

EU News Bulletin

The latest EU funding opportunities, news and events for local & regional government



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FUNDING

Transport Networks

Almost €1 billion of financing is available for European transport infrastructure projects in three separate work programmes under the 2009 Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Calls for Proposals, launched on 31 March. This includes a €500 million allocation as part of the Commission's European Economic Recovery Plan, with the aim of stimulating economic demand in construction and other sectors by accelerating investments which can be largely implemented during 2009-2010.

Additionally, there will be funding opportunities under the TEN-T Multi-Annual Programme, with priorities including 'Motorways of the Sea' freight routes, Intelligent Transport Systems integrating information and communications technology for road safety, and harmonised rail signalling systems. The complementary TEN-T Annual Programme includes €60 million in loan guarantees. Proposals will be evaluated on their relevance to TEN-T priorities and policy objectives, their impact - particularly on the environment - and their completeness, clarity, soundness and coherence.

Deadline: 15 May
<http://ec.europa.eu/tentea>

Intelligent Energy - Europe

The 2009 call for 'Intelligent Energy - Europe' under the Competitiveness & Innovation Programme is providing €65 million in funding across 4 strands:

- SAVE (Energy-efficient buildings and products);
- ALTENER (electricity from renewable energy sources; renewable energy heating/cooling; small-scale renewable energy applications in buildings; biofuels);
- STEER (alternative fuels and clean energy-efficient vehicles; energy-efficient transport; capacity-building in transport for existing local and regional agencies);
- Integrated activities (networking for local action; sustainable energy communities; bio-business; energy services; intelligent energy of higher education teachers).

Deadline: 25 June
Call text and 2009 Work Programme:
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/call_for_proposals/call_library_en.htm

Sustainable & Competitive Tourism

The European Commission's Tourism Unit has published a call on "Knowledge Networks for the competitiveness and sustainability of European Tourism" with the overall objective to provide added value in improving the performance of European tourism, through the creation of an environment favourable to small tourism businesses and to their cooperation on related issues.

The call will co-finance initiatives of public and private bodies, or their existing networks, aiming to demonstrate to small and micro companies that adopting and implementing sustainable practices is an important aspect of long-term competitiveness.

Deadline: 30 June
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=2929&tpa_id=136&lang=en

Life+ pre-announcement

The LIFE+ 2009 call for proposals will be published on 15 May. This programme supports the development and implementation of Community environmental policy and legislation relating to the 6th Environmental Action Programme and incorporates components relating to nature & biodiversity, policy & governance and information & communication. The upper value on his call is €250 million.

The 2009 applications package will be made available when the call is published. However, there are unlikely to be significant changes with respect to the 2008 call, so potential applicants can begin preparing their applications using last year's guidance. A National Information Day will take place in Dublin on 29 May. This will be mainly aimed at newcomers to the programme who are considering preparing a proposal or at those who have been unsuccessful previously. Contact Vanina Dubois, lifeie@mwhglobal.com to secure a place.

Deadline for submitting proposals to the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government: 15 September
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/lifeplus/call/index.htm>

Civil Protection

The 2009 Call for proposals under the Civil protection Financial Instrument Cooperation is now open. This programme supports and complements Member States' efforts to protect people and property in the event of natural and man-made disasters, terrorist acts and technological, radiological and environmental accidents. It also facilitates co-operation between Member States in the field of civil protection. Cooperation projects may cover either prevention or preparedness themes.

Deadline: 18 May
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/index.htm>

Interreg

The latest North West Europe call is now open for all 4 priorities and for Strategic Initiatives with a 17 April deadline.

Application Pack including updated Guidance Notes:

www.nweurope.eu/index.php?act=page&page=funding&id=350

Meanwhile the second call under the Atlantic Area programme will open in early April.

