

NETWORK DESCRIPTION

Please use the following structure to describe your network.

1. Title of network

Increasing the Participation of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Employment.

2. Duration of network

start date: 1.11.2008
end date: 31.10.2011

3. Preparatory phase

List the main types of activity in response to section 4 of the call

| Start Date | End Date | Type of activity |
|------------|------------|--|
| 1.11.2008 | 30.04.2009 | <p>Establishing a collaboration agreement with the selected partners and identifying a group of key actors and stakeholders in each Member State and region. Profiles will be suggested by the Steering Group (consisting of the core group members), along with roles and tasks to ensure clear commitment to the platform and achieving its aims and objectives.</p> |
| 1.11.2008 | 30.04.2009 | <p>Collecting information and organising information exchange: The Steering Group will agree a reporting framework and establish a pool of experts who will work with each participating region/Managing Authority to prepare a baseline report that sets out the policy context in each region/ member state, the ESF OP priorities, supporting actions on employment and other issues to be addressed. These baseline reports will form the basic information for the platform's launch seminars. The draft reports will be presented to the core members at the first steering group meeting in February 2009. Information will be collected along the three thematic priorities for the platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment and Validation: Valuing Migrant Competences - Fostering Anti-discrimination Skills as a Professional Approach and Skills - Integrated Territorial Approaches <p>The steering group will commission the development of a benchmarking tool and impact assessment framework that will have due regard for National and regional ESF Operating Programmes and strategies for increasing the participation of minority ethnic groups and migrants in employment. The web-based information platform www.transnationality.eu will be used to enhance communication among partners in the platform.</p> |
| 1.11.2008 | 30.04.2009 | <p>An information/ launch seminar will be organised for April 2009 to launch the platform and formalise the workplan, activities and timetables with representatives of the participating regions and Member States and stakeholders..</p> <p>The seminar will promote the main outcome of the development phase, a publication (baseline report) of findings of the experts on each participating region / Member State.</p> |

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| | | <p>The seminar will also set out the framework for a benchmarking tool-kit to be tested in the implementation phase.</p> <p>The seminar will also provide a partner brokerage service to match participants up for study visits through a “market place” format that allows for direct discussion and agreement between participants.</p> |
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4. Implementation phase

List the main types of activity in response to section 4 of the call

| Start Date | End Date | Type of activity |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| 01.05.2009 | 15.09.2009 | <p>Each participant will compile an action plan that sets out the key milestones and outcomes to be achieved as their contribution to the platform. This will include development of a composite report for their institution/ region / Member State containing the actions to be taken and the role of partners.</p> <p>The action plans will cover the following components that are linked to the themes that each participant will be implementing.</p> <p><u>Benchmarking Tool-kit</u> Each participant will specify how they will apply the <i>benchmarking tool-kit</i> drawing on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statistical analysis of the participant’s Operational Programme. - Mapping of ESF investment in projects working with migrants and ethnic minorities (ESF allocation, agreed outputs and unit costs). - Identification of delivery problems and issues <p><u>Equalities Impact Assessment Framework</u> Each participant will specify their ESF OP equal opportunities action plan or integration plan that will be taken and the impact measures that change will be measured against.</p> <p><u>Assessment and validation of target group competencies</u> Each participant will specify the pilot approaches they aim to test to support the development of competencies and skills of migrants and ethnic minorities who hold overseas qualifications.</p> <p>The action plans will then be shared across the platform and enable each participant to set out the focus of their transnational activities and their partners.</p> |
| Phase I September 2009 (3-5 days) | | <p>Phase I: Briefing Seminar I (Peer review development): A workshop will be held to establish the peer mentoring process, progress in the development of tool-kits and impact assessments. It will bring together the key actors and stakeholders to prepare for the series of transnational study visits to each partner region. Guidance notes specifying the format for matching mentor and mentee partners will be organised and a timeframe for the study visits will be agreed. Moreover the statistical analysis of ESF OPs will be discussed to address any new problems and challenges that have subsequently been identified and whether they have a comparator in other Operational Programmes.</p> |
| Phase I 01.10.2009 | Phase I 31.05.2010 | <p>Transnational study visits: The programme will take two forms: Group visits from partner regions and individual visits as part of the peer mentoring process.</p> <p>The aim of the visits is to identify good practices and promote regular dialogue through individual peer mentoring in order to maximise the impact of projects and initiatives underway in the</p> |

