

Matra Training for European Cooperation

(MTEC)

ISPA/CF – Environment

The Changing Framework of EU Funding for Environmental Infrastructure: ISPA/CF and Challenges for the New Member States and Candidate Countries

October 24th to November 11th 2005



ECORYS Nederland
in co-operation with:



Grontmij



RPS-BKH Consultants



Enviro-Markets International

Key Information

- Objective: The *ISPA/CF – Environment* training will help to solve many of the problems that are being experienced in prioritising, financing and implementing environmental investment projects. The main focus will be on meeting the requirements of EU funding programmes (such as ISPA and the Structural and Cohesion Funds) through efficient and effective project development and management. The training will also provide opportunities to observe best practice from several EU Member States (including the New Member States), as well as for professional networking. The training will involve a combination of lectures, workshops, group exercises and site visits. All training will be held in English;
- Period: 24 October – 11 November 2005;
- Location: the training will be held at the World Trade Centre in Rotterdam;
- Accommodation: delegates will be accommodated at the Hotel Savoy (also in Rotterdam);
- Target group: senior officials from government agencies (including ministries and funds) and regional authorities who are responsible for managing and implementing investment programmes to bring environmental infrastructure up to the standards required by EU legislation;
- Participants: 50 in total, drawn from 10 New Member States (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and four Candidate Countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey);
- Information: anne-marie.verhoef@ecorys.com.

Introduction

The Challenge for the New Member States and Candidate Countries

All Member States and Candidate Countries must comply with EU environmental legislation. In general the Candidate Countries must comply before accession, while the New Member States must deliver on the commitments that they made during the negotiation process. In order to comply, they are required not only to transpose the legislation but also to ensure that it is fully implemented. This includes (where relevant) the preparation of plans, the establishment of systems for permitting, monitoring, inspection and enforcement, and the setting up of appropriate reporting procedures.

However, all the Candidate Countries and New Member States still face major challenges in upgrading their environmental infrastructure to meet EU standards. Existing plants may need to be closed or upgraded, and new plants will also be required. This is a substantial financial and management challenge not only for the Candidate Countries but also for the New Member States, as the necessary investment programmes can take many years to complete.

The Role of EU Funding Programmes

EU funding programmes have a significant role to play in securing the necessary investment. Projects funded using EU grants can act as a catalyst for progress, and can also help to attract funds from other sources (for example, international financial institutions).

In the pre-accession period, the main EU funding programme for public environmental infrastructure has been the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA) programme. ISPA provides funding for large-scale (greater than 5 million Euros total cost) public sector environmental projects. ISPA has already committed almost 4 billion Euro to environmental projects in Central and Eastern Europe over the period 2000-2006.

Since May 2004, the first wave of New Member States has faced the transition from ISPA to the post-accession Structural Funds (SF) and Cohesion Funds (CF). The implementation of ISPA projects approved prior to May 2004 continues, but in principle SF and (particularly) CF can provide higher levels of funding for environmental infrastructure projects. ISPA funding for new projects is still available (and at increased levels) to Bulgaria and Romania, while funding in Turkey and Croatia comes mainly through the CARDS programme.

ISPA projects have not been implemented as widely or as quickly as had been expected, and in general the amount of EU funding actually spent remains a small proportion of the total funding committed. In part this has resulted from tendering problems or issues relating to the role of private sector companies. However, there are still issues to be addressed relating to project selection and preparation, since the number of projects in the ISPA pipeline has often been quite limited, prioritisation has not always been based on the most appropriate criteria, and there have been problems preparing proposals.

These problems are now even more pressing for the New Member States as they have moved into the post-accession funding regime. The establishment of Implementing Agencies and the preparation of programmes is a technical and administrative challenge, and in most areas they themselves have greater responsibility under the Extended Decentralised Implementation System (EDIS). Yet it is critical for their future environmental investment programmes that all countries have the capacity to set up programmes and prepare and implement projects efficiently and effectively.

Objective and output

The primary aim of the course is:

To train the participants to use EU financing instruments (ISPA/CF) more effectively in order to secure implementation of essential environmental infrastructure projects & programmes.

Its more specific objectives include:

- Providing a clear understanding of the requirements for compliance with EU environmental legislation that covers all stages in the policy cycle;
- Demonstrating how Member States (and Candidate Countries) have used best practice to secure full and effective implementation of challenging new directives;
- Providing delegates with a systematic approach based on specific tools that can be used to more effectively develop and implement investment projects & programmes involving environmental infrastructure;
- Demonstrating best practice in establishing the formal structures (Implementing Agencies) and preparing the technical programmes that are required by the EU;
- Highlighting the opportunities offered by EU funding programmes, the problems that have arisen in securing funds and implementing projects, and how those problems can be addressed;
- Creating an awareness and understanding of the likely direction of EU funding programmes for environmental projects after 2006, including both the new opportunities that will emerge and the new challenges that will need to be faced;
- Providing delegates with opportunities for networking both with their peers from other countries and with key international experts in the planning and implementation of environmental investment programmes.

