



MUTUAL LEARNING ON SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

APPLICATION FORM 2007

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND TIMETABLE

VP/2007/012

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THE POLICY DIMENSION OF YOUR PROPOSAL

- 1) Which key policy issue(s) will be addressed in your proposal?

The project *Bridges for Inclusion* will address the recognised need of more concrete strategies and action for the reinforcement of coordination and interaction between Employment and Social Inclusion European strategies.

The background of this project is, in a certain way, the result of the fruitful cooperation between Rede Europeia Anti-Pobreza / Portugal (REAPN) and the International Labour Office (ILO). Since 2002 and in the framework of the STEP Programme (Strategies and Tools against social exclusion and poverty) and the CIARIS Platform (Learning and Resources Centre in Social Inclusion), REAPN developed different actions and projects which contributed to one of its major challenges: the identification, experimentation and dissemination of the best practices in the fights against poverty and social exclusion.

One of the most important axes of this work was the possibility to reinforce the capability and to empower the organisations and citizens who are directly involved in the fight against poverty. An important contribution to put this into practice was a project - which is the direct background of the present proposal.

In 2005, in the framework of the “Second Transnational Exchange Programme (VP/2004/004) and in partnership with ILO and other six organisations in different countries, REAPN promoted a project called “MULTIPLICAR: strategies, tools and actors to fight poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe”. Briefly this project was an attempt to, through the dissemination and use of the CIARIS platform, make available to different organizations in Europe a wide range of information and resources that were useful for a better implementation of the European Strategy on Social Inclusion, more specifically the implementation of the National Action Plans for Inclusion and their recommendations. From the final evaluation report the most important outputs were the involvement of more than 500 organisations in 7 different countries and the development of 33 micro-projects.

¹ Please refer to the Award Criteria of this Call for Proposals.

The good results achieved by the MULTIPLICAR project and the interest showed by the European Commission (DG Employment and Social Affairs) in deepening the institutional relations between its own strategies and ILO's activities in the field of social inclusion, made REAPN and ILO think there was still space for improvement and to go further in exploiting CIARIS capabilities to reinforce the fight against poverty and social exclusion and to contribute to a better deliver of the Social Inclusion Strategy in the framework of the new PROGRESS Programme.

Therefore we decided to present a project proposal which mainly will be focused on showing the need to make more clear and effective the relationship between employment, social welfare and social inclusion and to enhance strategies and practices, particularly those coming from the fields of inclusive entrepreneurship, social economy and local development, where this positive relation can be concretized. This kind of project proposal is very much in line with the European Commission Guidelines for this call for proposals (objectives, key-policy issues and mechanisms), particularly on which concerns the idea of promoting social inclusion and protection for all, both by promoting the participation in the labour market and by fighting poverty and social exclusion.

This goes also in line with the International Conference, held in Lisbon in October 2006, jointly organized by the International Labour Office (Department of Social Security), the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity of Portugal and the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) on "Social protection and social inclusion: converging efforts in a global perspective". This Conference already gave the opportunity to discuss three themes related to the current project proposal, in particular: (i) the modernization of social assistance to promote social inclusion, (ii) the development of integrated socio and economic approaches at the local level and (iii) the access for vulnerable groups to social services to cover basic needs. In their conclusions, the three organizing institutions agreed to promote and pursue their joint efforts in highlighting the role of social protection in fighting exclusion. In that sense, this project will represent a concrete follow-up of the Lisbon Conference, and a way for European actors to increase their knowledge and expertise on the means to converge employment policies (and activation policies in particular) and social inclusion policies.

2) Why do you consider this issue to be a priority area in terms of social inclusion and social protection?

The European Employment Strategy was established in Luxembourg ten years ago (1997). Since then, the EU Member States tried to coordinate their employment policies following common objectives which are defined and reviewed periodically. On the other hand, the European Strategy on Social Inclusion was born in Lisbon in the year 2000. Through the Open Method of Coordination the Member States tried to coordinate the national policies of social inclusion according to the objectives and indicators defined at the European level (Nice 2001).

But, and no matter all the efforts made in the last years, these European strategies for employment and social protection and social inclusion followed "parallel roads". The

liaison and communication between both strategies was not strategic enough and its effectiveness was not able to deliver the expected results. There weren't sufficient or efficient "bridges" between these two apparently separated "worlds". A very significant element that shows this lack of communication and coordination between both policies and strategies is the growing number of working poor population and the also growing number of people at risk of poverty in the EU.