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| | | <p>different regions and Member States. The organising principle will be transnational visits of teams of experts from partner regions. These teams will observe practice and discuss strategies as well as reflecting on issues which may be common to all of them or specific to one region. The visits, organised by the host partner in cooperation with the platform coordinator will take place over a three to five day period and will focus on one of the three thematic priorities (see above). Each core partner will host at least two visits as mentor partner (showing good practice).</p> <p>This process will be reciprocated with each partner visiting at least three partners as mentee partner (learning from good practice of others). The outcome here is to strengthen transnational working and individual relationships and to test the transfer of good practice from one institutional context to the other.</p> |
| Phase I 01.10.2009 | Phase I 31.05.2010 | <p>Development of Benchmarking Toolkit: Each participating partner will measure improvements on the initial baseline position lined out in the briefing report (baseline report), comparing performance improvements against other regions across different Member States.</p> <p>Development of Equality Impact Assessment Frameworks: Each participating partner will establish the assessment framework that has been agreed for their programmes and the datasets used to measure the level of change.</p> <p>Assessment and Validation systems: Each participating partner will test out approaches to improve systems and practices that demonstrate effective use of individual skills in the workplace</p> |
| Phase I May 2010 (3-5 days) | Phase I | <p>Peer Review Seminar (PRS1): The peer review seminars form the analytical core of the platform's work. The focus of PRS1 will include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Findings from the Study Visits, identification of good practices, progress in the development and implementation of transnational good practice will be discussed along an analytical framework developed by external experts. - Findings will be analysed and turned into recommendations and action plans for ESF Operational Programmes. - Review of initial benchmarking results and possible refinements to the tool-kit. - Progress in the implementation of equality impact assessment frameworks <p>This will result in a paper setting out recommendations to inform future action, potential innovation and change to ESF OPs for the second-half of the programme period..</p> |
| Phase II August 2010 | Phase II | <p>Phase II, briefing seminar II: The same format as that specified in 2009 (phase I) will apply, The aim is to use this seminar to attract and engage a wider range of regions and Member States. In particular focussing on those that participated in Equal, PROGRESS, successful ESF projects as well as those that expressed an interest during 2009 but could only make a commitment at this stage.</p> |
| Phase II September 2010 | Phase II March 2011 | <p>Second round of transnational study visits: New matching of mentor and mentee partners (see first round).</p> |
| Phase II September 2010 | Phase II March 2011 | <p>Testing of Benchmarking Toolkit: Each participating partner will measure improvements on the initial baseline position set up in the first briefing seminar, comparing performance improvements</p> |

