



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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Draft

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION
TO THE MEMBER STATES**

establishing the guidelines for Community Initiative Programmes (CIPs) for which the Member States are invited to submit proposals for support under the EQUAL initiative

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1. At its meeting on 13.10.1999, the Commission of the European Communities approved these draft guidelines for the Community Initiative entitled EQUAL, the aim of which is transnational co-operation to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market. EQUAL will also take due account of the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers. (*General Regulation, Article 20 Paragraphs 1 (d) and 2, 2nd subparagraph*).
2. Under EQUAL, Community funding in the form of grants will be made available for activities which respect the guidelines laid down in this notice, and which are included in proposals presented by each Member State, and approved by the Commission of the European Communities in the form of Community Initiative programmes (CIPs).

I. GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

3. The growing interdependence of Member State economies has led to the inclusion of a new Title on employment in the Amsterdam Treaty. It provides for a co-ordinated strategy for employment and the adoption of guidelines which the Member States take into account in their employment policies. The employment guidelines - based on the four pillars of Employability, Entrepreneurship, Adaptability, and Equal Opportunities - and their transposition by the Member States into national action plans for employment (NAPs) provide the framework for financial support at EU level, in particular interventions co-financed by the Structural Funds.
4. The objective of the European employment strategy (EES) is to arrive at a significant increase in the employment rate in Europe on a lasting basis. To achieve this, the development of the skills and employability of those currently outside the labour market is essential. The needs of those already in work, especially in exposed or vulnerable sectors, must also be attended to, so that their skills are renewed and updated. Furthermore, the capacity for entrepreneurship must be broadened, and the equal participation of women and men in the labour market must be ensured. This clearly requires actions to counter inequalities, discrimination and exclusion both for the jobless and for the employed. To be fully effective, the European employment strategy must now be translated into decentralised action plans, at the level of the regions, local authorities, cities and rural districts - that is to say at the level of territories liable to generate local co-operation. This requires both new approaches (laboratory for new ways of delivery) and shared priorities and dissemination processes (transnational co-operation).

5. The Commission is mindful in this respect of the considerable value added that can be generated by transnational co-operation and action under the Community Initiatives. In one sense, this is a practical manifestation of the "common concern" which the new employment Title of the Amsterdam Treaty refers to. In another sense, the experience gained under the current Community Initiatives EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT shows that transnationality is a dimension which can bring significant added-value to project operators, who learn from the experiences and perspectives of others in similar situations. In addition, it shows that considerable policy innovation can be achieved through transnational co-operation, particularly between policy makers. For these reasons, the Commission regards transnationality as an essential element of all activities to be funded under EQUAL.
6. Three other elements drawn from the implementation of the current Community Initiative programmes stand out. The first concerns the involvement of local and regional authorities. Their involvement not only appears to be a factor ensuring internal coherence between the actions of a project and the development needs of the territory, but it strengthens the probability of mainstreaming results of the project. Secondly, the current programmes show the weakness that results from inadequate participation by business. This has often meant that the good projects have not led through to real job opportunities. And finally, despite the often positive and innovative actions of small promoters, their distance from the policy process has meant that mainstreaming of their experience is unlikely. The Commission draws the conclusion that it is necessary to change the type of project to be supported by EQUAL. In the current period, EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT have supported individual small-scale projects promoted by a single entity. Under EQUAL, therefore, the Commission proposes a more strategic basis for projects to ensure a greater co-operation between these small-scale promoters. EQUAL projects will be prepared and implemented by partnerships established at local or sectoral level, and which, by involving all the relevant partners, should help to improve the dissemination of good practices.
7. The new Initiative will therefore seek to build on lessons learned under the current EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT programmes. EQUAL will act as a testing ground to develop and disseminate new ways of delivering employment policies in order to combat all sorts of discrimination and inequality felt in connection with the labour market, *i.e.* both by those seeking access to the labour market and by those already within it. Particular needs of the asylum seekers shall be addressed taking into account their specific situation.
8. Successful innovation and good practices developed under EQUAL should be disseminated widely and, where appropriate, incorporated into mainstream Structural Fund programmes. This will in turn serve to promote the objectives set out in Articles 13 and 137 of the Treaty. Since EQUAL contains mechanisms to support this process, it will provide the labour market element of an integrated strategy at Community level to combat discrimination (in particular that based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) and social exclusion. It will be complementary to other policies, instruments and actions developed in this respect and which go beyond the labour market area and, in particular, the specific legislation and action programmes under Articles 13 and 137 of the Treaty. The Commission and the Member States will ensure overall consistency and complementarity between such activities and EQUAL.

