on Gender Mainstreaming in the New funding period of the Structural Funds, May, 2011 (<http://www.gendercop.com/elisabeth-schroedter-speaker-at-gender-cop-conference/>)
- Position paper on Gender Mainstreaming in the Funding Period of the Structural Funds, May, 2011 (<http://www.gendercop.com/elisabeth-schroedter-speaker-at-gender-cop-conference/>)
- Awareness Raising and Gender Mainstreaming – Jury Activity in Stockholm, September, 2011, Expert Jury
- Comments on CSF/ESF regulations December 19, 2011 (<http://www.gendercop.com/comments-on-new-csf-funds-regulations/>)





Activities for 2012 and 2013:

- Conference on Evaluation and Gender Mainstreaming, Helsinki, January 26, 2012 (<http://www.gendercop.com/seminar-on-evaluation-in-helsinki/>)
- Conference on Gendering the Flagships (preliminary: June 20, 2012)
- Conference on Gender Budgeting, Berlin, September 27, 2012
- January 2013 - release of "main result" - Minimum Standard on applying Gender Mainstreaming throughout the ESF-cycle

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Increasing the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in employment (IMPART)

Start date: 1 April 2009

End date: 31 March 2012 (the request for prolongation until 31 May is under way)

Objectives:

The Learning Network IMPART is intended to give a concrete input to the design of employment strategies, including the future targeting of ESF support, with the focus on increasing the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities. The network, consisting of 12 partners from 7 member states, was applying a peer review process between partners in two rounds during 2010 and 2011. IMPART developed a general model/methodology for identifying good practice in delivering programmes, which is also transferable to other themes and funding programmes.

Participating countries and regions:

Belgium (Flanders), Estonia, Spain (national level and regions – Aragon and Andalucía), Scotland, England, Germany (national level and regions – Baden-Württemberg and Berlin), Sweden, Greece

Latest news:

- The network finished the second round of study visits by the end of 2011. The Final Report is going to draw from ten study visits' individual findings reports.
- The network partners are currently concluding the Final Report and Benchmarking Toolkit which will be presented at the Policy Forum in Berlin on 22 March 2012. They will also be made available online.

Planned activities for 2012:

- Management Committee meeting and Lunch Talk with MEPs in Brussels, 1 March 2012
- Final network event: Policy Forum in Berlin, 22 March 2012

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COP - Community of Practice on Partnership in the ESF

Start date: 1 January 2009

End date: 31 December 2011

Objectives:

The aim is to stimulate more creative partnership thinking and implementation in the structural funds, especially in the ESF, in order to enhance policy outcomes of Operational Programmes. The Network builds on the work of the 2006-2008 COP on Partnership in the ESF and promotes continuous learning within the COP with the “critical friend” review method. The network focuses on partnerships being adopted by national and regional Operational Programmes of Member states and regions. The COP members exchange and learn about their ways in implementing partnerships with special attention drawn to processes and actions of governance. The COP focuses on the policy areas identified for ESF interventions, thereby examining ‘PEOs’:

- Partnership practices of Member States on all levels
- Effects on policies as well as impacts for ESF target groups
- Opportunities for improving policy planning and delivery

The areas of concern - governance, sustainability, transnationality and innovation – will be explored by the Community of Practice on Partnership in the ESF.

Participating countries and regions:

Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Romania

Latest news:

- The **9th COP Meeting and PEO Exploration** was successfully held in Vienna, Austria on October 10, 2011 on “Linking policy fields by partnerships: The Austrian Territorial Employment Pacts (TEPs)”. Please download the PEO Key Lessons Report Austria at <http://partnership.esflive.eu/node/650> (registered account is needed).
- The “**International Partnership Conference**” was organised in the Schönbrunn Palace Conference Centre in Vienna, Austria on October 11-12, 2011. The conference provided the opportunity to discuss partnership experiences and impacts of partnerships on Operational Programmes of the Member States/Regions and their future perspectives. Furthermore the “**Communiqué on Partnerships in the ESF**” was presented and the draft version of the “**Partnership Learning Manual**” discussed. More information about the event as well as about the outcomes of the conference are available at <http://partnership.esflive.eu/conference>.
- The **10th Closing and Reflection Meeting** organised on December 6, 2011 in Vienna, Austria at the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection premises concluded the successful work and implementation of the ESF network during the last three years. Core outputs as well as the results of the **external evaluation**, implemented by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (UK), were presented and potential cooperation in the future was intensively discussed by the COP steering group members.
- The “**Partnership Learning Manual**” was officially published on January 3, 2012 with an aim to assist Managing Authorities and other programme managers in the further development of their partnership approaches and help countries learn from existing partnership experience. The complete publication is available at <http://partnership.esflive.eu/node/653>.