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| | | <p>against other regions across different Member States. The benchmarking will be tested with the support of a web-based tool (www.transnationality.de) and a score card system.</p> <p>Equality Impact Assessment Frameworks: Each participating partner will measure progress of indicators on the initial baseline position and comparing performance with other regions and Member States and identifying the critical factors resulting in strong or weak outputs.</p> <p>Validation and Assessment: Each participating partner will continue to develop tools and test out approaches through pilot activities and share information and outcomes with their mentor or mentee.</p> |
| Phase II March 2011 | | <p>Peer Review Seminar (PRS2): The second peer review seminar will be similar to the first one. It will bring together phase I and phase II participants, with the emphasis on emerging lessons, potential policy recommendations and developing a mainstreaming strategy to disseminate results of the study visits. Moreover the web-based information platform, the benchmarking tool and good practice identified will be evaluated and potential opportunities for dissemination will be discussed.</p> |
| Combine Phase I and II April 2011 | June 2011 | <p>Outcomes: policy recommendations, benchmarking tool, web-based information platform: Recommendations to the commission, and national and regional stakeholders will be written up. The texts will be discussed with the steering group of core partners and then delivered to stakeholders of interest. The results of the benchmarking analysis of ESF OPs will also be written up and presented to stakeholders. Moreover the web-based benchmarking toolkit, equality impact assessment frameworks and good practice activities will be disseminated to interested partners and stakeholders. The web-based information tool for partners will be offered as the organising principle for transnational information exchange (already existing at www.transnationality.de).</p> |
| September 2011 | | <p>A Policy Forum will be held to present recommendations to the wider public and to support the dissemination and mainstreaming process and the impact of the benchmarking tool equality impact assessment frameworks and good practice activities on validation and assessment.</p> <p>The policy forum will be linked to a national policy event in Germany to create public visibility and high level interest in the platform's achievements. Strategic partners will be invited along with regional, national and European level stakeholders linked to employment policies, ethnic minority and migrant integration and ESF programme implementation.</p> |
| July 2011 | October 2011 | <p>A Synthesis Report will be drafted by the partners, to be addressed to the Commission. It will summarise results and outcomes, at the end of the three years of activity of the partnership and constitute a dissemination tool for future follow-on activity.</p> |
| July 2011 | October 2011 | <p>Mainstreaming of recommendations through:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrable evidence with implementation into ESF operational programmes and support strategies; - dissemination and take up of the benchmarking tool; - dissemination and take up of equality impact assessment frameworks; and - Provision of comprehensive web-based information platform. |

5. Working language(s) of the network

English will be the main communication language of the platform. Languages spoken in partner regions during the study visits will be translated into English.

6. Short summary of the network and expected results

The platform is designed to give a concrete input to the design of employment strategies with the focus on increasing the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities. Members of the platform recognise that Member States have different histories and contexts that define the term ethnic minority or migrant. Furthermore, that these terms can be interchangeable in different Member States.

For the purpose of this platform, migrants and ethnic minorities are defined as those individuals and communities of a different race, colour or ethnic identity that have arrived from another country of origin and settled in a country to live and work. They may be recently arrived or of long standing and acquired citizenship and may have children born in the country they have settled in.

For the purpose of clarity the activities of this platform do not include asylum seekers or the Roma Communities as the needs of these groups are being considered by other networks and platforms.

The platform will concentrate on **three thematic priorities**, namely:

- Assessment and Validation: Valuing Migrant Competences
- Fostering Anti-discrimination Skills as a Professional Approach
- Integrated Territorial Approaches

The scope of activities will include:-

- development of a strategic transnational network
- research including baseline studies on activities in regions and Member States regarding ESF investment, support and engagement of ethnic minorities and migrant communities
- identification of good practice through study visits
- Peer mentoring and review fostering transnational links
- Development of benchmarking tool-kits and equality impact assessments
- Creation of a transnational benchmarking club for employment
- Strategic links through Eurocities and Regions for Economic Change
- A policy forum that is linked to national policy in Germany and other transnational networks.

Expected results will include:-

- Improved understanding and awareness of effective implementation strategies based on “what works” in local and regional labour market settings.
- Criteria to identify "good practice" and performance indicators to measure effectiveness of policies will be considered as a basis for benchmarking solutions capable of replication in different regional contexts.
- Mechanisms for the successful transfer of good practice will be identified and tested

- Professional development for individuals and institutions to support strategic approaches to lifelong learning, access to and progression in employment and effective operational delivery.
- An enlarged transnational network focussed on equal opportunities and tackling barriers to employment for ethnic minorities and migrants.
- An inter-active tool for benchmarking performance of ESF programmes at a regional and national level to assess impact .
- The evidence base is used to inform the development of the second half of the ESF Operational Programmes, complementing mid-term evaluation studies that are commissioned by ESF Managing Authorities.
- A web-based information platform at [www.transnationality .de](http://www.transnationality.de) will be used disseminate the evidence, practice and lessons learned during the study visits.
- A benchmarking club of regions and Managing Authorities that will continue to share experience beyond the lifetime of the platform will be created.