Now a new momentum is being created by the revision of the social inclusion strategy, with the new PROGRESS programme, the revision and implementation of the new Structural Funds and with the formulation and implementation of the National Reform Programmes (coming out of the renewed Lisbon Strategy). It seems that a new opportunity for a better coordination at the European, national and local levels of the employment (activation policies notably) and social inclusion policies could be possible.

If we take in consideration most of the main conclusions from the recent Informal Council of Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs (under the Portuguese Presidency – Guimarães, 5-7 July 2007) we can clearly see the formal recognition of these priorities and the need for a new momentum, particularly when we look into the following conclusions:

“The coordination of policies is one of the most important tools for European progress in employment and social issues. It enhances the improvement of policies and fosters advances towards common goals while safeguarding the flexibility, at the national level, to design strategies that are adequate to the specific contexts and policy options of Member-states.”

“Taking stock of the first ten years of the European Employment Strategy and having in mind all developments of the Open Method of Coordination, within the context of the Lisbon Strategy, is an important point of departure for our capacity to improve these instruments. The expression of the view points of Member-States, EU institutions, Social Partners and NGO's representatives has enabled us to identify core messages for the future.”

“First of all, and in the light of the challenges Europe faces today, it is important to strengthen and further improve policy coordination dynamics. It should be done through both the clear mapping of strategic priorities, and, on the other hand, by increasing the efficiency of our methods to deliver positive outcomes. Results are, therefore, a key word.”

“Social inclusion is a fundamental dimension of sustainable development strategies for Europe. It provides tools to create opportunities for all and to maximize the potential of European societies and economies. More than a matter of citizenship, it also has positive effects on employment, economy, skills and human development. The integration of migrants and unflavoured groups, and the fight against poverty, especially among children and youngsters, when life chances are generated, were mentioned as specific topics that should be a matter of more active concern. Future steps in “active inclusion”, based on promoting labour market integration, adequate minimum income schemes and

access to quality social services, may help build a solid and balanced framework in the field of inclusion.

“Enhancing the strategic capacity of employment policies is of great importance. Employment growth and workforce supply, the quality of jobs, the conciliation of work, family and personal life, with implications to the equality of women and men, and migration dynamics are dimensions that could be stressed in coordination processes. The prospective capacity to map potential sectors for creation of new jobs, and meeting the challenges of innovation and skills renewal in global competition were also mentioned.”

“European processes of coordination have all to gain in strengthening the participation of all relevant stakeholders. This would enhance their effectiveness and mobilisation potential and therefore increase the capacity to deliver better and more visible results for citizens.”

If it is true that that these two strategies followed, in a certain way, “parallel roads”, at the national, regional and local levels, this was even more clear, specially because at these levels the responsible authorities follow different logics and the programmes and initiatives come from different departments and organisational cultures (sometimes divergent ones – different ministries, different bodies – for employment and for social security...).

Social Economy (particularly at the national and local levels) uses to play an important role trying to “alleviate” this lack of coordination. These kinds of initiatives, being responsible to face the overall phenomenon’s (different forms of unemployment or precarious employment and poverty and social exclusion) try to build “bridges” between employment measures and social inclusion strategies and programmes. These organisations (in their different structures, formats, approaches and actions) have a large experience of social and professional integration of social excluded groups overcoming in their daily life’s the obstacles of the policies that come in a vertical way (and not counting with their participation) from different ministries and national or regional departments. The local dimension uses to be the main territory for experimentation and where important efforts are being made for “bridging” employment and social inclusion strategies.

Therefore, and this will be the main focus of this Project, it could be very interesting to understand how through local experimentation generated by social economy initiatives these “bridges” are being developed and can be explored. It will be important to analyse the national and European employment, activation policies and inclusion policies and their articulation and coordination in a mutual learning process. These analyses and findings should be able to provide the necessary strategic and mutual learning to help to better coordinate the present and future orientations of the European and national policies on employment, social protection and social inclusion, “bridging” these “two worlds” to achieve better results within the major objectives of the renewed Lisbon Strategy.

To make it brief, this project should try to make evidence of how the active inclusion policies and the social and professional integration schemes can be useful to fight

poverty and social exclusion and improve people's social protection. The major questions we would like to answer with the development of such a project are:

- Are these policies really effective? At which levels?
- Who are they leaving behind and why?
- How can they be improved (particularly within the actual Social Inclusion Strategy and the renewed Lisbon Agenda)?
- How to bridge a more clear connection between social protection and active inclusion (through employment activation and social welfare measures)?
- Which is the role of social economy in this context (social enterprises, micro-finance, etc)?
- Which is the role of inclusive entrepreneurship (self-employment, micro-firms, etc.)?
- How to better link the unemployed to existing job opportunities (pathways to employment, etc.);
- How can Social Economy be a major player to make more effective the active inclusion policies?
- How the contributions from these different fields can be better linked to each other in the framework of territorially based changes in the socio-economic context (local development, etc.);
- Which kind of organisational and institutional solutions can better contribute to agency in linking both European Strategies? (local development agencies, local governments, local partnerships, etc.).
- Finally, how can we provide a larger participation in the overall processes, particularly from those directly concerned (people living in poverty and exclusion)?