A key step towards these objectives is to give participants insights into the issues surrounding the ISPA and Cohesion Fund programmes and EU structural policies in general. Central to the training programme is the concept that, in order to meet these challenges, the participants need specific skills that help them to tackle the barriers that still exist effectively and efficiently.

The training programme is focused specifically on addressing these issues in much greater depth than would be possible in a two or three day 'workshop' type of event. Delegates will benefit from the experiences of several Member States in implementing key 'investment heavy' directives in several different sectors (e.g. urban waste water & landfill directives).

By the end of the course, delegates will have:

- A clearer understanding of the issues that need to be addressed to secure full and effective implementation of key investment-heavy directives in different sectors of the EU environmental acquis.
- An awareness of how these issues have been addressed in practice in the Netherlands and other Member States, not only at policy level but also within the organisations responsible for planning and implementing the investment needed to secure full compliance.
- A clear vision (based on site visits) of the approach to best practice in the technical implementation of specific investment projects.
- An awareness of the tools that are available to assist in developing and implementing investment programmes for environmental infrastructure, and an understanding of how they can be used most effectively.

- An understanding of how these mechanisms can be used to manage ISPA and Cohesion Fund pipelines and projects more effectively and efficiently both now (to 2006) and in the future (2007 on).

Programme Characteristics

The training will be based around the policy life cycle and EC approaches to Project Cycle Management (PCM). This provides a commonly accepted and systematic approach to programming, programme and project development, project implementation, project evaluation and (where appropriate) corrective action. Policies are only likely to be effective where all stages in this policy cycle are considered and carried out consecutively. Thus experiences from the implementation and evaluation stages can then be fed back into the programming phase, raising the quality and effectiveness of the programme as a whole.

The principles of PCM underpin the implementation of all the main EU support programmes. It is particularly relevant to the post-accession Structural Funds and Cohesion Funds, where implementation is based on programming documents covering key priority areas such as the environment. Although it appears less relevant to ISPA, which finances individual projects rather than programmes, in fact programming takes place at a different level (i.e. within the EC) and its use is still appropriate.

Within this framework the training course will focus on refining the key skills that officials need to use to overcome the problems that they encounter in their working situation at different points of the cycle. The course will provide many opportunities for 'learning by doing', when participants will be challenged to apply new skills, tools and behaviours during realistic role-playing exercises. It is expected that they will be able to this experience directly when they return to their own countries.

But this is not just a theoretical exercise! There will be opportunities to learn directly about best practice in the implementation of key investment-heavy directives in the Member States, including visits to installations and discussions with the different stakeholders involved. There will also be 'problem solving' sessions when the key issues facing the Candidate Countries and New Member States are debated with experts and experienced officials. Finally, there will be ample time for informal discussion and the interchange of experiences between delegates.

General outline of the programme

The training programme will be based on five separate components:

- Keynote Lectures on topical issues presented by experts from outside the training team (generally Member State, New Member State or EC officials, but also established international experts in specific fields);
- Tutorial Sessions by members of the training team, to introduce the relevant approaches, skills and tools;
- Discussion Sessions that provide the opportunity not only for follow up to lectures and tutorials but also to analyse and solve problems of general interest;
- Group Exercises where delegates work together in smaller groups on solving problems or carrying out practical exercises, guided by members of the training team (these Group Exercises will link together to provide a coherent 'learning by doing' experience over the duration of the course);
- Study Visits that provide the opportunity not only to visit an installation (for example, a water treatment plant or an incinerator) but also to discuss the implications of the relevant directive with key stakeholders (local authority, site operator, environmental inspector etc);

Working Groups will be established at the start of the course, with each group comprising a cross-sector of participants from different countries and with different backgrounds). As well as working together on Group Exercises, each Working Group will be given a other tasks to carry out at various

points during the course. As far as practicable, the topics covered will be matched to the requirements and interests of the delegates. They will include:

<p><i>EU Policy & Instruments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EU Environmental policy ➤ Financing instruments ➤ Implementing Agencies and programme development 	<p><i>Key Investment-Heavy Directives</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Urban Waste Water Directive ➤ Landfill Directive ➤ IPPC Directive ➤ Other sectors/issues
<p><i>Skills and Tools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project/programme management ➤ Characterisation & prioritisation ➤ Financing & presentation (e.g. CBA) ➤ Implementation (tendering, PPP etc) ➤ Monitoring & evaluation 	<p><i>Study Trips (Provisional)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Regional environmental policies ➤ Water management ➤ Wastewater treatment ➤ Waste incineration & disposal ➤ Waste recycling & recovery