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Facing the Challenge – How to effectively support public administration reforms by ESF funds

Start date: 1 January 2010

End date: 31 October 2012

Objectives:

The aim is to highlight how ESF funds can effectively be used to reform public administration and thus improve the quality of activities undertaken in the area of good governance and administrative capacity building. The learning process includes exchange of knowledge, discussion on experiences and sharing best practices among ESF Managing Authorities, line ministries and policy makers. The ACB Network partners tackle following themes within their five working groups:

- Strategic planning (a result-based approach and evidence-based policy)
- e-Government (public services rendered online, e.g. e-payment of taxes)
- Business-friendly administration (simplification of start-up procedures and reducing administrative burdens towards business operation)
- Partnership principle for better regulation (partnership in legislative process)
- Local government (response to the needs of citizens and interactive solutions)

Participating countries:

Bulgaria, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Czech Republic

Main results achieved 2011:

- Launch of the on-line platform www.publicadministrationreform.eu
- Baseline studies with problem analysis and research concerning strategic planning and business friendly administration
- Questionnaire survey on partnership principle in legislative process and e-government made among ACB Network Partners: a preparation for another baseline studies
- Full report *Strategic Planning Study and Good Practices* available on-line (December 2010)
- Baseline study on e-government with problem analysis and research (March 2011)
- Full *Study on e-Government Good Practices* discussed during thematic workshop in Pravetz, Bulgaria (June-July 2011)
- *Implementation Guide on Transfer of Good Practices in e-Government* discussed during second thematic workshop in Bansko, Bulgaria (October 2011)
- A cross-country *Study on business-friendly administration*; results analyzed during thematic workshop and peer review in Warsaw, Poland (June – October 2011)
- 4 interactive workshops, peer review and various study visits on the spot took place in 2011 (in Pravetz, Bansko, Warsaw, Bukarest, Madrid, Vienna and Amsterdam)
- Conference Catalysing efforts – ESF support for better governance in Warsaw, organized under the framework of the Polish Presidency with 4 thematic discussion panels participated by the ACB Network representatives, took place in October 2011
- Conference background paper based on the common *Stand on the future of Good Governance within the cohesion policy after 2013* was finalized by the ACB Network Partners in November-December 2011





Planned activities for 2012:

- Reports and publications:
 - Training manual and e-learning training programme on strategic planning (June)
 - Final recommendations and good practices selection in business-friendly administration (until May)
 - Final report with recommendations how to apply partnership principle for better regulation (June)
 - Comprehensive report with conclusions, policy recommendations and best practices of the effective use of ESF for local government (September)
 - Common ACB Network publication *Good Practice Guide* with recommendations how to better use ESF funds for the activities in the area of administrative capacity building (September)
- Learning events:
 - Workshop (round table) focused on the implementation of the partnership principle in the legislative process in Lithuania (April)
 - Peer review with the purpose to acquire knowhow and firsthand information from the leader/s in the field of strategic planning in Bucharest (May)
 - Second workshop in Warsaw on using structural funds for measuring burdens and simplifying burdensome regulations towards business (April)
 - Learning seminar on citizens' needs and interactive solutions used within local administration matched with a study visit in Greece (June or September)
 - A closing Policy Forum addressed to Managing Authorities responsible for administrative capacity building OPs or Priority axes in Warsaw (October)

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Community of Practice on Results-based Management (RBM)

Start date: 1 May 2009

End date: 31 December 2012

Objectives:

The COP aims to integrate Results Based Management in the EU Structural Funds.

For the purpose of the COP the operational definition of RBM is: "Results Based Management (RBM) is the way an organization applies processes and resources to achieve targeted results." RBM consists of several elements:

- Strategic orientation and coherence: RBM starts by formulating sound objectives that shift the focus from inputs and activities (how much resource to spend on the intervention) to measurable results (what can be changed in the world outside of the intervention) in a coordinated way.
- Stakeholder engagement: RBM makes use of the expertise and resources held by stakeholders in order to increase the likelihood of achieving relevant results.
- Delivery planning: RBM allocates available resources to activities that will contribute most to the achievement of the desired results. A pre-condition to sound resource allocation are organizational arrangements that ensure authority and responsibilities are aligned with results and resources.
- Monitoring and evaluation: RBM checks whether the allocated resources are making the intended difference and feeds back the information into decision-making.

