



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE, FREEDOM and SECURITY

Directorate B : Immigration, Asylum and Borders

EUROPEAN REFUGEE FUND 2005-2010

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2006

1. Introduction.

Council Decision 2004/904/EC of 2.12.2004 established the European Refugee Fund (ERF II) for the period 2005 to 2010 to support and encourage Member States' efforts in receiving refugees and displaced persons (see Official Journal L 381 of 28.12.2004).

The objective of the ERF is to support and encourage the efforts made by the Member States in receiving and bearing the consequences of receiving refugees and displaced persons.

In this regard, 93 % of the Fund's available resources are allocated each year to the Member States in order to support activities relating to:

- reception conditions and asylum procedures;
- integration of persons referred to in Article 3 of Council Decision 2004/904/EC whose stay in the Member State is of a lasting and stable nature;
- voluntary return of persons referred to in Article 3 Council Decision 2004/904EC, provided they have not acquired a new nationality and have not left the territory of the Member State.

In addition, in accordance with Article 8 of Council Decision 2004/904/EC, the Commission may use up to 7 % of the Fund's remaining resources to finance "transnational actions or actions of interest to the Community as a whole concerning asylum policy and measures applicable to refugees and displaced persons".

The target groups covered by the European Refugee Fund II actions for the period 2005 to 2010 comprise the following categories (Article 3 of the aforementioned Council Decision):

- (1) any third-country nationals or stateless persons having the status defined by the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto and permitted to reside as refugees in one of the Member States;
- (2) any third-country nationals or stateless persons enjoying a form of subsidiary protection within the meaning of Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 (Official Journal L304 of 30/9/2004) on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted;
- (3) any third-country nationals or stateless persons who have applied for one of the forms of protection described in points 1 and 2;
- (4) any third-country nationals or stateless persons enjoying temporary protection within the meaning of Directive 2001/55/EC.

The purpose of this notice is to invite proposals for co-financing for activities covered by the Community Actions Annual Work Programme 2006, which was adopted on 14 August 2006.

Attention is drawn to the fact that Community Actions must be complementary to those supported under the national programmes of the European Refugee Fund II, as well as to those supported under complementary initiatives, such as the EQUAL initiative or the preparatory actions for the integration of legal migrants from third countries (INTI) and the preparatory actions for return management in the area of migration. In addition, actions relating solely to cooperation between Member States' authorities may be more appropriately funded under the ARGO programme until 2006.

2. Objectives.

In accordance with Article 8(2) of Council Decision 2004/904/EC, Community Actions should concern the following areas:

1. the furthering of Community cooperation in implementing Community law and good practices;
2. support for the setting-up of transnational cooperation networks and pilot projects based on transnational partnerships between bodies located in two or more Member States designed to stimulate innovation, facilitate exchanges of experience and good practice and improve the quality of asylum policy;
3. support for transnational awareness-raising campaigns on European asylum policy and the situation and circumstances of the persons referred to in Article 3 of the ERF decision;
4. support for dissemination and exchange of information, including the use of IT and communications technology, on best practices and all other aspects of the ERF.

3. Priorities for 2006

In the light of recent developments in asylum policy, including the Hague Programme, and the adoption of instruments of Community legislation of the first stage relating to the Common European Asylum System, the following priorities have been defined for 2006. These are described in further detail in the next heading.

- a. The correct transposition and implementation of the Community legislation of the first stage of the Common European Asylum System. This should include actions to improve the quality of first instance decision making and the continuing development of the capacity of stakeholders in the asylum field.
- b. Activities facilitating the practical and collaborative cooperation envisaged in the Hague Programme to assist Member States in achieving a single procedure for the assessment of applications for international protection; in jointly compiling, assessing and applying country of origin information and for addressing particular pressures on the asylum systems of Member States resulting, *inter alia*, from geographic location. These activities are outlined in the Commission Communication on Strengthened Practical Cooperation entitled "*New Structures, New Approaches: Improving the Quality of Decision making in a Common*

European Asylum System” and endorsed in the Council Conclusions on practical cooperation of 27 April 2006 ¹.

- c. The promotion of good practices and new developments in the field of resettlement in EU Member States including the strategic use of resettlement, the resettlement of vulnerable groups, group resettlement and the development of innovative methods such as private sponsorship for resettlement.
- d. Integration and empowerment of persons benefiting from international protection, in particular through involvement of education institutions, professional and employers organisations, trade unions and refugee community organisations.
- e. Encouraging better information and fairer perception of the situation faced by asylum seekers and refugees in the EU.
- f. Promotion of common measures to address specific needs of vulnerable groups among asylum seekers and persons benefiting from international protection, such as victims of torture, minors and unaccompanied minors.