3) How will your proposal draw on existing knowledge on the selected issue? and how will it add to existing knowledge?

As we already stated (Q. 1), this project proposal has a specific background which gives the opportunity to draw on an important amount of existing knowledge and patrimony of experiences.

On one hand the leading partner (REAPN) is for a long time (16 years) an actor which is developing and implementing different projects tackling poverty and social exclusion. For instance, REAPN participated in different European projects under different initiatives (*Preparatory Measures for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, Transnational Exchange Programme, Peer Reviews, Awareness Raising Projects*, European Initiatives such as *HORIZON, INTEGRA, EQUAL*) and it's at the same time the national member of one of the European Networks involved in the European Programme to fight poverty and social exclusion (European Anti-Poverty Network).

On the other hand the range of partners which will be involved in this project will also provide the same kind of experience and knowledge. If we take in consideration that most of the partners are the national network members of the European Anti-Poverty Network (Portugal, Spain, Belgium and Bulgaria) or organisations in membership of

this organisation at the national level (France and Romania) and that we count also with the formal participation of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) itself and the International Labour Office (ILO) it is quite clear that there is a tremendous potential of existing knowledge about the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion Strategy. Most of these organisations and their members at different levels (national, regional and local) are participating actively in the follow-up and implementation of these strategies and by integrating a relevant number of social economy organisations have also the possibility to systematise and monitor different concrete experiences and practices.

One of the major trends of this project proposal will be exactly the possibility that counting with the overall partners and their experience and background, and drawing on the existent knowledge, to be able to, through an European and national researches, draw a “panorama” of the employment and inclusion strategies from the past ten years. This “panorama” by identifying the major initiatives (and their European and national background) and progresses under both strategies will be a first and important step to identify the major gaps and reasons for the lack of coordination between them but also to put in evidence the good practices of communication and inter-action between these two “roads”, particularly those coming from the more regional and local level experiences and actions of the social economy initiatives. This “panorama” will also be an important instrument to identify the necessary guidelines for the design of specific strategies for “bridging” employment and social inclusion and to help different kinds of actors to draw in a more structured way concrete model actions to concretize this approach.

Therefore, the most relevant added value of this project proposal will be the possibility to identify an important number of strategies of “bridging” employment and inclusion and concrete ways of putting them into practice by a different range of actors and local contexts ensuring more adequate and accessible social protection systems.

Taking in consideration the heterogeneous reality of the partnership involved (in terms of countries) it is expected that this added value will have a great potential for the transferring of knowledge amongst the EU member-states.

THE STRATEGIC APPROACH

4) Which mechanisms / working methods will you use?

The major mechanisms / working methods this Project proposal will put into practice will have a focus on the following areas:

- developing regional and local strategies on social protection / social inclusion having as major focus to “bridge” Employment Strategies and Social Inclusion / Social Protection strategies;

- strengthening the coordination of social protection and social inclusion policies and the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of policy;
- improving the evaluation and monitoring of policies and their impact.

In terms of methodology of development, the project will be implemented according to four different Working Packages (WP).

1st WP: to conduct a European general overview on employment and inclusion policies during the last ten years in order to analyse and demonstrate its “parallel roads” and to put in evidence the missing connections and opportunities for coordination. This report will have a focus on the European level and its institutions concerning these strategies. This report will also include a final framework to orientate the national researches which will be developed in the 2nd WP.

2nd WP: to develop national (or regional) researches trying to identify key strategies, programmes and actions in the field of the promotion of employment and the social welfare for inclusion (particularly those ones who show their ability to integrate the most disadvantaged groups or individuals). These national researches will include a first chapter about the general context of the country (concerning social inclusion and social welfare policies). When these reports will be finished the national partners will be responsible for organising national (or regional) workshops to present and discuss these reports with a range of different actors in order to involve them and better qualify the information. CIARIS (the Platform from ILO) will play an important role promoting these exchanges by facilitating on-line discussions to prepare and follow-up the national (or regional) workshops.

