European social fund ESF: implementing innovative measures 2000-2006

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PURPOSE: to present a Communication from the Commission on the implementation of Innovative Measures under Article 6 of the European Social Fund Regulation for the programming period 2000-2006.
CONTENT: The present Communication sets out how the Commission intends to exploit the possibilities offered by innovative measures under Article 6 of the ESF during the programming period 2000-2006, building on the Guidelines and taking into account the comments and suggestions made by both the ESF Committee and the European Parliament. The innovative measures must be operated in a simple, transparent fashion, with sound financial management. In addition, the operations will be based upon the following principles: innovation and experimentation; support to the mainstream programmes; concentration; complementarity; partnership; continuous improvement; transnational co-operation and networking and equal opportunities. In addition, a thematic approach will be followed during the period 2000-2006 and calls for proposals must have a well defined context and a clear purpose. The Commission will prepare a new Communication with proposals to develop a more strategic approach in this field. It will also focus the calls for proposals for Innovative Measures during the 2001-2002 period on the following themes: adaptation to the new economy within the framework of Social Dialogue and second, local employment strategies and innovation. As regards adaptation to the new economy within the framework of social dialogue, support will be given to the following activities: - innovative approaches to anticipation of economic and social change; - innovative approaches to the use of IS tools in the framework of social dialogue; - new approaches to corporate social responsibility; - innovative approaches to the modernisation of the work organisation; - innovative approaches to promote Lifelong Learning. With regard to local employment strategies and innovation, it is intended to give priority to the following areas: - fostering the implementation of Local Action Plans for Employment and benchmarking activities; - integration of the employment dimension in all local policies; - developing training standards for social entrepreneurs and innovators; - development of financial instruments in support of the activities of the third system; - enhancing the quality of services and jobs. Lastly, the Commission will, with regard to capitalisaiton, dissemination and evaluation, support a number of types of aciton in the process of creaitng an impact at Union level. The ESF (2000-2006) may finance innovative measures subject to a ceiling of 0,40% of the ESF annual funding. The financial size of projects supported should be sufficiently large to generate valuable experience. Each call will define a minimum and a maximum amount of financial support (usually between 300.000 to 3 million Euro) as well as the percentages of intervention of the ESF. Where the size of an individual project could be excessively small, the possibility offinancing proposals that would entail a group of projects (with a single co-ordinating promoter) could be used.