9. In order to promote a labour market open to all, EQUAL will operate in a number of thematic fields, defined in the context of the four pillars of the employment strategy, and after discussion with the Member States. These are the fields of intervention for which groups of Member States consider that co-operation is necessary to improve ways of delivering their national policies by the promotion of new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market. EQUAL will contribute to the promotion of equality between women and men by adopting a complementary dual-track approach: gender mainstreaming and specific actions in favour of women. Equality between women and men is to be promoted as an integral part of all four pillars and thematic fields while also being targeted specifically in a separate pillar. Member States will ensure that this horizontal thematic approach will primarily benefit those subject to the main forms of discrimination (based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) and inequality. The first set of thematic fields¹, which will serve as the basis for the first call for proposals and may be reviewed thereafter, is as follows (they have been grouped according to the structure of the employment guidelines) :

Employability

- a) Facilitating entry and re-entry to the labour market in order to promote a labour market open to all
- b) Combating racism in the workplace

Entrepreneurship

- c) Opening up the business creation process to all
- d) Increasing job quality in the social economy (the third sector)

Adaptability

- e) Developing inclusive workplace practises and continuing vocational training
- f) Introducing information technologies, anticipating change and upgrading skills

Equal Opportunities for women and men

- g) Developing new forms of work organisation to reconcile family and professional life
- h) Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation.

10. Each Member State will be expected to choose at least one thematic field in each pillar for the implementation of EQUAL taking into account the recommendations issued by the Commission in the context of the European employment strategy. In each pillar, Member States will select one or more thematic fields in which they want to co-operate; this implies a variable number of Member States working together in each thematic field. In addition, at least a minimum level of action aimed at asylum

¹ This list of thematic fields is indicative and will be finalised by the Commission following the consultation period.

seekers, to be defined according to the dimensions of the problem in each Member State, will be a continuing part of the national EQUAL agenda.

11. The list of thematic fields may be reviewed every two years to take account of developments in the labour market and in the employment. Proposals for additional thematic fields will be put forward by the Commission following the necessary consultations. The proposals will be submitted for agreement to the ESF Committee after discussion in the Employment Committee.
12. EQUAL will operate within these thematic fields principally through integrated projects, called "development partnerships" (DPs) which may take two forms : geographical or sectoral.
 - Geographical DPs bring together relevant actors or interests in a given geographical territory – for example a local authority area or "travel to work" area – to pool their efforts and their resources in pursuit of a strategy which they have jointly defined and agreed in response to a major problem within their geographical territory. Organisations involved may include the following : public authorities, bodies responsible for equality between women and men, private companies, employer associations, trade unions, training or guidance centres, universities or colleges, local branches of the public employment service, NGOs, etc.
 - Sectoral DPs, on the other hand, will operate within specific sectors where the partners concerned agree on the need to combat inequalities and discrimination. These DPs might include employers and trade unions, the relevant public authorities, the Ministry responsible for the sector, training or development institutes, NGOs, etc.

Member States can choose either or both of these types of partnership to suit the thematic fields they have selected.

13. The partnership approach is the precondition for project funding under EQUAL. The partners within the DPs will define and agree the strategy to be followed and the means of bringing it to fruition. DPs will undertake transnational co-operation and will activate the mechanisms for good practice dissemination and mainstreaming. This emphasis on partnership in a context of transnational co-operation will distinguish EQUAL projects both from those supported under EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT, and from those supported under the mainstream Structural Fund programmes.

Asylum Seekers

14. The position of asylum seekers within the Union is complex. They may be divided essentially into three categories²:
 - those whose application for asylum is under consideration by the Member State concerned;

² Refugees are not included under this heading because, as long-term residents, they are eligible under normal EQUAL Development Partnerships.