3rd WP: to promote bilateral ‘peer reviews’ between transnational partners. Each national partner will organise a peer review to receive another national partner. The country receiving the peer review partner will organise a workshop (and visits) involving 3 or 4 experiences of inclusion through employment initiatives. This will permit to enrich the analyses produced in the second WP and a mutual learning between the partners. The results of these ‘peer reviews’, apart from the obvious mutual learning, should help to define the next and very important WP: the selection of experiences and their capacity building on fostering actions and projects “bridging” employment and social inclusion initiatives.

4th WP: in each partner country (region) there will be a selection of 3 (maximum 4) different experiences. These experiences should be organisations (from different fields but with a specific focus on social economy) confronted with problems of poverty and social exclusion and which would like to participate in a capacity building process for “bridging” actions and projects in the context of this project. In a certain way, these organisations / experiences will constitute a laboratory for designing strategies of “bridging” employment initiatives to social inclusion and fight against poverty and social exclusion. The capacity building process will count with a very active contribution from the CIARIS Platform by providing the necessary on-line distance training tools. This action (within the context and objectives of the project) should also be able to help the organisations involved (with the monitoring from the national partners) to develop strategic approaches and to draft project proposals in the framework of the Structural Funds (2007-2013) having present the idea of “bridging”

employment and inclusion strategies. Some of these experiences should also try to tackle the available technical assistance in the Member States for the development of experimental projects and actions. To resume, the main idea of this WP will be to raise the capacity of different kinds of organisations to draw strategies and actions (following the conclusions of the previous WP's) counting with the support and mentoring of the project through the CIARIS Platform.

5) How will you involve key actors in your project?

The project proposal started already by involving an important range of transnational actors having in mind their roles and characteristics and their potential – as national or regional networks – for being able to involve the necessary key actors in this project and to have important means of dissemination.

This transnational partnership will count also with the very important participation of two international organisations: the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) and the International Labour Office (ILO). These two organisations apart from their active specific collaboration in the overall activities of the project will also assure a bigger impact and dissemination of its outputs. EAPN, by actively participating in the project will offer the opportunity to enlarge the views and reflections of the project by involving the overall network in some of its actions. ILO, particularly through the CIARIS Platform will play a very important role facilitating the involvement and active participation of different key actors and their mutual learning and also by giving to this project a more global and international dimension.

Counting with this strong transnational partnership it is expected that, at the national and regional levels, there will be an important and easier involvement of key actors such as social economy organisations, local authorities, trade unions, national experts and public bodies directly involved in the Employment and Inclusion implementation strategies.

The involvement of key actors at the national or regional level will be provided by the methodology of the project itself. Firstly the transnational partners will be asked to establish a national “Development Partnership” precisely with the aim of involving in a horizontal basis the key actors for the good development of the project. Secondly the WP 3 and WP 4 will provide a high level of participation of different stakeholders, also counting with the involvement of those directly experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

6) Outline the strategy you have set up for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of your project? Describe the mechanisms to ensure the lasting effect of it.

There will be an internal and an external evaluation. In the first case the leading partner (REAPN) will define a set of instruments and indicators to develop the self-

evaluation of the overall activities. The transnational meetings will be the moment for monitoring the implementation of the project and to analyse the internal evaluation outputs.

The external evaluation will be of the responsibility of an external team. This team will set in the beginning of the project a criteria of indicators for evaluation of each activity and will be present in all the transnational meetings. This external evaluation will also be responsible for setting indicators to provide evidence of the lasting effects of the project.

It is important to underline that the involvement of a European Network (EAPN) and an International Organisation (ILO) will also constitute a strong added value to assure a lasting effect for this project. The fact that a great number of organisations and platforms of organisations in Europe and outside Europe (namely through CIARIS Platform involvement in the project) will get in direct touch with the project actions and outputs is expected to produce a quite relevant possibility for a sustainable lasting effect. The fact that this project intends also to produce an impact on the decision-making processes at different levels should also assure that its outputs will “survive” easily after the project ends.

PARTNERSHIP

- 7) Please list partner organisations involved in your project. Give reasons why you have selected them (e.g. experience in the selected issue, etc.).

⊙ European Anti-Poverty Network – Portugal (REAPN) - leading partner

The European Anti-Poverty Network / Portugal is a network of groups (associations) and of individuals whose main purpose is to fight poverty and social exclusion. EAPN Portugal has been established as a non-governmental organization, which privileges information, training and research as key areas of action.

