Public Consultation on EU funds in the area of Cohesion

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

Read the introduction
(http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/newsroom/pdf/public_consultation_cohesion_en.pdf)

Guidance

- **Are you replying as a as an individual in your personal capacity**? If so, please tick the first option under question 1. You will then be invited to enter your personal details and then led directly to questions 27 to 40 which relate to EU funds in the area of cohesion.
- **Are you replying as an entity or in your professional capacity**? If so, please tick the second option under question 1. You will then be invited to enter your personal details as well as information on the entity of behalf of which you are replying and then then led directly to questions 27 – 40 which relate to EU funds in the area of cohesion.
- **In both cases, you may skip the non-mandatory questions and upload a document** (1 MB max) under point 41 and enter any other comment under point 42. Please do not include any personal data in documents submitted in the context of the consultation if you opt for anonymous publication. It is important to read the specific privacy statement for information on how your personal data and contribution will be dealt with.

About you

*1 You are replying

- ○ as an individual in your personal capacity
- ◉ in your professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation

*8 Respondent's first name

*9 Respondent's last name

*10 Respondent's professional email address

*11 Name of the organisation

Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (coordinated Dutch Government position)

*12 Postal address of the organisation

Parnassusplein 5
2511 VX Den Haag
The Netherlands

*13 Type of organisation

Please select the answer option that fits best.

- ○ Private enterprise
- ○ Professional consultancy, law firm, self-employed consultant
- ○ Trade, business or professional association
- ○ Non-governmental organisation, platform or network

- ○ Research and academia
- ○ Churches and religious communities
- ○ Regional or local authority (public or mixed)
- ◉ International or national public authority
- ○ Other

*21 Please specify the type of organisation.

- ○ Intergovernmental organisation
- ○ EU institution, body or agency
- ○ National parliament
- ◉ National government
- ○ National public authority or agency

*22 Is your organisation included in the Transparency Register?

If your organisation is not registered, we invite you to register here (https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/ri/registering.do?locale=en), although it is not compulsory to be registered to reply to this consultation. Why a transparency register (http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/staticPage/displayStaticPage.do?locale=en&reference=WHY_TRANSPARENCY_REGISTER)?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ◉ Not applicable

*24 Country of organisation's headquarters

- ○ Austria
- ○ Belgium
- ○ Bulgaria
- ○ Croatia
- ○ Cyprus
- ○ Czech Republic
- ○ Denmark
- ○ Estonia
- ○ Finland
- ○ France
- ○ Germany
- ○ Greece
- ○ Hungary
- ○ Ireland
- ○ Italy
- ○ Latvia
- ○ Lithuania
- ○ Luxembourg
- ○ Malta
- ◉ Netherlands
- ○ Poland
- ○ Portugal
- ○ Romania
- ○ Slovak Republic
- ○ Slovenia
- ○ Spain
- ○ Sweden
- ○ United Kingdom
- ○ Other

*26 Your contribution,

Note that, whatever option chosen, your answers may be subject to a request for public access to documents under Regulation (EC) N°1049/2001 (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/PDF/r1049_en.pdf)

- ○ **can be published with your organisation's information** (I consent the publication of all information in my contribution in whole or in part including the name of my organisation, and I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent publication)
- ◉ **can be published provided that your organisation remains anonymous** (I consent to the publication of any information in my contribution in whole or in part (which may include quotes or opinions I express) provided that it is done anonymously. I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent the publication.

EU Funds in the area of cohesion

27 Please let us know whether you have experience with one or more of the following funds and programmes

at most 6 choice(s)

- ☐ The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- ☐ The Cohesion Fund (CF)
- ☑ The European Social Fund (ESF)
- ☑ The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF)
- ☑ The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)
- ☑ Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)

28 Please let us know to which of the following one or more topics your replies will refer

at most 3 choice(s)

- ☐ Economic and sustainable development
- ☑ Employment, skills and education
- ☑ Social inclusion

29 The Commission has preliminarily identified a number of policy challenges which programmes/funds under the policy area of cohesion could address. How important are these policy challenges in your view?