- those who have been admitted under a humanitarian resettlement or evacuation programme or who benefit from a temporary protection arrangement;
 - those who have not been granted refugee status, but who benefit from another form of protection (complementary or subsidiary protection) because their individual situation prevents their return to their country of origin.
15. In the majority of Member States, access to the labour market by asylum seekers as such (the first category above) is either forbidden or hedged around with very restrictive conditions. As regards the latter two categories, however, Member States have shown themselves more willing to consider access to the labour market. It could also be noted that in the Joint Action of 26 April 1999, the Council recognised the desirability of helping asylum seekers who face repatriation with education and training, which would give them skills useful in their home country³. It is important that this state of affairs be respected in implementing the "asylum seeker" element in EQUAL.
16. Action in respect of asylum seekers may be programmed either (exceptionally) as a sectoral DP (i.e., a national partnership project, involving all the appropriate partners to support social and vocational integration for asylum seekers), or as a geographical DP in an territory where there is a high concentration of asylum seekers. The same types of partnership, strategy and activity should be envisaged as for other EQUAL development partnerships.

Territorial coverage and final beneficiaries

17. EQUAL applies to the whole territory of the European Union; development partnerships (DPs) supported under EQUAL must involve transnational co-operation with at least another DP from a different Member State, normally funded by EQUAL, and may, in addition, include co-operation with similar projects supported in a non Member State eligible for funding under the *Phare*, *Tacis* or *Meda* programmes.
18. Under EQUAL, the final beneficiaries are the development partnerships (DPs) as already described in § 0 above. Each DP must include a jointly agreed administrative and financial partner with the capacity to manage and account for public funding.

II. ACTIONS WITHIN EQUAL CIPs

19. Section I of this Notice sets out the broad objectives and thematic fields within which EQUAL will operate. This section sets out the elements which the Commission expects to see in the programme proposals to be presented by Member States, and explains the process for preparing and developing DPs.
20. Each Member State will present a proposal for a Community Initiative Programme (CIP) in the form of a Plan. The Commission will approve the CIP in the form of a Single Programming Document as provided for under Article 19 of the General

³ JOINT ACTION of 26 April 1999 adopted by the Council on the basis of Article K.3 of the Treaty on European Union, establishing projects and measures to provide practical support in relation to the reception and voluntary repatriation of refugees, displaced persons and asylum seekers, including emergency assistance to persons who have fled as a result of recent events in Kosovo: OJ L114/2 of 1 May 1999; cf Article 5 (c).

Regulation (see further details on programming in section IV, below). The priorities in this programme proposal will be taken from the list of thematic fields set out in § 0 above.

21. Experience gained under the current round of Community Initiative programmes suggests that three types of action will be necessary to generate added-value for all those involved. The Commission will look for these, or actions achieving the same results, in all CIPs. These actions are set out below.

Action 1: setting up Development Partnerships and transnational co-operation

Action 2: implementing the work programmes of the Development Partnerships

Action 3: thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy.

These actions may in each case need to be supported by technical assistance.

Action 1:

**Setting up Development Partnerships (in the territory or the sector)
and transnational co-operation**

22. The objective of Action 1 shall be to facilitate the creation or the consolidation of durable, effective development partnerships (DPs) and to give transnational co-operation a real added-value. Selection will be based upon applications containing a draft work programme submitted jointly by a number of organisations (DP initiators) in which they identify the problem they propose to address, the nature of the actions they intend to implement, the actors to be involved in the DP and their expectations for the transnational co-operation. DP initiators will have a limited period of time, and receive some limited funds, to develop an agreed strategy and to formalise the Development Partnership and the Transnational Co-operation Agreements (cf.: § 0-0 below).
23. The time period available for this Action shall be decided by the managing authority but should not normally exceed 6 months.
24. The DP selection procedures and the financial and administrative management of the CIP fall entirely within the competence of managing authority in co-operation with the monitoring committee of the CIP. Unsuccessful applicants should be given reasons for their non-selection.

With respect to the thematic field and territory/sector chosen, each Partnership will develop an agreed strategy by assessing the current state of labour market exclusion, discrimination and inequality; conducting an audit of relevant action carried out so far in particular within EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT; identifying and agreeing on common objectives; and assessing opportunities for action.

Selection guidelines

26. The Commission expects that the following selection guidelines will be taken into account in the provisions for implementing the CIP (see §51), included in the Plan :

- Innovation : this should be assessed in terms of methods, instruments and implementation procedures used in the thematic field in which the DP initiators operate, as compared to the normal practice in the territory or the sector and what is supported by the national or regional Structural Fund programmes. The "strategic outcomes"⁴ of EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT will be taken into account as a reference point.
- Integrated approach : the capacity of the DP to take into account the multidimensional nature of the problem to be tackled should be assessed as well as its capacity to identify, with a view to prevention, the factors leading to inequality and discrimination and its capacity to implement a gender mainstreaming approach.
- Empowerment : for each DP, all those involved in the implementation of activities shall take part in the decision-making process. In addition, the active participation of those targeted for assistance shall be positively assessed.