Organisation

The training programme is being organised by a consortium led by ECORYS and also comprising Grontmij, RPS-BKH Consultants and Enviro-Markets International. ECORYS has already prepared and implemented four MTEC courses on the Structural Funds, each attracting 50 trainees from Central and Eastern Europe. The successful elements of this training methodology were used in a similar way, but with new content, for the second and third ISPA/CF Environment Courses, which were held in Rotterdam in 2003 and 2004. These courses provided highly popular with the delegates, and that successful format and approach is being further refined and developed for 2005. The material is being developed and presented by highly experienced staff from all four members of the same consortium, complemented where appropriate by guest speakers from other organisations and our hosts during the study trips.

ECORYS

ECORYS is a fully independent applied economic research and advisory institution currently involved in many projects in various disciplines all over the world. ECORYS specialises in economic strategy development, Structural Fund interventions, economic impact assessment, programming and training. This includes work in all key sectors of the environment (water, air, waste, industrial pollution control, energy).

ECORYS has vast practical experience in applying the EU Structural Funds and other EU funding programmes in many Member States. As a result it is aware of the major problems that arise during the implementation of EU funding programmes. ECORYS already applies this experience to numerous projects in Central and Eastern Europe, including the preparation for EU Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund and the establishment of appropriate institutional frameworks.

Grontmij

Grontmij is one of the largest consulting engineering companies in the Netherlands, with 4,000 professional staff and more than 85 years of experience in building, infrastructure and the environment. Grontmij Water and Waste Management provides specialist services in the areas of waste water, drinking water, solid waste and energy management, with a strong focus on institutional development support.

Grontmij is increasingly active in the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and is currently involved in a number of projects financed by the European Commission and the Dutch government. This includes the development of waste management plans for two Voivodships in Poland, regional waste management in Hungary and wastewater treatment in Romania. The company is also active in many other countries around the world, including Turkey.

RPS Consultants

RPS Groep Nederland (RPS) was established in 2000 through the merging of several consulting forms including BKH Consulting Engineers and BAK consultants. RPS has 150 professional staff (engineers and scientists) and is a member of RPS Group plc, one of the largest independent environmental consulting firms in Europe.

RPS is active in many environmental fields, including environmental management & engineering, environmental policy, planning & training, industrial waste management, urban development & integrated water management, and project & contract management. The companies in the group have worked in over 40 countries around the world, and are very active in the EU Candidate Countries where their work has covered wastewater treatment, waste management, inspection and enforcement and industrial pollution prevention and control.

Enviro-Markets International

Enviro-Markets International (EMI) is a UK-based but international consultancy that specialises in providing companies and public agencies with advice on identifying and exploiting market opportunities in the fields of environment and energy. EMI is actively involved in EU and other public programmes in many countries, and has a detailed understanding of the market opportunities created by current and forthcoming changes in policy, legislation and funding.

Investment planning and financial engineering is an important component of EMI's work. The company's Principal Partner (Dr John Butson) was formerly manager of the EC's Priority Environmental Projects for Accession (PEPA) programme, and the company is currently working on a number of projects linked to the implementation of ISPA/CF projects including a major training programme in Bulgaria and Romania. He has worked in 24 of the 25 Member States and all four Candidate Countries.

Dates

The course will be held at the World Trade Centre in Rotterdam from October 24th to November 11th 2005.

Fees/Accommodation

The Netherlands Government will provide fellowships. The fellowship includes costs such as international travel, board and lodging, visa and insurance, tuition fees, lecture materials and excursions (where these are included in the programme). Participants will be accommodated in Hotel Savoy in Rotterdam, based on full board and lodging. The hotel is within walking distance of the World Trade Centre.

Admission Requirements

The course is designed for senior officials from government departments (particularly the Ministry of Environment or its equivalent), from environmental funds and from regional and municipal agencies responsible for implementing environmental infrastructure programmes or major projects.

As the training course will be conducted in English, all delegates must be fluent in written and spoken English.

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 the **9th of September**, through the Royal Dutch Embassy in the applicants' country. By this date, all forms, including the signed employer statement, must be received by the Royal Netherlands Embassy. 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 Secretariat

Further information about the course (including a detailed programme) will be available on the ECORYS web site in due course.

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More information on the courses developed under the MTEC programme

- The Royal Netherlands Embassy in your country can supply more copies of this leaflet and information about the other courses.
- For further information, you can contact either the Royal Netherlands Embassy or EVD/CROSS:

EVD/CROSS

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