7. What is the short term, what the long-term vision of the network?

The short term and long term vision have to be embedded into the economic and political framework the platform is situated in and the specific labour market challenges it aims to tackle.

The EU Context:

Increasing the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in employment and thereby strengthening their social integration is one of the priorities for intervention of the ESF in the period 2007 - 2013.

Three major issues feature in current debates on the exclusion, discrimination and integration of migrants and ethnic minorities in the EU. The first is the apparent failure of policymakers in overcoming the persistent labour market inequalities encountered by migrants and ethnic minorities, who generally experience far greater levels of unemployment than the majority population, receive lower wages, and are significantly over-represented in the least desirable jobs. Within a labour market split by ethnic and national origin, migrants and ethnic minorities experience discrimination even if they offer the skills and competences that are required for more qualified and better paid occupations. Those individuals experiencing additional disadvantages, such as age, physical disability or mental ill-health face, further barriers to finding employment.

The second issue relates to the overall socio-economic context of the EU which is characterised by skill and labour shortages that are increasingly noticeable in a number of sectors. Moreover, as the age profile of the European population rises, this will result in a shrinking of the EU's workforce. The influx of migrants and the increase in number of young people from ethnic minorities in urban centres therefore provides the main areas of population and labour force growth.

The third issue relates to the prospect of an economic downturn in a number of EU Member States. Inevitably those individuals with the lowest levels of qualification and skills are most vulnerable to losing their jobs and have less opportunity to re-enter the labour market.

The **long-term vision** of the platform relates to the need of European societies to ensure that the talents and potential of all citizens are fully mobilised, to effectively address the socio-economic problems highlighted above. Against this background, the ESF provides a major resource to assist Member States in launching new initiatives to effectively address these issues.

The National and Regional Context

Strengthening national and regional structures and their capacity to design and implement strategic approaches to increase the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in employment is essential in promoting economic sustainability and social integration. The **short-term vision** of the platform includes developing the capacities of key national actors and regional stakeholders to manage resources strategically, ensure effective programme development and management and build effective partnerships at a regional, national and transnational level for increasing the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in employment.

There is a significant need for professional development of actors and stakeholders to formulate strategies and actions in this field. This is why the platform will be implemented by transnational teams of key actors and stakeholders from different Member States and regions. These key actors and stakeholders will include representatives of the main social and economic interests such as the regional development agencies, social partners, employers, employment services, regional authorities, training developers and providers, NGOs, Chambers, trade unions and equalities commissions etc. It will be important that they can understand and span the strategic level and operational aspects as well as being able to disseminate and influence policy in their region or Member State.

Thematic Priorities of the platform

The platform's priorities have developed over time. They have evolved from the involvement of partners in Equal, particularly in the transnational EQUAL platform "Acting against Ethnic Discrimination in Employment". They have been informed by the findings of the evaluation report into good practice and lessons from working with Migrants through EQUAL. The priorities have been further developed through partner discussions which took place in the Hamburg seminar (May 2008) and the Berlin seminar (June/July 2008) which resulted in **three thematic priorities being identified which the platform will address.**

Theme 1 - Assessment and Validation: Valuing Migrant Competences and Skills

In most EU Member States, the qualifications of third country nationals are not formally recognised by employers and therefore employment intermediaries. Consequently their potential is not realised with migrants having to accept lower skilled, lower paid jobs below the qualifications that they had originally obtained. As a result, they experience a process of de-qualification which can ultimately lead to social deprivation and poverty.