Participating countries and regions:

Belgium (Flanders, Wallonia), Czech Republic, Greece, Italy (region of Molise and Tecnostuttura), Lithuania, Poland, Slovak Republic, Sweden, EIPA

Latest news:

Seminars were held on the following topics:

- "How to sensitize and convince stakeholders to focus on results "
- "How to change organizational culture from input oriented to results oriented"
- "How to define results that are realistic, operational and for which the program managers want to be held accountable"
- "How to measure performance" and "How to ensure good quality of information"
- Build skills of self-evaluation on all levels (project, intermediate body etc.).
- How to measure properly the quality of products and results?
- How to link finance to performance, in connection to financial simplification

Next to the baseline study on state of the art in RBM, the following key knowledge outputs are available from the website:

- Logic modeling and Balanced Scorecards
- Strategic Planning Systems and IT support
- Convincing stakeholders to focus on results in programming
- Two types of call for proposal
- Going with ESF to catalyst organizations





- Concept mapping
- Implementing ISO
- Restructuring the organization for supporting a result oriented culture
- Teams supporting outcome oriented calls
- Ensuring reliable indicator data collection
- Evaluating indicator systems
- Longitudinal evaluation of the effects on program target groups
- Outcome based financing conditions in Poland
- A tendering system for implementing ESF-financed services
- Theory based quantitative evaluation

In addition, the website has a database containing a hand-picked selection of key resources connected to RBM.

Finally, the COP prepared a RBM self-assessment tool.

Planned activities for 2012:

A final meeting will take place on:

- How to design and appraise intervention schemes based on results chains?

Next to this, study visits are planned in Lithuania and the Czech Republic where COP members will make a detailed analysis of one partner's RBM system (using the RBM self-assessment tool) and share good practice.

Finally, work will start on a new Sourcebook for sound planning and management of OP's, based on the COP self-assessment tool, and a seminar in November for all Member States will be prepared.

The COP welcome new partners at any time!

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Social Economy Network

Start date: 1 October 2009

End date: 30 June 2012

Objectives:

The network will address five key themes in relation to the social economy. These are: community law and social services of general interest; measuring social added value and quality standards; socially responsible public procurement and public social partnership; social franchising; and financial instruments and mechanisms of the ESF allocation to the social economy.

Participating countries and regions:

Belgium (Flanders), Czech Republic, England, Finland, Italy (Lombardy region), Poland, Sweden

Main results achieved by 2011:

- Baseline study with problem analysis and research on the European level elaborated/ national thematic studies completed (2010)
- Creation of the national thematic groups – Lombardy, Poland, Sweden / Czech Republic and Flanders
- Questionnaires on social added value, financial instruments, public-social partnership / social responsible public procurement and social franchising elaborated and distributed among partners and national stakeholders (September 2010 - February 2011)
- Draft of a mixed model for measuring social added value prepared by Lombardy
- Common learning seminar in Warsaw (March 2011) – presentation of preliminary thematic conclusions and recommendations for further work for each thematic group
- Creating and testing a set of solutions by each thematic group (testing model tool for measurement of social added value, peer review groups meetings, workshops – Krakow, Prague, London, Antwerp)
- Common learning seminar in Milan (December 2011) – presentation of the draft final set of solutions (tool, recommendations, good practices analysis etc.)

Planned activities for 2012:

- Creation and approval of dissemination plan
- Final learning seminar for ESF managing authorities – presentation and discussion on final products of the network and their usage in the next programming period (2-3 April in Warsaw)
- Final mainstreaming conference (Brussels in June)
- Partners participation in international, national and regional events to promote the results of the network
- Final update of publications and results on the project website www.socialeconomy.pl





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European Network on Youth Employment

Start date: 1 July 2009

End date: 30 June 2012

Objectives:

Young people's unemployment is a major issue due to its close links to social exclusion and destabilisation. The aim of the network is to identify good practices through the execution of baseline studies, peer reviews and study visits, develop a Common Reference Framework for the employment policies for the young, draw up proposals regarding national and European policies in the field of youth employment and capitalise on this when ESF Operational Programmes are revised and in the framework of EU's next programming period.

One working group was created for each of the following themes: Entrepreneurship, Educational and Vocational Counselling and Mobility. Discussions generated through the network will address wider social, economic and technological issues so that programmes for young people can anticipate change and prepare young people more effectively for tomorrow's career opportunities.