4. Actions to be supported.

This call for proposals aims at providing financial support to actions which contribute to the realisation of the above objectives and priorities. Actions must be practical in nature, with tangible and measurable results.

Actions proposed for grants in 2006 should fall under one of the following headings set out in Article 8 (2).

1. Community Actions relating to the implementation of Community legislation and good practices referred to in Article 8(2) sub (a) should include:

- (a) Exchange of best practice and information, including on training, on the implementation of the procedural aspects of Directive 2004/83 EC on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted (OJ L304/12, 30.9.2004) and the Directive 2005/85 of 1 December 2005 on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status (OJ L 326/13, 13.12.2005), which encompasses the views of all those involved in the asylum process, including through the organisation and programming of workshops and Member State representative fora.
- (b) Exchange of information between national asylum authorities and development of good practice and methodologies for improving the efficiency of the asylum procedure without compromising the quality of

¹ COM (2006) 67 final.

decisions as well as continuing to develop the capacity of relevant stakeholders in the asylum process faced with the requirements of Community legislation including through the organisation and programming of workshops and Member State representative fora.

- (c) Exchange of best practice and information, including on training, on the implementation of Community legislation between national asylum authorities and other stakeholders, such as non-governmental organisations and international organisations;
- (d) Proposals aimed at further developing work previously done and projects currently underway, under the ERF, in the field of the implementation of Community legislation.

2. *The Setting up of transnational cooperation networks envisaged in Article 8(2) sub (b) should focus on:*

- (a) Projects which promote best practice and exchange of information between national asylum authorities relating to resettlement, the adoption of a Single Procedure and a joint approach to Country of Origin Information, including through the organisation and programming of workshops, exchange and liaison of personnel (including through 'twinning' projects).
- (b) The exchange of information on key developments in national case law between appeal bodies and judicial authorities as far as they relate to the implementation of principles of Community law on asylum including through the organisation and programming of workshops and Member State representative fora.
- (c) Projects which help develop a common approach to addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups among asylum seekers and persons benefiting from international protection through the sharing of information, the evaluation of existing practices and the definition of best practices.

3. *Community Actions relating to awareness raising under Article 8(2) sub (c) should emphasise the European dimension of the specific issues faced by asylum seekers, refugees and displaced persons with a view to publicising the results of the European Refugee Fund. These should include:*

- (a) Publications, campaigns (including mass media advertising campaigns), conferences and events to support the implementation of Community legislation and policy on asylum. To impact on public opinion in general, the actions should concentrate on raising awareness with a view to promoting a change in society and a greater understanding of protection issues including resettlement.
- (b) The involvement of education institutions, professional and employers' organisations, trade unions and refugee community organisations in profile raising activities for refugees.
- (c) Projects which aim to highlight benefits to local communities who host asylum seekers, refugees and other displaced persons.

4. Community actions which support the dissemination and exchange of information, including the use of IT and communications technology on best practices and all other aspects of the fund (Article 8(2) sub (d) should include:

- (a) Research and exchange of information between national asylum authorities on good practices relating to improving the quality of first instance decision making (front-loading), including methods for verifying and approving the accuracy and presentation of Country of Origin Information and training for national authorities officials working with Country of Origin Information.
- (b) Projects which examine and promote best practice in national asylum authorities on the production of Country of Origin Information, including reports on fact-finding missions, for use in asylum determination procedures, including through the organisation of workshops, seminars and Member State representative fora.
- (c) Projects, workshops or representative fora which aim to share training materials and methodologies between national asylum authorities related to the implementation of the Common European Asylum System, including the development of curricula aimed at improving quality in asylum decision making.
- (d) Projects which examine and promote the knowledge on policies, measures and best practices addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups among asylum seekers and persons benefiting from international protection.

5. Available budget and financial provisions.

The indicative budget available for this call for proposals is 3,14 M€

The requested amount of ERF financial support per project can not exceed 70% of the total eligible cost.

The minimum amount of grant per project is fixed at €50.000. The maximum amount at €400.000.

The co-financing of an action under this call for proposal shall be exclusive of any other financing by another programme financed by the budget of the European Union.

The Commission will determine the amounts of financial assistance to be awarded, based on the available budget.

Project financing will be based on the principle of co-financing. If the amount awarded by the Commission is less than the amount requested by the applicant, it is up to the latter to find the additional amount or to reduce the total cost of the project without reducing the objectives or the content.

The necessary co-financing must be assured at the date of the application.

Should the project be selected for support, a grant agreement will be signed between the selected beneficiary and the European Commission. This agreement is a standard agreement, and its terms and conditions may not be altered or subject to negotiation.

6. Project duration and start dates.

Maximum project duration is 18 months.

A grant may be awarded for an action which has already started only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed. In such cases, expenditure eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant request, following publication of the call.