In the development of its work, REAPN wants to reach the following objectives:

- Establish/encourage an interaction (network) between grassroots organizations, groups or individuals who work to poverty and social exclusion eradication;
- Contribute to the definition and implementation of social action programs and policies;
- Promote and enhance the effectiveness of policies to combat poverty and social exclusion;
- Promote and encourage innovative actions in order to fight poverty and social exclusion;
- Lobby for and with the most vulnerable groups or individuals;
- Promote social integration and cultural, economic, moral and physical development for those who experience poverty and social exclusion.

REAPN is the Portuguese national network of the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) that appeared in 1990. Since 1994 REAPN, driven by principles such as subsidiarity and partnership, started a process of decentralization through the creation

of Regional Networks. These integrate a number of regional development centres (anti-poverty local networks) which work for poverty eradication in a local and regional basis. REAPN has nowadays more than 700 members (national, regional and local levels).

⊙ **European Anti-poverty network in Castilla-La Mancha - Spain (EAPN-CLM)**

EAPN-CLM is a significant network in Spain. The network was set up in 1994 and played an important role in re-founding the Spanish EAPN. In 2006, the EAPN's General Assembly meeting took place in Toledo.

Nowadays, EAPN-CLM has a team of 18 persons in three offices in his community. They provide services to 45 NGO's which are included in structure of EAPN-CLM, give support to the social investigations in local administration, improve the network strategy and innovate projects.

EAPN – CLM works in different areas, from research, communication, public relation, social inclusion's projects and other actions concerned at immigrants, better quality and access to the social services, employment, technologies for the NGO's, structural funds until the participation of persons who live in poverty. The website address (www.eapn-clm.org) is a nice way to show what they do.

Moreover, EAPN – CLM cooperates within the territorial community in different fields and very often works together with national foundations, community banks, city halls and the other social platforms of Castilla-La Mancha.

⊙ **Union Régionale des Entreprises d'Insertion – Languedoc Roussillon - France (U.R.E.I. – L.R.)**

U.R.E.I. – L.R. (Union Régionale des Entreprises d'Insertion) is an Association (1901) which federates the 38 “enterprises d'insertion” of the Region Languedoc Roussillon.

Her tasks are:

- To promote the “enterprises d'insertion”, to develop them in order to multiply the number of work-offer
- To encourage professional practices and to propose profitable formations
- To represent the “enterprises d'insertion” in the region
- To develop a dynamic partnership with ordinary entreprise
- To participate in National level board which is the C.N.E.I. (Comite National des Entreprises d'Insertion)

⊙ **Flemish Network of Associations of People Experiencing Poverty - Belgium (EAPN -Flanders)**

The Flemish Network of Associations of People Experiencing Poverty (“Vlaams Netwerk van Verenigingen waar Armen het Woord nemen”) is a coalition of 60 grass root associations and a few local networks (city-level). The main objective of the Flemish Network is to eradicate poverty and social exclusion. In the member associations people experiencing poverty play a central role. They take the floor at all levels of the association, of the network and in actions to all kind of authorities (local,

regional, national, European). In the member associations people experiencing poverty find a way to take their lives in their own hands and to put their experiences together in all domains of daily life. On that basis they discuss the difficulties they encounter and make propositions for change and improvement which they discuss with the relevant policy authorities.

The Flemish Network is a non governmental organisation (NGO) established on the basis of a Flemish decree (law) and is the official spokes channel of the Flemish government in every thing poverty concerns

☉ **Anti-Poverty Information Centre (EAPN Bulgaria)**

Anti-Poverty Information Centre is an independent NGO, coordination unit of EAPN Bulgaria. The main fields of its activities are economic policy, poverty alleviation and social inclusion. It is engaged in review, analysis and recommendations in the fields of unemployment and active labor market policies. The Centre has accomplished social assessments of the pro-employment policies and has elaborated strategies for development of ethnically mixed municipalities in economically depressed regions; it has actively participated in the elaboration of Bulgarian JIM, NAP/incl. and Operational Program “Human Resource Development; its representatives take part in the National Social and Economic Committee, in the Review group on Social Inclusion of EAPN Europe, in the work on social economy of OECD Trento centre and EMES network and teach social policy and social work at Sofia University.

☉ **Caritas Romania Confederation – Romania**

Caritas Romania Confederation was set up because of the necessity of having a representation on the national and international level, in order to present and defend the social-charity interests of all Diocesan Caritas in Romania.

Caritas Romania Confederation was established on September 1st 1993 in Iasi, at the annual meeting of the Diocesans Caritas. On October 21st 1993 it was recognized officially by the Conference of the Roman-Catholics' Bishops of Romania and on January 11th 1994 it became a juridical person, as a Non governmental organization. It is since 1995 a full member of Caritas Internationalis. The Caritas Romania Confederation has 11 members.

