

The Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue

Executive Summary of the Programme Document

The overall objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen the bilateral relations between Norway and the Beneficiary States. The Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue (PA22) will focus on how to promote the decent work agenda, foster the tripartite dialogue and increase the bilateral cooperation with Norwegian partners. By improving this dialogue the social partners in each country will contribute to sustainable economic and social development.

The objective of the Programme Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue

The overall objective of the Programme is to promote the social dialogue on decent work issues and improve tripartite cooperation between employer's organisations, trade unions and public authorities in supporting equitable and sustainable economic and social development.

There is an on-going bipartite dialogue in the Beneficiary States, but in some countries only a more hesitating tripartite dialogue involving public authorities. In many of the targeted countries, there is a lack of "demand-side pull"; either from social partners or the government. Where one or both sides are unable to represent the worker or employer constituency in a satisfactory way, effective bipartite or tripartite dialogue will not take place.

The Programme aims at contributing to an improvement in this respect. Important factors for the programme's success are to verify to what extent it has contributed to (1) increasing the dialogue between social partners in matters of Decent Work and (2) if the bipartite and tripartite social dialogue in the Beneficiary States have benefitted from the projects financed through the Programme.

Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security at the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

The EU Social Europe initiative reflects these priorities and will be taken into consideration as well as the principle of "flexicurity", focusing on flexible and reliable contractual arrangements, life long learning, effective labour market policies and modern social security systems. The new EU 2020 strategy sets out to deliver inclusive growth fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

The objective of the Programme Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue is very general, although some expected outcomes are featured in the Programme description. These provide indications and guidelines for the strategy of the Fund and for the selection of projects, as well as the prioritised activities underpinning the overall functioning of the Programme.

Programme Operator

The present Programme Document has been prepared by the Programme Operator in Norway, which is Innovation Norway.

The Programme Document relates to several legal and guiding documents.

Firstly, the legal documents establishing the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, and its presentation of Programme area no. 22 “Global Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue”. Secondly, the Programme Document for PA 22 sets out seven priorities that will be further operationalized and prioritized. This will be done by Innovation Norway through the publication of an open call for proposals, and relevant guiding documents, in consultation with the National Focal Points (NFPs) in the Beneficiary States when necessary to specify national focus areas to be covered by the call.

Innovation Norway will ensure that eligible partners and entities are made aware of the Programme and supported in their preparation of project proposals as well as the implementation. A dedicated webpage for the Programme will be established by Innovation Norway (address to be provided).

Target groups – eligible applicants

Primary target group: social partners/public authorities involved in decent work and tripartite dialogue.

The definition of an eligible partner is: Social partners, public authorities and organisations of public authorities, constituted as legal entities in the Beneficiary States and in Norway with regular activities related to decent work and/or tripartite cooperation may apply for financial assistance. The term Social partner means organisations representing employers and employees. Entities at national, regional and local level are eligible.

Such organisations are eligible applicants if they can demonstrate that they have performed activities related to decent work and tripartite dialogue.

Norwegian applicants meeting the formal requirements are also eligible, but only in partnership with legal entities in the Beneficiary States.

Employer’s organisations, trade unions and public authorities will be invited to apply for grants in order to undertake activities that will promote the objective of the Programme.

In order to strengthen bilateral relations and take advantage of Norwegian experiences within the fields of decent work and tripartite dialogue, partnership projects will be encouraged, but will not be compulsory within this Fund.

Expected outcomes

The expected Outcomes of the Programme are:

- Improved social dialogue and tripartite dialogue structures and practices;
- Enhanced understanding of the benefits of decent work.

Suggested activities to support the detailed in the Call for proposal

Projects to be supported under the Programme will address various ways on how to promote the objectives established. This can be in the form of workshops, preparation and dissemination of information and studies, partnership agreements with one or more partner(s) in the country/other countries, initiation of strategies and work on improved standards related to decent work.