Participating countries and regions:

Belgium (Flanders), Germany, Greece, Italy (Tuscany region), Lithuania, Spain, Sweden

Main results achieved by 2011:

Three baseline studies were prepared, one for each thematic field, studying practices, national policies and support measures in the EU Member States. Following the baseline studies, a benchmarking report was produced, evaluating practices with common criteria in order to draw conclusions of selected practices and make proposals. The documents prepared were reviewed during two Peer Reviews comprised of experts-reviewers in the three thematic fields.

The Common Reference Framework (CRF) which builds on the baseline studies and the benchmarking report and presents an integrated view of the three areas was also completed. The CRF aims to assist policy makers in refining current policies, as well as plan for new, in the framework of EU's next programming period.

All reports are available on the website of the network.

Planned activities for 2012:

- The dissemination conference will take place in Cyprus (3-4 May 2012)
- The final meeting of the steering committee will take place in June 2012
- Evaluation is currently taking place

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Transnationality
SHARING GOOD PRACTICE ACROSS EUROPE

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With support from the European Union - European Social Fund and state budget of the Czech Republic
www.transnationality.eu



Net@work: a net for employment

Start date: 8-9 July 2010

End date: 31 December 2013

Objectives:

Starting from the analysis of criticalities identified in the crisis control process and in consideration of specific national and/or regional needs, the overall objective of the Network is to increase awareness on effective solutions and to transfer experimental tools and strategies to improve employment and social cohesion, in view of structural reforms to be implemented in the next programming period and with particular reference to ESF use.

Partners exchanged experiences on the main thematic area - Flexicurity, furthermore the network started to share information on Integration tools for active and passive policies, with particular emphasis on the current and future role of the ESF and on Evaluation of employment measures.

Participating countries and regions:

Italy (Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Regions: Piedmont, Basilicata, Lazio, Lombardy, Marche, P.A. Trento, Veneto), Belgium (Flanders), Finland, Lithuania, Slovakia

Main results achieved by 2011:

- The ESF Transnational Learning “Net@work” kick-off event took place in Rome on 8-9 July 2010. The Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies launched the Network with the support of EC – DG Employment – and Isfol. The general purpose of the meeting was to present the Italian proposal for sharing and redefining goals, activities and results of the new network with other Member states and to give participants all the necessary information for joining the future activities.
- On 25-26 October 2010 the first Steering Group meeting took place in Rome. The objectives were to confirm the results of the kick-off event and to define the different roles of Net@work participants and the procedures for becoming a member. More specially, the intention was to confirm the themes and sub-themes identified, define the macro-activities, nominate the Working Group Coordinators and draft the Net@work agenda; the expected intermediate and final products and the procedures for formally joining Net@work were also indicated.
- On 14-15 April 2011 official partners met for the first time in Turin - Italy - and mapped out a Work plan of exchange events for the year 2011-2012. In addition, they produced the document “Net@work’s contribution to the future orientations of the European Social Fund after 2013”, containing partner countries’ proposals for improving ESF technical and management aspects. The document contributed to the debate regarding the next ESF programme.
- On 20-21 June 2011 the first exchange event took place in Finland in the framework of the “Flexicurity”. The meeting, organised by the Finnish Ministry of Labour and Economy in cooperation with Isfol, included site visits to two employment centres and an interesting presentation of a series of tools and strategies. Particular interest was aroused by the “Employment Barometer”, predicting short-term changes in the regional and national labour markets.
- On 24-25 November 2011, the Slovak Ministry of Labour organized the second study visit “National Employment Services Systems – Active Policies Evaluation and Monitoring Systems”. The meeting was a chance to discuss and share information on evaluation and monitoring of active policies for tackling the crisis. The six countries participated actively in the debate, with particular interest aroused by the UK





Department for Work and Pensions' presentation of the British internal and external evaluation process and methods.

Planned activities for 2012:

- March 2012: Region Lazio (Italy) and the Italian Ministry of Labour, in cooperation with Isfol, will organize a study visit on Flexicurity policies
- May 2012: Lithuania will hold a study visit on Active and passive policies
- September 2012: Italy will organize a Seminary on Outcomes of 2011-2012 Net@work activities

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EURoma

(European Network on Social Inclusion and Roma under the Structural Funds)

Start date: January 2008

End date: N/A

Objectives:

The overall aim of the EURoma Network is to promote the use of the Structural Funds to enhance the effectiveness of policies targeting Roma people and to promote their social inclusion. Therefore, partners of the Network are ESF Managing Authorities (some ERDF MAs are joining the Network as well) together with the representatives of the public bodies responsible for Roma issues in each of the 12 participating countries. The primary objectives of EURoma are the sharing of strategies, initiatives and approaches, learning based on experience and best practices, and the dissemination and standardization of such knowledge.