Its objectives are:

- Gives back the human dignity to each person
- Option for the poor and edged people to be reintegrated in he society
- To study and investigate the causes and to propose solutions conforming with justice and dignity of the human person
- Co-operation with other national and international aid and development organization

Caritas Romania is member in the national platform of non-governmental organizations, active in the field of cooperation for development (FOND) and member in the initiative group for the setting up the Romanian Anti-Poverty Network (RNAS).

⊙ **European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN)**

EAPN is an independent Network of Non Governmental Organisation involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. EAPN's membership is made up of 22 National Networks and 24 European Organisations concerned with the fight against poverty and social exclusion. EAPN only takes one member per country and this member is itself a Network of anti poverty NGOs. Full Membership of EAPN is based on EU member states and applicant countries, associate Membership is open to other European Countries (to date only Norway has associate membership)

EAPN was established in 1990 with the aim to put the fight against poverty on the EU Agenda. It aims to do this through:

- Dissemination of Information
- Exchange of practice
- Lobbying activities

EAPN aims to increase the participation of Anti Poverty NGOs in EU policy making and is committed to the developing the participation of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

⊙ **International Labour Office**

The International Labour Office through its STEP program provides institutional, technical and financial support to this project.

STEP is a global programme for combating poverty and social exclusion. It is active in two interdependent thematic areas: one related to the extension of social protection to the excluded and integrated approaches to social inclusion.

STEP's actions in the field of social protection are placed in the broader framework of combating poverty and social exclusion. It gives special emphasis to improving understanding of the phenomena of social exclusion and to consolidating integrated approaches at the methodological level which endeavour to reduce this problem. STEP pays special attention to the relationship between the local and national levels, while at the same time contributing to international activities and agenda.

STEP combine different types of activities: studies and research; the development of methodological tools and reference documents, training, the execution of field projects, technical assistance for the definition and implementation of policies and the development of networking between the various actors.

The programmes' activities are carried out within the Social Security Policy and Development Branch of the ILO, and particularly its Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for all.

In Eastern Europe, a team from ILO STEP located in Budapest, Hungary, runs a project with the support of the French Government, targeting 5 countries (Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania) and aiming at empowering actors to fight social exclusion, which includes the dissemination of CIARIS in the region.

⊙ **At the national level**

In each partner country some organisations (public and private) will be selected and will have an active role in the implementation and development of the project activities (by establishing a kind of Development National Partnership). The main

criteria to select them will be their role and context of intervention in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

- 8) To what extent does your partnership involve an appropriate mix of relevant actors and a good mix of eligible countries? And how does your partnership seek a balanced participation of women and men?

The partnership for this project proposal was selected taking in consideration their capacity and their experience working in the field of poverty and social exclusion. Their experience and their competences in this specific theme are a result of developing activities such as: research about these themes, social assistance and social policies (trying to influence them and contribute to their effectiveness). Another criteria was that they develop a very close work to local and national social organisations developing networks of cooperation in order of contribute to the good implementation of social programs and strategies (such as the National Action Plans for Inclusion, National Action Plans for Employment).

Most of these partners (and their members) by their activities and core business are in direct relation with other stakeholders with whom their cooperation will facilitate an extensive mix of participants from different sectors and levels of intervention.

Their experience managing European and National Projects such as EQUAL and other ESF Initiatives was also an important criteria. Finally the range of countries involved represent a mix of south (Portugal and Spain), central (Belgium and France) and new member states (Bulgaria and Romania) which will provide a complementary context of intervention.

In the current identification of people representing the partner countries there is a strong gender balance. This means that the balanced participation of men and women should be respected in the processes of decision making. This principle will be also taken into account in the selection of organizations (WP 4). Taking in consideration the aim of this project proposal the gender dimension will also be one of the focus of attention (guideline) in its major objective: “bridging” employment and social inclusion.

- 9) What will the role of each partner be?

The national (or regional) partner’s role will be:

- To participate in all the transnational meetings (a total of 6)
- To contribute for the European research (WP n.º 1)
- To conduct the national research and produce its output (and translation into english)

- To organise the National Workshop and produce its output (written conclusions)
- To organise a peer review in their own country and participate in another peer review in another country (and provide the necessary written conclusions)
- To select and to monitor the national experiences to participate in the WP n.º 4
- To contribute for the external evaluation of the project
- To contribute for the overall outputs of the project

The international partner’s role will be:

European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)

- To participate in all the transnational meetings
- To contribute for the European research – being associated consultants on the European research (facilitating information, reading and analysing the papers produced)
- To facilitate the logistic and organisation of the meetings which will take place in Brussels (total 2)
- To disseminate the results of the project within the organisation and its work plans (2008 and 2009)
- To facilitate the animation, dissemination and use of the CIARIS platform (through this project) within its members (national networks and European organisations) and alliances.