27. At the end of Action 1, the DP should be able to demonstrate, in the Development Partnership Agreement, that it has:

- established a detailed work programme accompanied by a realistic budget;
- involved all the partners required to ensure a comprehensive and effective approach;
- obtained the commitment of all partners to collaborate on a longer-term basis to implement the work programme;
- agreed on the role and contribution of each partner as well as on the arrangements for managing the partnership;
- established a steering group drawn from the members of the partnership to manage the strategy and its implementation;
- established the appropriate procedures and mechanisms in order to effectively implement the gender mainstreaming approach

⁴ A document presenting the "Strategic outcomes" of EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT will be available at the end of 1999 and updated in 2000.

- identified the partner body or organisation to administer the financial support under EQUAL (*cf.* §.0 above);
- foreseen a mechanism for on-going assessment including analysis of results and the presentation of data and information on the DP.

Transnational co-operation

28. DPs must identify at least one partner from an another Member State with similar interests, so that common objectives, a joint work programme and the mechanisms for transnational co-operation can be negotiated. In order to assist in this process, the Commission will ensure that the "partner-finding" databases developed during the EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT Initiatives are updated and made available in order to facilitate co-operation between EQUAL partnerships in all of the Member States.
29. As a general rule, co-operation should be established between DPs selected by the Member States, and preferably working in the same thematic field; such co-operation may also extend to similar projects supported in a non Member State eligible for funding under the *Phare*, *Tacis* or *Meda* programmes. The CIP proposal may provide for limited exceptions to this general rule, subject to the condition that the potential value added of co-operation with partners outside EQUAL is clearly identified, and that these partners are able to demonstrate their capacity to cover their own costs incurred by this co-operation.
30. At the end of Action 1, the DP should be able to demonstrate, in the Transnational Co-operation Agreement, that it has:
- established a transnational work programme accompanied by a budget setting out for each partner the activities to be undertaken (exchange of information and good practice, visits and exchanges of target groups, promoters, managers of DPs, joint working groups, seminars, joint development of products, services, methodology...);
 - set out the role of each DP and the common methods of decision making;
 - foreseen methodologies for monitoring and evaluation of joint activities.
31. Activities eligible for financial support under Action 1 will be defined by the CIP. They might include:
- activities necessary to finalise the Development Partnership Agreement (in a territory or sector), such as operating expenses, meetings, travel, baseline audits;
 - activities necessary to finalise the Transnational Co-operation Agreement (travel, meetings, translation).
32. Each CIP shall propose an indicative budgetary ceiling for grants to DP initiators selected under Action 1. Overall, the Commission would not expect Action 1 to represent more than 3% of total funds available.

Action 2 :

Implementation of the work programmes of Development Partnerships

33. In order for selection to be confirmed and to implement its work programme through action 2, each Development Partnership, by submitting the two documents (Development Partnership Agreement and Transnational Partnership Agreement) shall demonstrate that it fulfils the following conditions:
- Transparency : the DP must demonstrate the availability of the necessary co-financing. The DP must also accept that the results obtained (products, instruments, methods, etc.) will be public property.
 - Representative capacity : the DP must be able to demonstrate its capacity to mobilise different public actors (including local and regional authorities and employment services), the private sector (employers and trade unions), and NGOs in order that they work together. Particular attention will be given to the involvement of those suffering from discrimination and inequality.
 - Co-operative spirit : the DP must be able to demonstrate its capacity and its willingness to work in a context of transnational co-operation and explain the expected value added of transnational co-operation in implementing the different components of the work-programme. In addition, the DP must plan to co-operate actively in national and EU-level activities as regards networking, disseminating results and mainstreaming policies which will be organised jointly by the management authority and the various DPs on a thematic basis.
34. Under these conditions, the managing authority will confirm the initial selection of the Partnership, and notify it of the multi-annual budget available to implement its work programme.
35. This work programme should normally cover an initial period of 18 months to 3 years. If the results obtained justify an extension (for instance when the actions undertaken concern particularly complex processes), a further grant could be approved, along with an extension of the period of financing for the DP.
36. As regards the eligibility of actions, the normal eligibility rules of the ESF apply (cf. article 3 of the ESF Regulation⁵). However, in order to achieve the maximum effectiveness of the activities foreseen, the CIP may provide for the extension of eligibility to actions normally eligible under the ERDF, EAGGF Guidance or FIGG rules, particularly in regard to local development. The activities of the DPs need to be checked for compatibility with the provisions of the Treaty, in particular with the state aid provisions, and if necessary notified under Article 88 (3).