The starting date of the projects will be between 1 March 2007 and 31 August 2007.

7. Exclusion criteria.

The applicant organisation involved in the project must not be in one of the situations listed in article 93 and 94 of Council Regulation n°1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the budget of the European Union (published in OJ L248 of 16/09/2002, page 1).

Effective, proportionate and dissuasive administrative and financial penalties may be applied in the event of incorrect statements.

The Commission will exclude a proposal from the eligibility, selection and award procedure if the applicant organisation or one of the partners involved in the project:

- (a) is bankrupt or is being wound up, is having its affairs administered by the court;
- (b) has entered into an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters or is in an analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulation
- (c) has been convicted of an offence concerning his/her professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of *res judicata*;
- (d) has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Commission can justify;
- (e) has not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established;
- (f) has been the subject of a judgement which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- (g) has been declared in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with its contractual obligations within the framework of other grants agreements, procurement contracts or loans awarded by the European Community;

- (h) is subject to a conflict of interest;
- (i) is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying or failing to supply the information that may be required under this Call for Proposals;
- (j) has received another grant for the same project from a European institution. The applicant undertakes not to receive another one in the future. Total recovery of the grant will be effected in the event of double financing for the same project.

8. Eligibility criteria.

In order to be eligible, proposals must meet **all** the following requirements:

1. Be presented by national, regional and local authorities registered in one of the 24 Member States participating in the European Refugee Fund, by universities, by non-governmental organisations as well as international organisations, working on a strictly non-profit-basis, with proven experience and expertise in the fields covered, taking into account their respective institutional competences. Actions may include partners and participants from Denmark and acceding countries, but the cost for their participation may not be covered by the Community contribution and must be financed entirely by non-Community resources;
2. They must clearly relate to the objectives and priorities of the European Refugee Fund II Community Actions as defined in sections 2 and 3 above. The applicant must specify in the application form which objective and priority the project relates to (maximum 1 objective);
3. They must clearly relate to the actions defined as a priority for 2006 as defined in section 4 above. The applicant must specify in the application form which action the project relates to (maximum 1 action);
4. For actions 1(b), 2(a), 2(b), 4(a) and 4(c) the applicant organisation must be a national authority and the purpose is to enhance administrative co-operation;
5. Proposals covering objective 2 must include active partnership in at least 4 Member States involved in the European Refugee Fund;
6. Proposals covering objective 3 must include active partnership from all Member States involved in the European Refugee Fund;
7. Proposals covering objective 4 must include active partnership in at least 5 Member States involved in the European Refugee Fund;
8. Have a clear transnational dimension, i.e. not replace action that could be financed under the national ERF programmes implemented by the Member States;
9. The objectives of the project and its intended impact must be clearly indicated, and a detailed description must be given of the activities envisaged, the results anticipated, and the approach, working methods and timetable to be followed;
10. Respect the ceiling on percentage and maximum grant amount set out in section 5 above;

11. Respect the starting date and maximum project duration set out in section 6 above;
12. Contain **all** the elements and documents defined in the application form (including annexes and documents requested by the checklist attached to the form). If a document appearing on the checklist is either unavailable or not relevant, please say so and give the reason why;
13. Include sufficient information on staff assigned to the project. CVs for project staff, specifying their role and function in the project, must be attached. Where CVs are not available, a job profile or job description must be submitted;
14. Include an explicit written undertaking from each co-financing organisation or partner stipulating that they will participate in the project and in case of co-financing that they will provide the amount of funding stated in the grant application;
15. The application documents (application form, forward budget estimate form, financial identification form and staff treatment form) must be initialled on each page and signed by an authorised signatory in the applicant organisation;
16. The applicant **must** provide on diskette or CD-ROM an electronic version of the following documents:
 - the duly completed grant application form” ERF Community Actions 2006 ”;
 - the duly completed “detailed forward budget estimate” form;
 - the duly completed “staff costs analysis”;

These forms are available and can be downloaded from the DG JLS website at:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/refugee/funding_refugee_en.htm

The applicant must ensure that:

- files copied on the diskette or CD-ROM can be read by the Commission
- these documents are not corrupt, by entering data strictly in the proper fields and by never unprotect fields or electronic formats. If really necessary, you may add a paper sheet if you feel there is not enough space for all the information on the grant application form. If any of the files is corrupt, the application will be rejected.

Proposals that meet the above eligibility criteria will be further evaluated using the selection criteria.

9. Selection criteria

1. Applicants must have the capacity to finance the proposed activities properly. The annual accounts for the last financial year will be provided by the applicants; if the requested grant exceeds €300.000, an auditor's report issued within the last 2 years by an approved auditing firm will be also provided (**this is not applicable for Public**

Bodies). That report shall certify the accounts for the last financial year available and give an assessment of the financial viability of the applicant.