International Labour Office (ILO)

- To participate and support the organization of the first and in the final transnational meetings of the project
- To create a specific space and tools for the project in the CIARIS Platform and jointly with the project’s members collect the information and resources
- To animate (face-to-face and virtually) with project’s members involved the national and transnational discussions and workshops
- To build the training modules for “bridging capacity building”

10) What degree of support and active involvement does your proposal have from the local, regional and national authorities of the eligible countries concerned?

Taking in consideration the nature of the partners involved in this project proposal this active involvement from local, regional and national authorities can be taken for granted. Most of the partners involved in this project proposal are directly involved and working with this kind of public authorities in the framework of different projects and programmes. All these partners are quite involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the Employment and Social Inclusion European Strategies at European, national and local levels by being represented in different tables and mechanisms of participation.

Nevertheless all these “granted” involvement, and as we’ve stated already, particularly the national partners will be responsible for establishing a National Development Partnership where they will seek an even more deeper compromise,

support and participation from public authorities. In some of the countries this support will be official and efforts will be made to assure that the project actions and outputs will be taken in consideration in the discussions of the future Employment and Social Inclusion Strategies.

EXPECTED RESULTS

11) How will your project contribute to mutual learning on social inclusion and social protection policies and processes?

If we look into the objectives and main actions of this project proposal (Working Packages) it's quite clear that a good definition for the "Bridges for Inclusion" project is the one of being a "mutual learning process". The entire project and its methodology pretend exactly to be a process of, through mutual learning and exchange of knowledge, to identify the best strategies and actions to improve the connection between Employment and Social Inclusion strategies. This mutual learning will start by knowing and reflecting in a deeper way about the existent patrimony (European overview); to exchange information about the national contexts and experiences (national researches); to exchange ideas and good practices in a peer review format; to involve other actors in the overall actions and reflections and facilitate the capacity building of different actors at different levels; to extend the learning to a more vast audience by disseminating the project outputs. It's important to underline that the presence of ILO and their Platform (CIARIS) will play an important role facilitating the exchanges and the mutual learning (also beyond the project "frontiers").

12) What will be the concrete outputs from your work and how will you disseminate the results?

⊙ **1st output:** the report of the European general overview on employment and inclusion policies during the last ten years.

⊙ **2nd output:** national reports presenting a scenario of the major (and selected) strategies, programmes and actions who favour a close relation between social activation actions (in the field of employment) and social protection and inclusion of the most disadvantaged groups promoted by social economy initiatives.

⊙ **3rd output:** a report of the national peer reviews and their main conclusions and recommendations.

⊙ **4th output:** a package for on-line training (through CIARIS Platform) on capacity building bridging employment, social protection and social inclusion strategies and

projects in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, in particular to access structural EU Funds.

⊙ **5th Output:** The improvement and update of CIARIS and the support to a community of practitioners by promoting exchanges of practices and by including in the Platform all the mutual learning provided by the actions of this project.

⊙ **6th output:** a ‘road map’ which settles the major conclusions and recommendations of the project by presenting study-cases based on the concrete and local experiences monitored in the context of this project (this will be made through the organisation of a final publication).

This project has, by the nature of its partners (national and regional networks, international organisations), a strong potential for a quite important impact and dissemination of results.

- All the partners will use their own dissemination channels (publications, national and regional events, WebPages, mechanisms of enlarged participation...) to spread and disseminate the project and its outputs. The fact that there will be a National Development Partnership will also assure the involvement of a range of actors which will assure a more enlarged knowledge and dissemination of the project and its outputs;
- There will be a Webpage of the project which will play an important role in the dissemination of the project outputs;
- The international organisations (EAPN and ILO) will play a major role in spreading the project outputs and incorporate them in their own core business. At this level it will be particularly important the role of ILO and the CIARIS Platform;
- All the events promoted in the project context (Transnational Seminars, National Workshops, Peer Reviews and final Seminar) will be important moments and strategies for the project dissemination (counting also with public visibility through the involvement of *media*);
- The final publication (particularly the “road map”) will constitute an important tool for disseminating the project outputs and to facilitate that its added value will have a great potential for the transferring of knowledge amongst the EU member-states.