Consequently the scope of activities in this theme include:-

- Identification and development of assessment procedures to accredit previous formal qualifications and informal competences;
- Development of good practice to develop bridging courses to enable migrants to "re-qualify" in their area of skills and experience through a programme of module and credit based learning;
- Better management and support for young people from migrant and ethnic backgrounds in their transition from school to further education and vocational training;
- Developing effective use of life long learning programmes / (re-)training adults to promote sectors where there is a (future) demand for labour;
- Effective promotion of the benefits of diversity within the workforce.

Theme 2 – Fostering Anti-discrimination Skills as a Professional Approach

Discrimination against migrants and ethnic minorities also occurs indirectly due to a lack of recognition and understanding of the disadvantages these groups face. Therefore sensitising staff through training can help break down existing barriers between training, employment and advisory services and facilitate equal access to such services. Transfer and mainstreaming of the lessons that can be gained from the work of EQUAL in this field could be significantly enhanced if Member States' ESF Managing Authorities were to encourage such initiatives within the 2007-2013 programme period.

Consequently the scope of activities in this theme includes:-

- Developing new approaches to capacity building and anti-discrimination training in public and private intermediary services for employment and training;
- Developing equality impact assessment tools to enable stakeholders to conduct assessments of processes and policies with their partners;
- Research to identify and assess the quality and take-up of anti-discrimination training

Theme 3 – Integrated Territorial Approaches

Fragmented action without effective coordination and communication between the key local or regional bodies has little effect on the situation of groups that are exposed to discrimination in the labour market. Greater impact can be achieved when organisational structures and processes are integrated across different measures into a comprehensive strategy which engages all the actors involved in economic and social development of a region.

EQUAL experience demonstrates that local and regional authorities are particularly well placed to coordinate responses to the range of problems that can undermine the precarious employment situation of migrants and ethnic minorities (e.g. language deficits, lack of recognised qualifications, transition management, housing problems and entrenched prejudices and gaps in intercultural communication between the host society and immigrant communities). Almost no other single group of actors has a greater capacity for leadership and for the coordination and pooling of resources in this field.

Consequently the scope of activities in this theme includes:-

- Developing measures to support comparative benchmarking of regional integrated approaches
- Developing a tool-kit for stakeholders to use and apply.
- Establishing a benchmarking club by encouraging stakeholders to peer review each other throughout the platform's lifetime and beyond.

8. What are the learning objectives of the network? What is the learning domain?

Obj.1: This platform aims to explore innovative approaches concerning the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in employment that can be integrated into strategies for regional development.

Obj. 2: This platform aims to improve mechanisms for the transfer of ESF good practice among EU Member States and regions on a basis of mutual cooperation. This will involve study visits for small groups of actors and stakeholders to observe initiatives in different contexts in order to draw out examples worthy of wider dissemination. Study visits will be complemented by establishing peer mentoring networks which will enable individual

stakeholders to collaborate on specific activities and policies with the mentor stakeholder advising on the feasibility of measures and assessing the quality and impact of outcomes with the mentee stakeholder.

Obj. 3: This platform aims to demonstrate how transnational thematic cooperation constitutes a strategy for policymakers aiming at a European approach within the European Social Fund and better support for migrants and ethnic minorities in the employment sector.

The participants in the platform will develop a benchmarking tool-kit that will include statistical analysis of each participant's ESF Operational Programme, a mapping of ESF investment in projects working with migrants and ethnic minorities (ESF allocation, agreed outputs and unit costs), the identification of a problem and whether it has a comparator in other Operational Programmes, the establishing of common features, such as scale, sectors, and partner arrangements, the identification of unique facets that relate to national / regional economies, characteristics, laws and systems that may have a disproportionate impact on delivery. The tool will be developed in the development phase to establish a baseline position for each participant. It will be tested in the implementation phase including a scorecard system that can be used to monitor progress against set targets in an agreed workplan.