⁵ Regulation (EC) No 1262/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 June 1999 on the European Social Fund. (OJ L 161, 26.6.1999).

Action 3:
Thematic networking, dissemination of good practice
and making an impact on national policy

37. The CIP proposal shall provide, through a separate action, for networking, dissemination and mainstreaming activities within EQUAL. Participation in this Action shall be mandatory for all DPs in order to ensure the mainstreaming impact that EQUAL seeks. It shall be organised by the Managing Authority in such a way as to ensure an input into labour market and employment policy. Policy makers, particularly those in charge of drafting the National Action Plans for Employment (NAPs) and those involved in mainstream Structural Fund Programmes, as well as mainstream ESF management will be associated closely with this activity. In addition, the CIP proposal shall provide for the systematic exchange of information between the monitoring committees for Equal and for the mainstream ESF programmes.
38. In order to ensure consistent horizontal and vertical mainstreaming activities at local, regional and national level, Member States shall establish a co-ordination mechanism. This could, for example, take the form of Steering Committees chaired by the Managing Authority for each thematic area in the CIP including representatives of each Development Partnership. The CIP shall define the types of activity to be carried out, which would normally include:
- Thematic networking of DPs to provide benchmarking of best practice, in particular with respect to the principal forms of discrimination (based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) and inequality; to provide identification of the factors leading to inequality and discrimination and to analyse effective and potential impact of the DPs in this context.
 - Internal dissemination of good practice aimed at other areas or sectors within the Member State as they become available (*i.e.* from the end of Action 1).
 - Mechanisms ensuring an impact on national employment policy and the European employment strategy, notably as regards the content and implementation of the National Action Plan for Employment (NAP) and the support it receives through the Structural Funds.
39. These activities shall normally be implemented by DPs acting either singly or in groups on the basis of their specific expertise and proven capacity. For this purpose, these DPs will receive additional funding.

Action 4 : Technical Assistance

40. Technical assistance, with a budget not exceeding 5% of the ESF co-financing of the CIP, will be available to support the implementation of Actions 1 to 3 and will be used particularly :
- to advise on and facilitate the consolidation of partnerships and the search for suitable transnational co-operation partners (Action 1);

- to collect, edit and disseminate the experience and results, including annual reports of the DPs (Action 2);
 - to support the thematic networking, the horizontal dissemination activities and the setting up of mechanisms for policy impact (Action 3);
 - to ensure the sharing of all relevant information with the other Member States and the Commission (cf. III. Actions at European level).
41. Technical assistance will also be available to support the monitoring, audit and evaluation of actions at CIP level.
42. Technical Assistance activities will be subject to normal tender procedures, and will be entrusted to organisations separate from the Managing Authority.

III. ACTIONS AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

Mechanisms to create an impact at Union level : EQUAL and the European Employment Strategy

43. If EQUAL is fully to play its role as a testing ground for developing and promoting new ways of delivering employment policies, it will need strategic co-operation mechanisms between Member States to exploit the potential impact of good practice identified all over the Union. Three types of action will be implemented by the Commission to support this process:
- Thematic review at Union level;
 - A periodic assessment of the value added by EQUAL in relation to the National Action Plan for Employment (NAP);
 - Setting up of discussion fora at Union level.

Thematic review

44. In order to benchmark the best practises, the Commission will organise a series of "thematic reviews" with Development Partnerships for each of the EQUAL thematic fields (see § 0), taking into account the results of the national thematic networking.

The results will be summarised and made public, and will be used to enrich the policy peer reviews set up in the context of the employment strategy, the evaluation activities at Union level, and the dissemination and exchange activities planned in the Community Programmes under Articles 13 (fight against discrimination) and 137 (in favour of social inclusion). Accession countries will be associated with the discussion and exploitation of the results.

Periodic assessment - EQUAL and the NAPs

45. On the basis of the activities undertaken in the framework of action 3 in each of the Member States, the Commission will establish a database of best practise under EQUAL (methods, procedures, processes, instruments, etc.). The information thus assembled shall be exploited for periodic assessments of the actual and potential

impact of Equal on the NAPs, specifically with regard to combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market. This assessment will be presented for information to the mainstream ESF and other structural funds monitoring committees.