Complementarity

The Programme is complementary to EU's European Social Fund, which is also providing support for the capacity building of social partners in the Member States. The Fund promotes partnerships, agreements and initiatives through networking of relevant stakeholders. The Programme is also supportive of and complimentary to other EU-initiatives, like "EU Social Europe", the principle of "flexicurity" focusing i.e. on flexible and reliable contractual agreements in the new EU 2020 strategy, which is set to deliver inclusive growth in a high employment economy and also to other EU initiatives, such as "New Skills for New Jobs"

The challenges and needs will vary among the different Beneficiary States. The programme will enable social partners and institutions to open new ways of communicating on the objective and expected outcomes of the Programme.

Moreover, the Programme is supportive of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Decent Work Agenda with its four pillars (1) employment creation, (2) worker's rights, (3) social dialogue and (4) social protection. The social dialogue is promoting the understanding of strong and independent workers' and employers' organizations as central to increasing productivity, avoiding disputes at work, and building "cohesive societies". The Programme will take into account relevant EU/EEA-legislation and national legislation in the Beneficiary States on employment and social policy.

In the planning and implementation phase of the Programme, all NFPs will be approached to ensure that the Programme complies with national legislation and priorities.

Assessment of the projects

Innovation Norway will assess and select projects by implementing the organisation's established decision-making tools and structure for providing financial grants. A short list of project proposals will be sent to the respective NFP to give them the opportunity to provide comments before Innovation Norway decides on a grant. For more details please see Rules and Procedures which is listed on the Programme website.

Innovation Norway will enter into a Project Contract with the Project Promoter by issuing a Grant Offer Letter. The letter will state purpose of the grant, special conditions and provide further details on how the implementation of the project is to be done according to the Standard Terms and Conditions and Rules and Procedures.

How to start:

The Programme website will provide you with the following information:

- Electronic Application Form with help functions
- List of any country specific focus areas (to be published on 3 November 2011)
- Template for Partnership Agreement
- Template for Project Implementation Plan
- Template for detailed budget
- Template for Disbursement Schedule
- Standard Terms and Conditions on Norway Grants from Innovation Norway
- Rules and Procedures on the Implementation of the Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue. Guidance to project applicants
- Executive Summary of the Programme Document; Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Innovation Norway will provide assistance upon request. Information of name and address to be contacted for assistance will be provided on the Programme website. One open call is envisaged, with a grant rate up to 90%, along with co-financing in cash. Normally the grant amount per project will be between EUR 50 000 – 400 000, less in states with smaller grants, thus allowing Innovation Norway to meet the differences in available grants allocated to each Beneficiary State. An overview of minimum and maximum grant amounts per project, per country, are given in the Call text. Unless otherwise is decided in the Project Contract, the man-hours provided by the Project Promoter and eventual partners will be accepted as cash co-financing.

Information meetings with potential applicants are planned in several of the Beneficiary States, updated information on such meetings will be put on the Programme website of Innovation Norway and on the respective NFP's websites. Participants are expected to meet their own costs for participating in such information meetings.

Innovation Norway is to undertake the assessment of applications in the period April-August 2012

There will be no seed money. When a project is approved, up to Euro 2 000 may be added to the funding of the project as payment for the preparation of the project application.

Timeline

October 2011	Open call in all Beneficiary States, webpage with all relevant information and Application Form available
November 2011 - January 2012	Information meetings in beneficiary states
January - March 2012	Project application preparations (electronic application form available February 2012)
April 22, 2012	Deadline for applications
April-August 2012	Assessment of applications
August-October 2012	Grant decisions and Project Contracts (Grant Offer Letter) with Project Promoters
September 2012	Start of project implementation
December 2014	End of eligibility period for the implementation of projects

Suspected irregularities will be handled by a lawyer at Innovation Norway's legal department in co-operation with the Programme management, and reported to the donor (the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs') special entity for irregularities. The programme website will contain a push button for reporting irregularities.

Mode of payments

Project funds will be transferred into to a project bank account established for this purpose only by the Project Promoter. The bank account shall be verified by a Financial Identification Form signed by representatives of the Project Promoter and the Bank. (This template will be published on the programme website later on.) Request for disbursements shall be addressed to Innovation Norway.

Checks of compliance with Project Contract will also include site visits by Innovation Norway's employees and/or external experts, depending of the nature of the project. Advance payment will take place after the signing of the Project Contract. Time schedule for advance payment to project promoters will be agreed in the Project Contract.