Obj. 4: This platform aims to harness the efforts of all actors in the regions involved to pool resources and to identify individuals and organisations who can act as key agents of change. The intention being to foster a climate of cooperation across regions and EU Member States by creating a transnational network of actors who have been supported in developing their skills and competencies in working with migrants and ethnic minorities.

Obj. 5: This platform aims to pilot measures and processes which could be replicated and adapted by other EU Member States and regions.

Obj. 6: This platform seeks to support stakeholders in mainstreaming lessons into national, regional and local programmes and policy and improve the competencies and skills of staff participating in their delivery. This will be supported through the development of training and action plans that contribute to the development of equality impact assessment frameworks..

The **learning domains** correspond to the three thematic fields the platform will focus on. In each of the three thematic fields the platform will :-

- promote transnational peer review between experts from the partner regions
- seek to improve the qualification of regional and local staff,
- Enable improved programme development and service delivery supported by open and transparent evaluation and rephrasing of national and regional ESF operational programmes, develop, test and implement an interactive tool for benchmarking the impact of ESF operational programmes in the partner regions.

9. Professional competence and experience

How will competence in the field of the proposed network be mobilised. What are the proposed tasks of experts (in particular/ network facilitator and of thematic or process experts)?

Each core partner will be responsible for nominating experts who will be involved in the strategic, management and delivery level through the peer review process. Each partner will also be responsible for the organisation of two study visits in a region. Each partner will nominate experts who will be selected by the Core Group to support writing the baseline reports and presenting them, at the first seminar in April 2009. Each partner will also nominate experts to conduct the analysis of the regional ESF OPs and other employment programmes as baseline information for the development and testing of a benchmarking tool and in supporting the development of equality impact assessment frameworks. Each partner

will nominate experts who will take part in the peer review seminars, which form the analytical core of the platforms work, as recommendations will be developed and the benchmarking tool evaluated. The National Ministry of Labour in Germany will support the platform's work by nominating stakeholders and organising the final policy forum linked to a national policy event in autumn 2011.

Berlin's Representative for Integration and Migration will manage the coordination of the platform, making sure deadlines are met and that study visits run smoothly. He will oversee the progress of developing the benchmarking tool and make sure recommendations are disseminated and mainstreamed to the relevant stakeholders and political fora. Together with the steering group he will take decisions on possible amendments to the platform's workplan, promotion of the platform and the process for widening the membership of the Core Group in the second round of study visits. He will prepare the first baseline report in close cooperation with the appointed experts. The representative has a long-standing experience in the coordination of European projects and transnational cooperation. He has coordinated two development partnerships under EQUAL with strong transnational components. Moreover he has taken part in various transnational projects with partners from UK, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Poland, The Netherlands and Denmark in the context of INTI and the transnational ERF. He is a permanent member in the Eurocities and the ERLAI network and will host the next European Integrating Cities conference in Berlin in spring 2009.

10. Approach to handle languages

English will be the main communication language of the platform. Languages spoken in partner regions during the study visits will be translated into English.

11. Lasting impact and/or multiplier effect of the network

The benchmarking tool will have the strongest and long lasting impact because it can be applied by other ESF regions and Member States. Initially a benchmarking between as many ESF regions as possible in the field of migrants participation in the labour market would be the most favourable effect of the network. The benchmarking tool developed by this platform can be a first cornerstone to this objective.

The Equality Impact Assessment Framework is a replicable tool that can be adapted by individual organisations to establish their own frameworks and monitor performance for programmes that go beyond the ESF.

The peer review process will intensify the dialogue between the regions; it will trigger a learning process of those that are mentees in specific thematic areas. Good practice will be transferred and implemented by other ESF regions or Member States.

12. Other useful information

The platform will link with and complement the PROGRESS programme, support the work of the Eurocities network who will be targeted as key stakeholders for engagement in the platform. Good practice and validated evidence of effective assessment and validation processes will also inform the development of the European Qualifications Framework.

* to be elaborated in the work programme