

Project ideas with

EFFECT

Co-operation in optimizing the European Social Fund Interventions

PROJECT IDEAS WITH EFFECT

Co-operation in optimizing
the European Social Fund Interventions

PROJECT IDEAS WITH EFFECT – co-operation in optimizing
the European Social Fund interventions

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CO-OPERATION IN RESPECT OF OPTIMIZATION

The European Social Fund (ESF) enters a new period from 2000-2006. The new fund affords a great number of exciting opportunities for project development and innovative thinking to the benefit of the unemployed, the employed, businesses and entrepreneurs. At the same time stricter requirements are imposed in respect of control and efficiency for the future social fund projects. The new opportunities and challenges oblige the Social Fund's partners to work together in order to optimize the quality of future interventions.

In order to create an improved basis for this co-operation, the National Labour Market Authority initiated, in the autumn of 1999, a development project in which representatives from the ESF administration in Vejle and North Jutland Counties, the Technological Institute, Sociological Analysis, AMU-Center Horsens/Silkeborg, Employment Services South and North Jutland, EK Innovation, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour participated. The project group has gathered and processed a large range of experiences from previous Social Fund programmes as well as other related areas, and is now able to submit this inspiration catalogue.

The catalogue addresses itself first and foremost to the total social fund administrations as well as members of the fund's committees (regional social fund committees, project approval and monitoring committees) in order to pass on specific ideas and recommendations regarding how the administration and committees can jointly contribute towards raising the quality of the ESF efforts. It is important that the catalogue is not regarded as being an end-product in its own right, but rather a starting point for a co-operative process that secures an ongoing development and the optimization of the ESF efforts. The dynamics of the project first come about when the administration and committees harvest specific (positive and negative) experiences with the catalogue's methods, tools and ideas, or when new problems, ideas and solutions occur.

The catalogue will also be able to inspire project applicants, project managers and others who work within – or in connection with – the social fund's area, or who use project-based working methods in general.

1 The overall (regional and central) social fund will subsequently be referred to as "the administration"

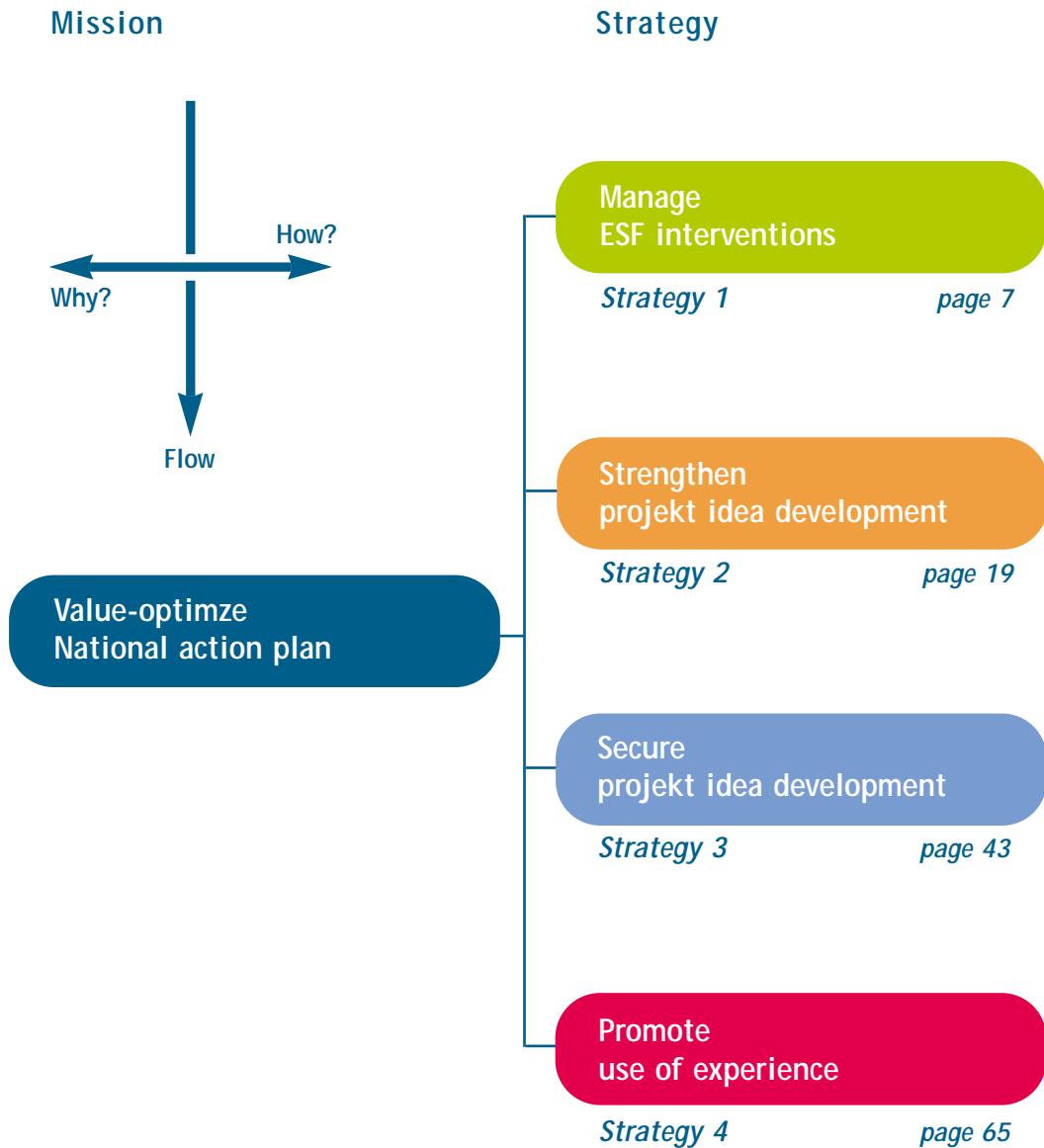
If one wishes to work towards the maximum utilization of the Social Fund's means, it is not enough to concentrate upon a key area and – for example – do everything to select the best project ideas. On the other hand there is a need to achieve an overview of the Social Fund's area and – on that basis – carry out and test a long range of large and small initiatives and improvements that, in time, can lead to profound improvements.