13) How will your project impact on the decision-making process at local, regional and national levels?

As we already stated previously (Q. 10 and Q. 12) the fact that we’ll count with strong mechanisms of dissemination from the partners involved in the project proposal and their participation and different roles in several important structures and bodies of

decision (at different levels) will facilitate an impact on the decision-making process. Most of the partners are by nature important and decisive interlocutors that can produce impact and positive influence at different stages of the decision-making processes.

The fact that there is a strong potential for the elaboration of new and innovative strategies (Working Package 4) and the intention that these strategies can be transformed into concrete actions will also constitute an important engine of producing impact on the decision-making processes (for instance at the Structural Funds level) and on the capacity to facilitate the introduction of new measures and programmes to better accomplish the objectives of this project – “bridging” employment and social inclusion – by identifying good practices that can be used to justify the formulation of new policies.

TIMETABLE OF YOUR PROPOSAL

<i>Month/Year</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Activity/Output</i>	<i>Allocation of task per partner</i>
December 2007	Porto (Portugal)	1 st Transnational meeting Objective and output: start-up meeting of the project; presentation of the partners and agreement on the calendar of activities and monitoring and evaluation procedures	REAPN ILO
December 2007 – February 2008	European level	1 st Working Package: European general overview report on employment and inclusion policies. Output: European report on the last 10 years of developments of the Employment and Social Inclusion Strategies	REAPN
March 2008	Brussels (Belgium)	2 nd Transnational meeting: to present the European report and. This transnational meeting will also have the intention to promote the participation of other European actors (counting particularly with the cooperation of the European Anti-Poverty Network). Output: to define and agree the final guidelines for the national researches	REAPN EAPN ILO
March 2008 – July 2008	National level	2 nd Working Package: to develop national (or regional) researches trying to identify key strategies, programmes and actions in the field of the promotion of the employability and the social welfare for inclusion (particularly those ones who show their ability to integrate the most disadvantaged groups or individuals). When these reports will be finished the national partners will be responsible for organising national (or regional) workshops to present and discuss these reports with a range of different actors in order to involve them and better qualify the information. CIARIS will play an important role promoting these exchanges by facilitating on-line discussions to prepare the national (or regional) workshops.	All national partners

		Output: national reports (including the discussions of the workshops)	
September 2008	Porto (Portugal)	3 rd transnational workshop to present the national researches and to prepare the peer-reviews of the 3 rd WP and strengthen a community of practitioners through CIARIS. This will be also an important moment to define the needs for the training package which ILO Geneva should develop for the WP n.º 4 Output: organisation of the peer reviews; guidelines for the training module elaboration	REAPN ILO
September 2008 – December 2008	European level	Elaboration of the package of training modules Output: package of training modules	ILO
September 2008 – December 2008	National level (6 peer reviews, one in each country)	3 rd Working Package: promotion of bilateral ‘peer reviews’ between transnational partners. Each national partner will organise a peer review to receive another national partner. The country receiving the peer review partner will organise a workshop (and visits) involving 3 or 4 experiences of inclusion through employment initiatives. This will permit to enrich the analyses produced in the second WP and a mutual learning between the partners. Output: The results of these ‘peer reviews’, a part from the obvious mutual learning, should help to define the next and very important WP: the selection of experiences and their capacity building on fostering actions and projects “bridging” employment and social inclusion initiatives.	All national partners
January 2009	Porto (Portugal)	4 th Transnational meeting: present the conclusions from the national peer reviews and to prepare the next very important step: the 4 th WP Output: conclusions from the national peer reviews; final arrangements for the implementation of the 4 th Working Package	REAPN
January 2009 – September 2009	National level	4 th Working Package: in each partner country (region) there will be a selection of 3 (maximum 4) different experiences. These experiences should be different organisations confronted with problems of poverty and social exclusion and which would like to participate in a capacity building process for designing strategies for “bridging” employment and inclusion actions. Output: 18 experiences in total; a “road map” which settles the major conclusions and recommendations of the project by presenting study-cases based on the concrete and local experiences monitored in the context of this project	All partners

May 2009	Porto (Portugal)	5 th Transnational meeting: to monitor the implementation of the 4 th WP and to prepare the final Seminar of the project and the project final outputs (publication).	REAPN
November 2009	Brussels (Belgium)	Final Seminar of the Project to present the results and outputs of the project and its final publication, as well as the means to go on through CIARIS with collaborations established between partners during the project. Output: presentation of the project results; final publication	All partners