

Matra Training for European Cooperation

(MTEC)

Programme management

IPA/Structural Funds

October 5th –16th 2009



ECORYS Nederland BV

Key Information

- Objective: Training participants in the implementation and management of EU IPA/Structural Funds
- Period: October 5th – 16th, 2009
- Location: Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- Accommodation: Savoy Hotel, Rotterdam
- Target group: officials from regional and national authorities & agencies who are responsible for the management and implementation of EU IPA and Structural Funds
- Participants: 50 in total, drawn from 2 New Member States (Bulgaria and Romania), 3 Candidate Countries (Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey) and 4 potential Candidate Countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia)
- Applications: before September 4th, 2009
- Information: structuralfunds@ecorys.com

Introduction

Part of the accession is Chapter 21 of the Acquis, which is related to the regional policy and more specifically to the preparation for IPA/Structural Funds. For many decades the European Union has been supporting lagging regions with funds to improve economic and social conditions in these regions. To harvest the benefits from future assistance provided by the Structural Funds and IPA, the Candidate Countries will have to continue their preparations to create an effectively functioning institutional and legislative system and proper administrative capacity to absorb and manage the funds.

Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU on 1st of January 2007. Croatia and Turkey are candidate countries; they started accession negotiations on 3 October 2005. In December 2005, the European Council granted the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the status of a candidate country; accession negotiations have not started yet.

All the other Western Balkan countries are potential candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. The EU has repeatedly reaffirmed at the highest level its commitment for eventual EU membership of the Western Balkan countries, provided they fulfil the accession criteria. Albania was the first of the officially recognized potential Candidate countries to start the negotiations of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) in 2003. This was successfully agreed and signed in June 2006, completing the first major step toward Albania's full membership in the EU. The negotiations on SAA with Bosnia-Herzegovina started in November 2005, however, they were not completed yet as the country faces a number of reform challenges (i.e. police reform). Serbia started the SAA negotiations in October 2005. These were suspended in May 2006 and resumed in June 2007.

Montenegro commenced the negotiations on SAA in October 2005, as a part of Serbia-Montenegro. These were suspended in May 2006 and recommenced in September 2006 with independent Montenegro.

Although progress towards accession varies among countries, becoming proficient in European affairs is of key importance for the government administrations of all of these countries.

Government officials, especially from the Candidate Countries, are thus faced with the tremendous challenge of dealing with the Acquis and the new developments in the EU, as

well as simultaneously dealing with domestically related affairs they cope with in their daily work. In these circumstances it is very difficult for government officials to obtain all necessary knowledge concerning the European policies and the required skills enabling them to contribute to the social dialogue both on the national and EU level.

Even though the New Member States are fully involved in the Structural Funds, there remains a need for training in programme management issues, as the first bottlenecks in the implementation phase are occurring now. The MTEC course on IPA/Structural Funds is designed to help officials from the New Member States and the Candidate Countries to prepare the sound management and policy formulation in the field of EU regional policy issues.

In this course ECORYS Nederland BV has designed a comprehensive, tailor-made and intensive training course aimed at training regional and national government officials in the field of implementing and managing EU IPA/Structural Funds. It is clear that all participants should become fully acquainted with European regulations in the regional policy and IPA/Structural Funds and the implementation and management of these funds. The participants should be able to apply this knowledge in practice. For this purpose a skills development programme is integrated, which will give the participants the opportunity to apply theory to practical problems found in their own country. In this way the participants will be able to use the acquired knowledge in their working environment and feel confident in managing IPA/Structural Funds.

Objectives of the course

The main objective of the course is to train *the participants in the management of EU IPA/Structural Funds mechanisms and to develop skills and attitudes necessary to play an active role in the development and implementation of national and European regional policies.*

The programme takes the participants through all stages of the policy life cycle: from strategic planning and programming through implementation, financial management and control to monitoring and evaluation, and will result in a robust group of well-trained executives in the various countries. The focus will be as much as possible on the implementation of the IPA/Structural Funds.

After the training the participants will:

- Know about different actors and institutions in the decision making and legislative procedures in the EU, especially in the field of the regional policy;
- Be able to apply planning and programming techniques in the context of the National Strategic Reference Framework, Sectoral Operational Programme and Regional Operational Programme process;
- Be able to deal with promotion and preparation of programme implementation and have had some examples of implementation of IPA/Structural Funds in other countries;
- Have fundamental skills for programme implementation such as project development, project appraisal and selection;
- Have fundamental skills and knowledge on financial management and control;
- Understand how IPA/Structural Funds influence and complement public finance;
- Develop skills necessary for the adequate implementation of EU regulations;

- Know about the monitoring and evaluation in a EU IPA/Structural Funds context;
- Be able to help create an appropriate Administrative Capacity to manage the IPA/Structural Funds in their own country;
- Be able to and feel confident to play a role in the management of the IPA/Structural Funds policy life cycle;
- Have gained more knowledge on good practices from other countries.

This year ECORYS organises two training courses on IPA and Structural Funds: a practitioners one and this one for programme managers.

The programme management course is meant for more experienced staff of the Managing Authorities/IPA units that implement IPA/Structural Funds and will cover all aspects of the Programme Cycle.

The practitioners course, is directed to project development and project appraisal under Structural Funds/IPA. This course is (potential) applicants and project appraisers in the IPA/Structural Funds management without much experience.