With that in mind the inspiration catalogue is aimed at achieving a wide co-operation in order to raise the quality level of four main areas

- **Planning and adaptation of the ESF efforts**
- **Development of project ideas**
- **Implementation of project ideas**
- **Distribution and employment of project experiences and results**

VALUE-OPTIMIZE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT

6



The above innovation tree shows the organic connection between "Mission" and "Product and Service". The tree can be read from the left by asking "How?", and from the right by asking "Why?". If the tree is read from top to bottom, the flow is obtained (the temporal order of events).

MANAGE ESF INTERVENTIONS

Princip: **The Labour Market Authority**
 County regional Social Fund committees and secretariat
 Monitoring Committee for Objective 3
 Regional labour market councils

The effect of the overall ESF interventions depends upon there being a clear prioritizing, and consistent following up, of the employment of the funds.

With the Objective 3 programme from 2000-2006 as a basis, the catalogue provides a number of suggestions as to how the general ESF interventions can be prepared and followed up on an ongoing basis. The intention is for the ideas and methods that are presented with regard to Objective 3 also – with certain adjustments – being employed within both the Objective 2 programme and EQUAL.

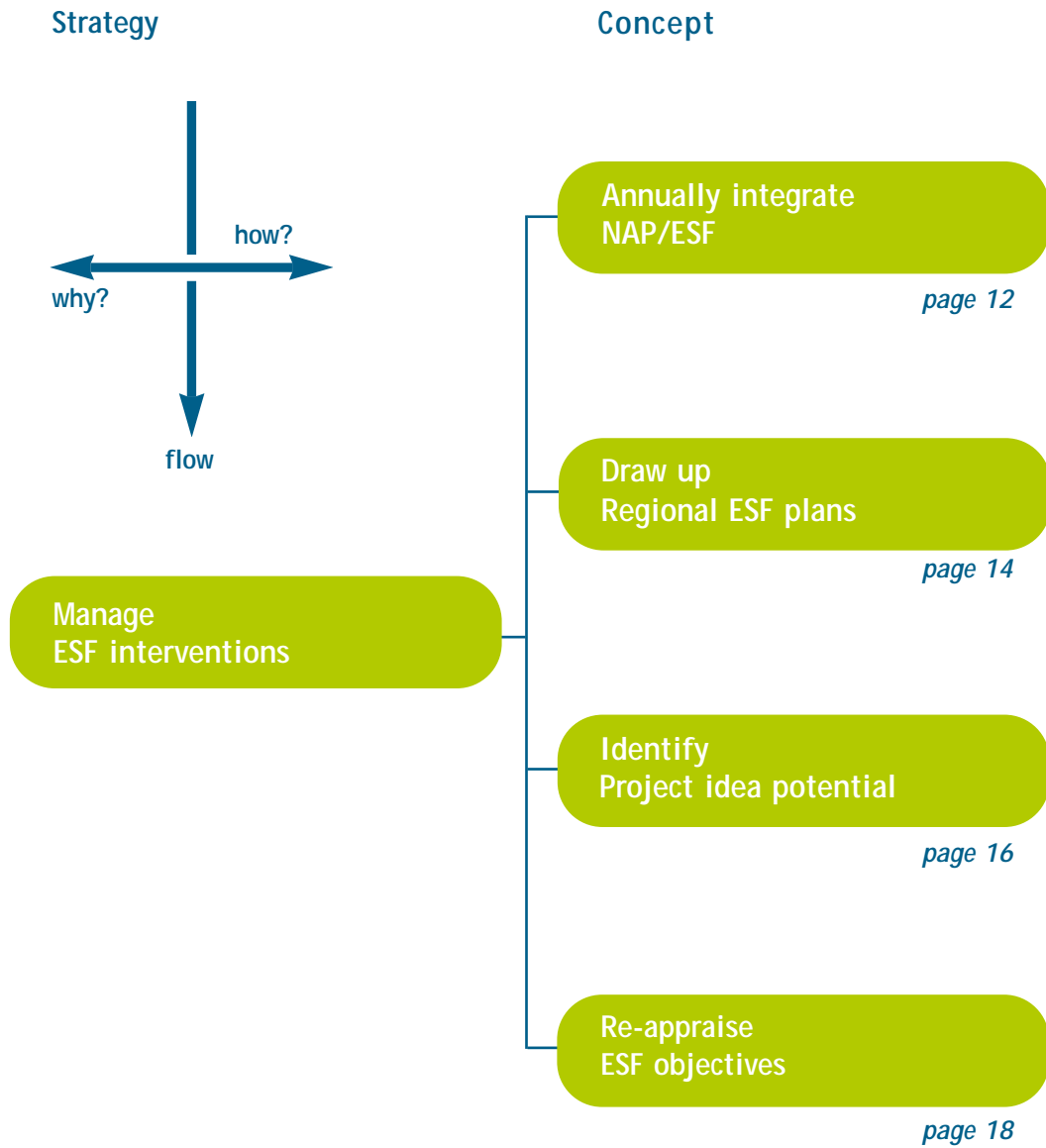
The catalogue points to four main tasks:

- **To work out programmes and programme supplements in agreement with the objectives in Denmark's national action plan for employment (NAP)**
- **To secure simple and efficient planning of the regional ESF interventions**
- **To undertake an ongoing assessment of the ESF interventions in order to identify a non-utilized potential of project ideas**
- **To undertake an ongoing assessment of ESF interventions with an opportunity to adjust the programme supplement**

On the next page there is an overview of the planning and following up of the Objective 3 interventions.

The procedure here and elsewhere in the inspiration catalogue is demonstrated by means of an innovation tree. With the innovation tree it is possible to create, in only a few words, an overview of a complex task and, at the same time, justify why and how the task is to be solved.