<http://www.coop-atlantico.com>

Other recent calls:

http://www.iro.ie/funding/news/funding_calls/

Partner Searches received by the IRO from other regions:

http://www.iro.ie/funding/news/partner_searches/

NEWS & POLICY

White Paper on Adaptation to Climate Change

In June 2007, the Commission published a green paper on adaptation to climate change, leading to the launch of a consultation and eventually to the defining of an approach based on: early action in areas where current knowledge is sufficient; global perspectives; filling knowledge gaps; and setting up a European advisory group to analyse coordinated strategies and actions. A White Paper setting out a more comprehensive EU strategy of measures to deal with the issue in the long-term has been expected for some months as a complement to this focus.

This paper was presented on 1 April and summarises the actual, likely and potential impacts of global warming and extreme weather on different economic sectors such as energy, transport, ecosystems, agriculture, tourism and health. Additionally it sets out a framework to prepare for a more comprehensive post-2013 strategy to help individuals, businesses, the EU and its Member States avoid "reactive and unplanned adaptation" in the future

according to Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas.

The first phase of the strategy, which runs until 2012, will focus on key sectoral EU policies - the potential impacts of climate change, the costs of action and inaction and how proposed structural and technical changes might impact on and interact with policies in other sectors – to identify possible adaption measures which could be mainstreamed. With this resilience in mind, the Commission has recently unveiled discussion papers on agricultural; health; and water, coasts and marine ecology issues. Among the issues raised is the prospect of assessing the need to use equipment and wider use of ecosystems to improve water storage capacity, avoid usage waste and further regulate the standards of water in agriculture, households and buildings.

According to the Commission, it is already clear that the impact of climate change will have varied regional implications, and most measures will need to be framed nationally, regionally and locally. It is also recognised that much work is required to ensure adequate sharing between Member States of information and research on climate-change impact and vulnerability, and best practices on adaptation.

White Paper:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/adaptation/pdf/com_2009_147_en.pdf

CoR at Oireachtas Committee

On March 24, members of the Irish Delegation to the Committee of the Regions met with the Joint Oireachtas Committee on European Scrutiny to discuss issues of mutual interest. In particular, the CoR members outlined the work of the Committee and in particular its activities in monitoring the principle of Subsidiarity. Members also addressed enhancing the input and involvement of the local authority level in the EU decision-making process and made a number of specific recommendations in this regard.

In particular: the Oireachtas establishing a more structured mechanism for consultation with local government on proposals from the European Commission that have implications at local government level; a more inclusive approach for transposing EU legislation into national law; and the potential to make better use of local and regional authorities as information channels for informing the public on EU issues and

making better use of European liaison officers within local authorities.

Full transcript:

<http://debates.oireachtas.ie/DDebate.aspx?F=SRJ20090324.xml&Node=H3#H3>

Further information: Contact IRO

Municipal waste survey – mixed results for Ireland

According to a Eurostat survey published in March, only the Danes among all EU nationalities generated more municipal waste per person in 2007 than the Irish average of 786kg. This amount is a full 150% of the EU average of 522kg. By contrast the Czechs produced a mere 294kg each – largely reflecting enormous variations in household consumer behavior patterns between Western and Eastern Europe though these figures exclude agricultural and industrial waste. The Danish total is mitigated by a mere 5% reliance on landfill compared to other methods. This trait is shared with Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden in particular – all of which prioritise incineration. Ireland is one of 11 Member States which did not at the time employ incineration – though the only one in Western Europe.

This also indicates significant differences in methods of waste treatment with recycling rates varying from 46% in Germany to several countries which continue to rely entirely or almost exclusively on landfill. The figure here for Ireland is an encouraging 34% for recycling which ranks joint fourth overall and a mid-table 64% for landfill. Composting accounted for 2% of treatment in Ireland - a figure dwarfed by the 13 countries who exceed the 10% mark for this method with Austria reaching 38%.

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/pls/portals/docs/PAGE/PGP_PRD_CAT_PREREL/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2009/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2009_MONTH_03/8-09032009-EN-BP.PDF

Consultation on strategy for sustainable growth post-2010

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) has launched a consultation of Europe's local and regional authorities on the future of the EU's approach to growth and jobs after the conclusion in 2010 of the current Lisbon Strategy. This is an opportunity to enable this levels of government to contribute their views towards next Spring's European Council

which will ultimately determine the future direction of this policy field.