Discussion fora

46. A number of discussion fora exist already, and others will be set up :
- the Employment Committee will be kept informed of the results and on each review of the thematic fields;
 - the ESF Committee will be involved in accordance with the provisions in Article 49 of the General Regulation and in relation to the powers set out in §2 of that Article;
 - a forum for the discussion of EQUAL will be organised on an annual basis with the NGO platform in order to facilitate discussions and feedback from the organisations concerned;
 - finally, as required, the Commission will organise a series of meetings focussing on more specific issues under EQUAL and on the transfer of good practices to policies in candidate countries.
47. A certain number of tasks (collecting and processing information, setting up an interactive data base, animating the thematic review process, organising of seminars and certain specific discussion fora) will be assigned to outside service providers through a technical assistance office at the initiative and under supervision of the Commission, on the basis of calls for tender to be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities. The execution of these tasks shall be financed at a rate of 100% of the total cost.

IV. PREPARATION, PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMMES

48. On the basis of the indicative financial allocations per Member State which the Commission will adopt, Member States shall propose a draft Community Initiative Programme for EQUAL (CIP) covering the whole territory of the Member State. These proposals will take the form of a Plan as set out in Article 16 of the General Regulation. The CIP proposals shall be prepared by the designated authority, involving the regional/local authorities, bodies responsible for equality between women and men and non-governmental partners as appropriate. The priorities in this proposal will be taken from the list of thematic fields set out in § 0 above. Where the Commission has issued relevant thematic recommendations to the Member State in the context of the European employment strategy, it will expect to find these reflected in the choice of priorities. According to the Structural Funds General Regulation (Article 1), the ESF Regulation (Article 2(c)), and the European employment guidelines, Member States will adopt a gender mainstreaming approach in implementing each thematic field. This entails a comprehensive strategy requiring structures and mechanisms if it is to work effectively. Member States will be expected to introduce a gender perspective in the programming, implementing, monitoring and evaluating phases of EQUAL.

49. The **proposal for a CIP** put forward by the Member States shall contain the following:

- A description of the current situation as regards discrimination and inequality in the labour market, and as regards asylum seekers;
- A description of its relationship with the NAP as interpreted in the policy frame of reference (Art. 1 (3) of the General Regulation);
- An *ex ante* evaluation, paying particular attention to the social and economic situation and the situation in terms of equality between men and women as required by Article 41(2)(a) and (c) of the General Regulation;
- A description of the strategy for the implementation of EQUAL, based on the selection of priorities, from the list in § 0 (including at least one of each pillar) plus, where relevant, a specific strand for the interventions focused on asylum seekers (*cf.* § 0-0 above). The priorities chosen may be reviewed as from the year 2002, as described in § 11. The actions considered in Section II above may be measures within those priorities.

50. **For each priority**, the CIP proposal shall set out:

- Its specific objectives, quantified where they lend themselves to quantification;
- An evaluation of the expected impact, including on the social and economic situation at local or sectoral level and the situation in terms of equality between men and women, in accordance with Article 41(2) of the General Regulation;
- A description of the actions and methods planned to effectively implement the gender mainstreaming approach
- An account of the process of programming, including the arrangements made to consult partners and the results of the consultations;
- A summary description of the measures planned to implement the priorities, including the information needed to check the compliance with Article 87 of the Treaty;
- A short description of the types of technical assistance expected to be required to implement the CIP;
- An indicative financing plan specifying for each priority and each year, in accordance with Articles 28 and 29 of the General Regulation, the financial allocation envisaged for the contribution of the ESF, as well as the total amount of eligible public or equivalent and estimated private funding relating to these contributions;
- An indication of whether and to what extent the actions proposed under each priority will contain activities normally eligible under the ERDF, EAGGF or FIFG, to enable the Commission to make the appropriate provision in its Decision on the CIP proposal under Article 21(2) General Regulation.