Approach of the course

ECORYS uses an interactive approach as much as possible. Basic texts will be provided to be studied by the participants. The training modules contain a mix of teaching and interactive exercises.

Some modules contain presentations and questions and answers. Those are meant to transfer knowledge and skills. In other modules the participants will apply the learnt knowledge and skills by producing joint papers and holding presentations. Other modules are focussed on illustrating examples through study visits and presentations from other countries. During the training the participants have many opportunities to learn from each other as well.

Structure and contents of the course programme

A distinctive feature of the programme is the policy life cycle. The policy life cycle is a commonly accepted systematic approach to programming, programme and project elaboration, project implementation, evaluation, and corrective action.

The programme of the course includes different modules. They are part of a coherent framework (policy life cycle) and based on the same principles (e.g. logical framework).

The accent in the programme will be on implementation and management skills. Intertwined to the content-related parts are activities targeted at skills improvement.

The modules include:

- *EU IPA/Structural Funds Structures & Administrative Capacity*

In this first introductory part of the course the following topics will be dealt with:

- IPA/Structural Funds in the EU, including institutions managing them;

- Project Cycle Management;
- Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.

- *Strategic Planning and Programming*
 - Key concepts in IPA/Structural Funds planning and programming;
 - IPA/Structural Funds programming in practice;
 - SWOT-analysis;
 - Setting Objectives and Priorities;
 - Establishing measures.

- *Implementation and absorption capacity*
 - Project pipeline development, incl. communication;
 - Grant Scheme management;
 - Public procurement;
 - Project development: Logical Framework Analysis and indicators;
 - Project appraisal and selection;
 - Programme & project implementation.

- *Financial management and control*
 - Establishing financial tables;
 - Audit trail;
 - Co-financing;
 - The control process;
 - Integration of IPA/Structural Funds into the national public finance system.

- *Monitoring and Evaluation*
 - Differences between pre-accession programmes and IPA/Structural Funds;
 - The actors in the monitoring process;
 - Experiences with different monitoring systems;
 - Ex-ante, on-going and ex-post evaluation;
 - Contracting out evaluation exercises;
 - The functioning of a monitoring system;
 - Concrete examples.

The everyday practice of IPA/Structural Funds will receive considerable attention with field visits and study trips. Furthermore, practitioners from the Netherlands and other EC countries

will be available to tell about their experiences. At last, there will be an exchange of learning experiences from the participants. For this purpose, the participants have to prepare a case of what they have learned.

Organisation

ECORYS Nederland BV

ECORYS Nederland BV is a fully independent applied economic research and advisory institute currently involved in many projects in various disciplines all over the world. ECORYS Nederland BV is specialised in economic strategy development, IPA/Structural Funds interventions, economic impact assessment, programming and training.

ECORYS Nederland BV has large-scale practical experience in the EU IPA/Structural Funds in Western Europe and New Member States of Central and Easter Europe. As a result it is aware of the major problems and potentials that arise during the implementation of IPA/Structural Funds throughout the whole EU. Furthermore, it is involved in numerous projects in EU candidate countries focused on the pre-accession strategy, including the preparation for EU IPA/Structural Funds and the establishment of an institutional framework.

Dates

The course will be held at the World Trade Centre in Rotterdam from the 5th through to the 16th of October 2009. You will be expected to arrive in The Netherlands on October 4th. You will fly home on October 17th 2009.

Fees/Accommodation

The Netherlands Government will provide fellowships covering costs, such as international travel, board and lodging, visa and insurance, tuition fees, lecture materials and excursions in so far as included in the programme.

Participants will be accommodated in the Savoy Hotel in Rotterdam.

Teaching Staff

The teaching staff will consist of:

- Staff Members from ECORYS Nederland BV;
- Lecturers from several Structural Funds programmes in the Netherlands and other EC Countries.

Admission Requirements

The course is designed for government officials from regional development agencies or central and regional governments in Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Turkey, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania. In principle employees from any organization that is likely to play a role in the management of IPA/Structural Funds (e.g. as Implementing Body, Managing authority or Paying Authority) are potential participants.

The maximum number of participants is 50. Important points on which the selection of participants will be largely based are:

- The participants should be *fluent* in spoken and written English;
- The participant should be highly motivated and enthusiastic;
- The participant should be comfortable with sharing their knowledge, perhaps in the form of a solo presentation;
- The participant should clearly demonstrate an immediate need for training on IPA/Structural Funds.

Applications

Applications should be made through the Netherlands Embassy in the applicant's country. Application forms should be downloaded from the website: www.cross-agency.nl.

Go to Downloads, click on application form for the relevant course, click on your country; you can then download the application form.

Applications (duly signed by the applicant and his or her employer) should be submitted before **August 28th 2009**, through the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the applicants' country. By this date, all forms, including the signed employer statement, must be received by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Please note that the application instructions on the website need to be followed carefully.

Only fully documented applications will be considered. Admission will be on a competitive basis. The participants will be selected by the steering committee.

Applicants who have been accepted for the course are expected to attend. In case of no-shows or cancellations within 3 weeks before the start of the course, the organisers reserve the right to claim any costs incurred (e.g. pre-paid flight tickets) from the applicant's employer.

Information and course organisation

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Contact person: Mrs. Viera Spanikova

More information on the courses developed under the MTEC programme

- The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in your country can supply more copies of this leaflet and information about the other courses.

- For further information, you can contact either the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands or EVD/CROSS:

EVD/CROSS

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