The outcome of the consultation will first be presented and discussed in Brussels during the Open Days week (5-8 October) before being incorporated into a formal CoR Opinion on the Future of the Lisbon Strategy. The deadline for contributing to the brief questionnaire underpinning this exercise is 20 April.

<http://lisbon.cor.europa.eu/consultation.html>

Clean Vehicles Directive

The EU's Council of Ministers definitively adopted, on 30 March, a new directive on the Promotion of Clean and Energy Efficient Road Transport Vehicles aimed at creating a viable market for green vehicles. This will require public authorities to take into account operating costs and the environmental impact of the vehicles that they plan to acquire when placing invitations to tender. The directive applies to all public contracting parties and to all types of vehicles, be the operators public or private.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/urban/vehicles/directive_en.htm

National waste prevention programmes and waste reduction week

The European Commission DG Environment is currently undertaking a study seeking feedback from stakeholders towards the development of future national waste prevention programmes. This follows the revision of the Waste Framework Directive and presents an opportunity for practitioners to contribute towards EU policy-making. This first part of the study consists of a 2-page questionnaire to identify Best Practices on Waste Prevention. If you are aware of such initiatives, at a national, regional or local level, that would be relevant, your feedback would be appreciated. The deadline for receipt of input for this phase is 11 April. Subsequent phases of the consultation will address the development of Waste Prevention Guidelines and of Indicators.

On a related matter of networking to influence wider waste management policy, the first ever official European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) has been announced for 21 - 29 November with the support of the LIFE+ Programme. This will be a key event for promoting awareness of sustainable

waste reduction actions and highlighting the impact of our consumption on the environment and on climate change. Expressions of interest in coordinating, organising and promoting the related events and actions to be undertaken by involved stakeholders (schools, universities, local authorities, businesses, etc.) on a territorial basis are requested from competent public bodies. The relevant expression of interest forms are available from the IRO and must be returned by 15 May.

Register on the Commission's online consultation forum

http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/Home/central_dir_admin?fn=register or contact the IRO:

Waste Framework Directive:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework_directive.htm

DG Environment Waste Prevention site:
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/index.htm>

European eGovernment Awards 2009

Local and regional public sector organisations are invited to submit their Information and Communication Technologies activities to the European eGovernment Awards 2009 to highlight how ICT improves service delivery to improve citizens' quality of life, increases trust in government and public sector organisations, and contribute to the increased competitiveness of companies and businesses.

The award categories are:

- supporting the Single Market (cross-border e-services and information sharing impacting on mobility for citizens and businesses);
- empowering citizens (improved and easier access to public services for citizens; ICT solutions for participation and/or engagement of all groups in society).
- empowering businesses (improved and easier access to public services for companies creating business opportunities and thereby enhancing competition and generating savings for businesses and SMEs);
- enabling administrative efficiency and effectiveness (Innovation or re-organisation in services and processes making administrations more efficient and effective and reducing administrative burden).

Submissions will be evaluated based on relevance, impact, innovation, potential for sharing good practice, management approach and communication and

dissemination. An Information Day will take place in Brussels on 21 April and the IRO would be happy to attend on behalf of interested parties. Call deadline: 10 June.

www.epractice.eu/awards

ICT for a Low Carbon Society - Consultation

In January 2007, the European Commission adopted an energy and climate change package, subsequently endorsed by the European Parliament and by EU leaders, targeting a 20% increase in the use of renewable energy and a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) by 2020. In May 2008 it announced an intention to promote the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in meeting these goals by improving energy efficiency throughout the economy.

The untapped potential of ICT is expected to reduce total carbon emissions in Europe by up to 15% by 2020 - not only by improving monitoring and management of energy use in workplaces and public spaces but by helping make people more aware of how they use energy domestically. A Communication has been published on 12 March calling on Member States (who at last December's Council summit reiterated a collective commitment to meeting the 20/20 targets) and industry to take concrete steps to realise this vision by spreading the use of technologies that allow people and business to carry out their daily activities in a more energy efficient way.