	Very important	Rather important	Neither important nor unimportant	Rather not important	Not important at all	No opinion
a. Promote economic growth in the EU as a whole	◉	○	○	○	○	○
b. Reduce regional disparities and underdevelopment of certain EU regions	○	◉	○	○	○	○
c. Address the adverse side-effects of globalisation	◉	○	○	○	○	○
d. Reduce unemployment, promote quality jobs and support labour mobility	◉	○	○	○	○	○
e. Promote social inclusion and combat poverty	◉	○	○	○	○	○
f. Promote common values (e.g. rule of law, fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination)	◉	○	○	○	○	○
g. Facilitate transition to low carbon and circular economy, ensure environmental protection and resilience to disasters and climate change	○	○	○	○	○	◉
h. Foster research and innovation across the EU	○	○	○	○	○	◉
i. Facilitate transition to digital economy and society	○	○	○	○	○	◉
j. Promote sustainable transport and mobility	○	○	○	○	○	◉
k. Promote territorial cooperation (interregional, cross-border, transnational)	○	○	○	○	○	◉
l. Support education and training for skills and life-long learning	○	◉	○	○	○	○
m. Improve quality of institutions and administrative capacity	○	○	◉	○	○	○
n. Promote sound economic governance and the implementation of reforms	◉	○	○	○	○	○
o. Other (please give degree of importance here and fill in question 30 below)	◉	○	○	○	○	○

30 If you selected 'Other' in the above question, please specify it here:

31 To what extent do the current programmes/funds successfully address these challenges?

	To a large extent	To a fairly large extent	To some extent only	Not at all	No opinion
a. Promote economic growth in the EU as a whole	○	◉	○	○	○
b. Reduce regional disparities and underdevelopment of certain EU regions	○	◉	○	○	○
c. Address the adverse side-effects of globalisation	○	◉	○	○	○
d. Reduce unemployment, promote quality jobs and support labour mobility	○	◉	○	○	○
e. Promote social inclusion and combat poverty	◉	○	○	○	○
f. Promote common values (e.g. rule of law, fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination)	○	◉	○	○	○
g. Facilitate transition to low carbon and circular economy, ensure environmental protection and resilience to disasters and climate change	○	○	○	○	◉
h. Foster research and innovation across the EU	○	○	○	○	◉
i. Facilitate transition to digital economy and society	○	○	○	○	◉
j. Promote sustainable transport and mobility	○	○	○	○	◉
k. Promote territorial cooperation (interregional, cross-border, transnational)	○	○	○	○	◉
l. Support education and training for skills and life-long learning	○	○	◉	○	○
m. Improve quality of institutions and administrative capacity	○	◉	○	○	○
n. Promote sound economic governance and the implementation of reforms	○	◉	○	○	○
o. Other (please give degree of importance here and fill in question 32 below)	○	○	◉	○	○

32 If you selected 'Other' in the above question, please specify it here:

200 character(s) maximum

Labour market integration and social inclusion of asylum status holders

33 To what extent do the current programmes/funds add value, compared to what Member States could achieve at national, regional and/or local levels without EU funds?

- ○ To a large extent
- ◉ To a fairly large extent
- ○ To some extent only
- ○ Not at all
- ○ Don't know

34 Please explain how the current programmes/funds can add value compared to what Member States could achieve at national, regional and/or local levels

1500 character(s) maximum

Please clearly indicate to which policies, programmes and funds your answers refer.

Not everyone reaps the benefits of the internal market (yet). Therefore, Europe needs to protect against the negative side effects and consequences of the internal market and globalisation. This is what the Netherlands does with the current ESF and EGF programmes by focussing on labour market integration of the most vulnerable groups (ESF) and people threatened by job loss due to globalisation (EGF). Differences in economic and social perspectives between groups in society and between regions and/or member states can cause tensions and can reduce support for European cooperation. These European challenges need also to be addressed at a European level. Integration of asylum status holders and youth unemployment are examples of these European challenges. Moreover, the social funds can contribute to the implementation of the European pillar of social rights.
Added-value also occurs as in the current programming there is a clear link between the funds and the necessary structural reforms (related to the European semester process). The implementation of the 2015 labour market reform (Participatiewet) is supported through the ESF.This added-value should be further increased in future programming by strengthening the link between ESI funds and structural reforms.

35 Is there a need to modify or add to the objectives of the programmes/funds in this policy area? If yes, which changes would be necessary or desirable?

1500 character(s) maximum

Please clearly indicate to which policies, programmes and funds your answers refer.