Participating countries:

Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Spain, Slovakia and Sweden

Latest news:

- The EURoma Network held regular half-yearly meeting on 11-12 May 2011 in Prague, hosted by Czech partners. The agenda was focused on discussing the contents of a guide that is being prepared in order to support the more efficient use of Structural funds for the social inclusion of the Roma communities at local level. Other relevant milestones were the EU Framework for Roma National Integration Strategies and the potential impact on Roma inclusion of the EU 2020 Strategy.
- The next EURoma Network meeting was held on 10-11 November 2011 in Budapest, hosted by the Hungarian partners. The topics discussed were: The role of Structural Funds in the promotion of Roma education; the presentation of the *Evaluation of ESF support for enhancing access to the labour market and the social inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities*; and the future National Strategies for Roma Inclusion and the potential contribution of Structural Funds.
- Elaboration of a EURoma Position Paper as concerns the Future Regulations of the Structural Funds (2014-2020)
- Elaboration of a EURoma Position Paper on the potential contribution of the Structural Funds to National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS)
- Regular update of the website www.euromanet.eu, launch of 3 Newsletters (in English and Spanish).

All information is available on www.euromanet.eu

Planned activities for 2012:

- Two regular meetings of the EURoma Management Committee. First half-yearly will be hosted by Slovak partners.
- Analysis of the use of the Structural Funds for the National Roma Integration Strategies
- Analysis on how the National Reform Programmes reflect Roma inclusion





- Publication of the Guide to promote the use of the Structural Funds for Roma inclusion at local level.
- Publication of the EURoma Practical Guide for the Operational programmes 2014-2020.

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Inclusive Europe – Connecting the Baltic Sea Region

Start date: 1 July 2011

End date: 31 January 2014

Objectives:

Inclusive Europe is a platform for transnational cooperation on working life issues / development. The aim is to increase collaboration between individuals, organizations and projects in the Baltic Sea Region. The region will be inspired, equipped and prepared for the next programming period, and meet up with the Baltic Sea Strategy and EUROPE2020. Inclusive Europe is managed by Arbetsmiljöforum in Sweden, and financed by the European Social Fund.

Participating countries and regions and other institutions:

Transnational partners: Poland, Finland, Belgium (Flanders), Czech Republic, Latvia, The Baltic Sea Network, The European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming, ESF Managing authority Hamburg.

There are also many national partners from Sweden and from the Stockholm region.

Latest news:

- A Polish model for Partner Search Forum was adopted in 2011 in Stockholm. The Partner Search Forum took place at the yearly event Working Life with over 1000 participants from European Countries such as Poland, Germany, Sweden, Czech Republic, Lithuania and Flanders. Over 70 ESF projects were specially invited for the reason that they all needed help to find transnational partners. The evaluation shows that over 93% projects were successful.
- The first workshop for Certified training for Transnational Cooperation took place in Stockholm on January 23, 2012. The international high level panel who will set the standard and agree on a training program will take place in connection to the Baltic Sea Network-ESF meeting in Riga in May. If you want more information or if you are interested to participate in the panel or the training program, please do not hesitate to contact lina.nilsson@arbetsmiljoforum.se.

Planned activities for 2012 and 2013:

- Inclusive Europe organizes a transnational forum for exchange of experiences on implementation of the Baltic Sea Strategy. Special focus is on the social dimension, e.g. how we can promote prosperity and make the Baltic Sea Region more accessible and attractive. The event takes place in conjunction with the annual event Working Life in Stockholm on 16-17 October 2012.
- In close cooperation with www.OCN.se, NSI-Poland and the “Baltic Sea Network – ESF” Inclusive Europe is producing an international standard/Certified training for transnational cooperation. Poland will start the training in May and Sweden in November 2012. It will be possible for a limited number of transnational partners to either participate in the training or do the tests to prove/validate that you qualify for the certification.
- In October – November 2012 about 100 Swedish employees in the Stockholm region will engage in study visits in the Baltic Sea Region. The motto is to: learn, share and get inspired! The themes for the study visits are:
 - Social innovations/entrepreneurship





- Rehabilitation
- Validation and work experience
- Equality, integration and prevention of discrimination

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