The Commission have consequently launched a new public consultation to establish a common understanding among all stakeholders of the issues needing to be tackled and of the proposed solutions. Contributions will feed into a Recommendation setting out specific actions to make the best use of ICTs being adopted in the second half of 2009.

In a related development, a 23 March agreement between the European Parliament and the Czech EU presidency on liberalising the EU's energy market – the so-called unbundling policy – means that some 80% of European consumers are set to have smart energy meters, found in recent trials to contribute to a 10% reduction in typical energy consumption, installed in their homes by 2020.

Smarter energy use:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sustainable_growth/energy_efficiency/index_en.htm

Consultation:

<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/jpm/forms/dispatch?form=ICT4EE3>

Deadline: 14 June

Public consultation on climate change policy

As part of a review of the implementation of EU climate policy, the European Commission is preparing its Fifth National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and is inviting organisations active in this field, including economic actors and NGOs, to contribute to this process through a questionnaire.

The European Community National Communication will cover the legislative measures and techniques relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation as adopted and implemented by the EU since 2006, as well as its assistance policies and programmes. The communication will not cover the Member States' own activities, since each party to the convention must submit its own report.

Deadline: 4 May

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/unfccc_en.htm

EVENTS

Upon request, the IRO is happy to attend Brussels-based events on behalf of Irish regional and local authorities.

Eco-innovation

The Eco-innovation European Info Day is an opportunity to learn more about the forthcoming call for proposals within the Competitiveness & Innovation Programme which is offering approximately €32 million in funding for projects in the areas of recycling, buildings, food & drink and green business.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/etap/eco_innovation/events_en.htm

22 - 25 April, Catalonia Planning

The 14th International Conference on Urban Planning, Regional Development and Information Society takes place in Sitges under the topic of 'Cities 3.0: Smart, Sustainable, Integrative Strategies, Concepts and Technologies for Planning the Urban Future'.

www.corp.at

30 April, Brussels Rural innovation

The RUR@CT network provides capitalisation tools for the transfer of good practices between European Regions with an interest in operationally promoting rural innovation at local and regional level. Its membership has already 50 regions or local authorities in 15 Member States. Network membership is free with a simple online procedure and a charter to be signed. To reflect European Commission DG REGIO's wish to reinforce strategic cooperation with RUR@CT, the forthcoming event will include a RUR@CT presentation to the European decision makers and a Partnership Forum for the transfer of good practices.

www.ruract.eu

12-15 May, Brussels Cycling Cities

Velo-city is generally considered to be the world's largest conference devoted to cycling as a functional and environmentally-friendly means of transport. The sessions making up this year's conference will address issues and aspects of design, parking policies, intermodality, communication, education, and health and lifestyle. Several cities are set to sign the Charter of Brussels, committing themselves to invest in cycling infrastructure as an integral element of their mobility systems.

www.velo-city2009.com

20-21 July, Osternund, Sweden Renewable Energy and Clean Tech

The "Renewable Energy and Clean Tech – Tools for Regional Development" conference intends to produce concrete proposals on how innovations in these fields can ease the current stagnation at

regional, national and European levels. These conclusions will be conveyed to the responsible ministers at the EU summit in Åre later that week. Attendance is free.

www.rdc2009.se/index_en.html

PUBLICATIONS

State Aid handbook for SMEs

A handbook has just been published by the Commission which gives a concise, and accessible overview of Community State Aid rules for SMEs, in particular, as regards support for access to finance in the current financial and economic crisis. SMEs are eligible for all aid categories allowed under EU State aid rules. For those categories of aid measures which can also be provided to large undertakings, SMEs benefit from higher aid intensities.

http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/studies_reports/sme_handbook.pdf

'FP7 Coach'

Version 3.1.0 of the *FP7 Coach* is now available as a "how to" e-book guide to assist with preparing, negotiating and managing projects under the Seventh Framework Programme. The almost 1000 pages are full of practical examples, checklists, tables and flow charts to guide and support project promoters.

www.fp7coach.eu

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