Effectiveness can be increased by enhancing focus of the funds. With regard to the social funds a strong focus on labour market participation and social inclusion of vulnerable groups through investments in human capital is desirable, this includes asylum status holders. An instrument for the EU to invest in people will increase the visibility of the EU and subsequently the understanding of what the EU can do for its citizens.
A stronger link with structural reforms is furthermore desirable. Social funds can be used in accompanying structural reforms through focused projects in the area of labour market participation and vulnerable groups (human capital).

36 To what extent do you consider the following as obstacles which prevent the current programmes/funds from successfully achieving their objectives?

	To a large extent	To a fairly large extent	To some extent only	Not at all	No opinion
a. Complex procedures leading to high administrative burden and delays	◉	○	○	○	○
b. Heavy audit and control requirements	◉	○	○	○	○
c. Available funding does not address the real challenges	○	○	◉	○	○
d. Insufficient administrative capacity to manage programmes	○	○	○	◉	○
e. Insufficient information about funding and selection process	○	○	○	◉	○
f. Lack of flexibility to react to unforeseen circumstances	○	◉	○	○	○
g. Difficulty of combining EU action with other public interventions	○	◉	○	○	○
h. Insufficient synergies between the EU programmes/funds	○	◉	○	○	○
i. Difficulty to ensure the sustainability of projects when the financing period ends	○	◉	○	○	○
j. Insufficient use of financial instruments	○	○	○	○	◉
k. Co-financing rates	◉	○	○	○	○
l. Late disbursement of funds / delays in payments to beneficiaries	○	○	◉	○	○
m. Insufficient linkages of the Funds with the EU economic governance and the implementation of structural reforms	○	○	◉	○	○
n. Legal uncertainty	◉	○	○	○	○

o. Insufficient ownership	○	○	◉	○	○
p. Insufficient involvement of civil society in design and implementation	○	○	◉	○	○
q. Other (please specify below)	○	○	○	○	○

37 If you selected 'Other' in the above question, please specify it here:

1000 character(s) maximum

38 To what extent would these steps help to further simplify and reduce administrative burdens for beneficiaries under current programmes/funds?

	To a large extent	To a fairly large extent	To some extent only	Not at all	No opinion
a. Alignment of rules between EU funds	◉	○	○	○	○
b. Fewer, clearer, shorter rules	◉	○	○	○	○
c. More freedom for national authorities to set rules	◉	○	○	○	○
d. More flexibility of activity once funding is eligible	○	◉	○	○	○
e. More flexibility of resource allocation to respond to unexpected needs	◉	○	○	○	○
f. Simplify the ex-ante conditionalities	○	○	◉	○	○
g. More effective stakeholders' involvement in the programming, implementation and evaluation	○	○	◉	○	○
h. Other (please specify below)	○	○	○	○	○

39 If you selected 'Other' in the above question, please specify it here:

1000 character(s) maximum

40 How could synergies among programmes/funds in this area be further strengthened to avoid possible overlaps/duplication? For example, would you consider grouping/merging some programmes/funds?

1500 character(s) maximum

Please clearly indicate to which policies, programmes and funds your answers refer.

The social funds (ESF, EGF, FEAD, YEI, Easi) can be merged into one fund for investments in human capital. This increased focus on human capital enhances EU visibility for citizens and a combined fund prevents overlap and increases efficiency. Synergies should not be seen as a goal as such, but more as a means/an instrument to achieve a more efficiënt and strategic use of funds.

Document upload and final comments

41 Please feel free to upload a concise document, such as a position paper. The maximum file size is 1MB.

Please note that the uploaded document will be published alongside your response to the questionnaire which is the essential input to this public consultation. The document is optional and serves as additional background reading to better understand your position.

Select file to upload

42 If you wish to add further information — within the scope of this questionnaire — please feel free to do so here.

1500 character(s) maximum

The answers presented in this questionnaire do only entail the social funds indicated in question 27. As seperate questionnaire is filled out regarding the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). In reference to 36-k: national co-financing rates are often too low. This results in insufficient political commitment and lacks an incentive to optimise spending of structural funds. To create more ownership, national co-financing rates should be increased.

Above answers are without prejudice to the overall position of the Netherlands on the MFF. The Netherlands advocates a future proof, flexible and financially sustainable budget; modernization should go hand in hand in hand with increasing effectiveness and efficiency. Focus should be on those areas where EU timely and adequate response creates added value. Individual programmes and objectives should support this overall objective and allow for an integrated evaluation of the future MFF.

Submit