2. Applicants must have the operational (technical and management) capacity to complete the action to be supported. In particular the team responsible for the action must have adequate professional qualifications and must have proven and documented experience in the field of asylum and immigration (attach CVs and particulars of involvement in operations/actions that took place in the last three years).

Proposals that meet the selection criteria will be further evaluated using the award criteria.

10. Award criteria

Among the projects which fulfil the exclusion, eligibility and selection criteria, the Commission will select the proposals achieving the highest score following evaluation according to the award criteria set out below, taking into account the funds available

1. The extent to which the proposed action is relevant to the priorities for 2006 defined in section 3 above;
2. The number of countries covered by the project;
3. The innovatory nature of the action compared to the practice in the relevant Member States;
4. The clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives;
5. The appropriateness and feasibility of the approach, methodology and timeframe;
6. The usefulness of the expected results;
7. The dissemination of results, lessons learned, acquired know-how;
8. The sustainability of the project and/or its results after termination of the ERF grant (where relevant) or measures proposed to ensure adequate follow-up of project outputs. Follow-up may not consist only in conferences and/or website dissemination;
9. The adequacy of the forecast budget: value for money and sources of financing other than the European Commission.

11. Further information.

Potential applicants are invited to read:

- the European Refugee Fund Council Decision 2004/904/EC;
- the European Refugee Fund Community Actions Work Programme for the year 2006;
- the lists and descriptions of Community Actions financed in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004;
- the Guide for applicants;

- the Standard grant agreement for an action.

These documents can be found on the following web-site :

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/refugee/funding_refugee_en.htm

Contact at the European Commission

The Commission service responsible for implementing the European Refugee Fund is Unit B-4 of Directorate General JLS – Justice, Freedom and Security.

Contact :

European Commission

DG Justice, Freedom and Security

DG JLS /B4 - ERF

LX 46 2/122,

BE-1049 Brussels.

Fax (32.2)298 03 06 - e-mail: JAI-EUROPEAN-REFUGEE-FUND@ec.europa.eu

All applicants will be informed of the Commission's decision concerning their grant application as soon as possible. It is envisaged that the Commission will complete its selection procedures in January 2007.

12. Submission of proposals.

Each proposal must contain two paper copies (one original and one copy) (cf. Section 8, items 12, 15 and 16) of the following documents:

- a printout of duly initialled, completed and signed Application form;
- the “Detailed forward budget estimate” form duly initialled, completed and signed;
- the “Staff costs analysis” form duly initialled, completed and signed;
- the “Timetable for implementation of the project” form duly completed and signed;
- the “Financial identification” form duly filled and signed (both by the applicant organisation and the bank in which the bank account is held);
- All the additional documentation defined in the “checklist” enclosed in the application form (cf. section 8 “Eligibility criteria” above);

Each proposal must also contain a diskette or CD-ROM, readable and not corrupted (cf. Section 8, item 16, containing an electronic version of the following documents:

- the grant application form “ERF – Community Actions 2006 ” duly filled in;
- the “Detailed forward budget estimate” form duly completed;
- the “Staff costs analysis” form duly completed.

Applicants must apply in one of the official EU languages. When possible, English or French should be used.

All these documents can be downloaded from the same web-site:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/refugee/funding_refugee_en.htm

The grant applications will be processed by computer. All personal data (such as names, addresses, CVs, etc.) will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data ². Your replies to the questions in this form are necessary in order to assess your grant application and they will be processed solely for that purpose by the department responsible for the Community grant programme concerned. On request, you may be sent personal data and correct or complete them. For any question relating to these data, please contact the Commission department to which the form must be returned. Beneficiaries may lodge a complaint against the processing of their personal data with the European Data Protection Supervisor at any time.

If, at any stage of the administrative treatment of grant applications, the persons or entities concerned consider that they have been affected by an instance of maladministration, they may, irrespective of any other means of redress, make a complaint to the European Ombudsman in accordance with Article 195(1) of the EC Treaty and as provided by the Parliament Decision of 9 March 1994 on the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties published in Official Journal of the European Communities L 113 of 4 May 1994.

Proposals must be sent by registered mail or by express courier, posted no later than 31 OCTOBER 2006 (date as on postmark), to the address mentioned below;

Address:

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DG Justice, Freedom and Security
DG JLS/B4 -ERF
LX46 – 2/122
BE – 1049 BRUXELLES/BRUSSELS
BELGIUM**

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or e-mail) or delivered at other addresses will be rejected.

The envelope must be marked:

“ERF Community Actions – CALL 2006 – NOT TO BE OPENED BY THE INTERNAL MAIL SERVICE”

² *Official Journal L 8, 12.1.2001.*