51. **The provisions for implementing** the CIP shall be set out, including :

- the designation of a managing authority (and a paying authority) within the meaning of Article 9 of the General Regulation with overall responsibility for managing the CIP;
- a monitoring committee for the CIP, in accordance with Article 35 of the General Regulation (see § 55);
- the mechanism for calls for projects to be launched in 2000, 2002 and 2004 (procedures for publicity, guidelines for selection, composition of the selection committee, possible appeal procedures);
- a description of the arrangements for managing the CIP including financial flows; types of contracts with final beneficiaries; whether or not to use global grants for the Development Partnerships in accordance with Article 27 of the General Regulation;
- national mechanisms for the thematic networking of the DPs, for dissemination and mainstreaming (Action 3) as well as for the procedures for the participation of representatives of the various actors involved (other Ministries, local and regional authorities, bodies responsible for equality between women and men, social partners, and relevant NGO networks);
- a description of the systems for monitoring and evaluation, including the information and indicator systems and the national evaluation set-up in accordance with Articles 36 and 42 of the General Regulation;
- a description of the specific arrangements and procedures for audit and financial control of the CIP, specifying the different responsibilities for financial control in accordance with Articles 38 et 39 of the General Regulation and article 11 of the regulation 2064/97 on financial control ; special attention will be given to mechanisms to prevent double funding of activities by Equal and other Union funding sources;
- information on the resources required for assisting the preparation, monitoring, audit and evaluation, including activities foreseen under Action 4 (see § 0-0).

52. These draft CIPs shall be submitted to the Commission by the Member States within four months of the final adoption of the present Guidelines. The Commission will approve each CIP by means of a Decision confirming the allocation of ESF funding to each priority it contains. The Commission may also agree to the use of global grant procedures for parts of the programme if requested by the Member State concerned (article 27 of the General Regulation).

53. Each CIP shall be supplemented by a programme complement as defined in Article 9(m) and described in Article 18(3) of the General Regulation and which contains, in particular:

- detailed information on the content of the measures including the ex ante evaluation and the relevant monitoring indicators;

- a financial plan by measure, which must be consistent with the financial plan of the CIP and include a description of the arrangements for co-financing the measures;
 - publicity actions.
54. This programme complement will be sent to the Commission no later than three months after the Commission Decision approving the CIP but preferably at the same time as the CIP proposal in order to accelerate the implementation process. The preparation of the programme complement must follow the same procedures as those for the CIP.

V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Monitoring

55. Each EQUAL Monitoring Committee will be set up according to Article 35 of the General Regulation. Member States are expected to promote the balanced participation of women and men in the Monitoring Committee and the membership shall reflect the broad spectrum of interests involved.

Each CIP will indicate the specific monitoring arrangements and indicators to be taken into account in accordance with Articles 36 and 42 of the General Regulation and taking into consideration the Commission's guidance on monitoring and evaluation.

Evaluation

56. According to procedures to be agreed between the Commission and Member States, all DPs shall produce a given type and amount of data and information each year for submission to the Monitoring Committee. The data and information in question should also be used by the CIP evaluator to identify and measure the state of progress of DP activities, the methodological innovations achieved, and the mainstreaming potential of results. In addition, they will serve as a basis for the periodic assessment exercise to be co-ordinated by the Commission (*cf.* §45).
57. At the level of the CIP, the mid term evaluation will be launched upon adoption to ensure continuous feed-back for any readjustments necessary for successive calls for projects. The CIP will indicate the specific parameters and indicators to be taken into account for the mid-term evaluation and the final assessment with a description of the national evaluation set up for EQUAL. In addition, the results of the ex-post evaluation of the EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT Initiatives will also be taken into account for the calls for proposals from 2002 onwards.
58. At Union level, the Commission will set up an evaluation mechanism, to assess the implications of EQUAL for the NAPs and other Community programmes.

VI. FINANCING

59. The EQUAL Initiative will be jointly financed by the Member States and the European Community. The total contribution of the European Social Fund to EQUAL for the 2000 - 2006 period is estimated at 2,847 billion €. In accordance with Article 7(7) of the General Regulation, the ESF contribution to EQUAL shall take account of the rate of indexation of 2% a year up to 2003 and shall be decided at 2003 prices for the years 2004 to 2006. By 31 December 2003, the Commission shall determine the rate of indexation applicable for 2004 to 2006.
60. The rates of Community contribution defined in Article 29 of the General Regulation will apply. In view of the innovative nature of the methods used, a systematic application of the ceilings indicated in the Regulations is recommended.
61. An indicative amount of a maximum of 2% of the total ESF contribution will be reserved to finance the activities carried out at the initiative of the Commission, as set out in § 0 to 0. These activities shall be financed at a rate of 100% of the total cost.

VII. TIMING

62. The Commission invites Member States to present their draft Community Initiative Programme for EQUAL within 4 months of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal.

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