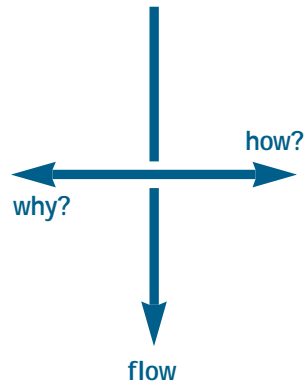
MANAGE ESF INTERVENTIONS



MANAGE ESF INTERVENTIONS

Strategy

Concept



Annually integrate
NAP/ESF
Concept 1

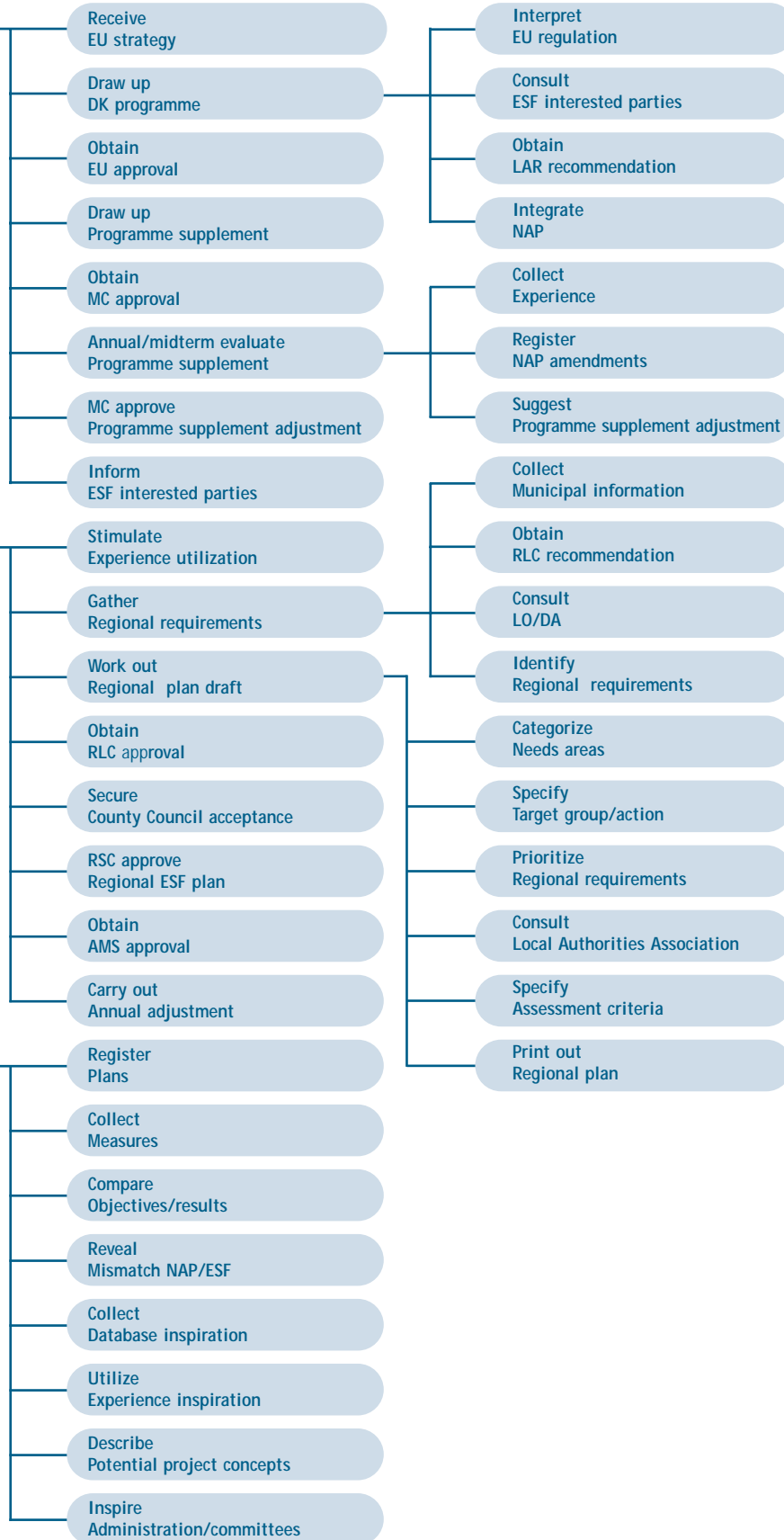
Draw up
Regional ESF plans
Concept 2

Manage
ESF interventions
Strategy 1

Identify
Project idea potential
Concept 3

Re-appraise
ESF objectives
Concept 4

Administration & co-ordination



ANNUALLY INTEGRATE NAP/ESF

Principal players: The National Labour Market Authority (AMS)
The Monitoring Committee for Objective 3 (MC)

It is a prerequisite for efficient application of the Social Fund resources that the formulation of the new programme (SPD) takes the coming period's EU strategy into account and, at the same time, lines itself up closely to the priorities in the national action plan for employment (NAP).

Out of consideration for continuity in the ESF effort, the writing of both programme and the programme supplement should be completed, approved and communicated to all the interested parties at the start of the period.

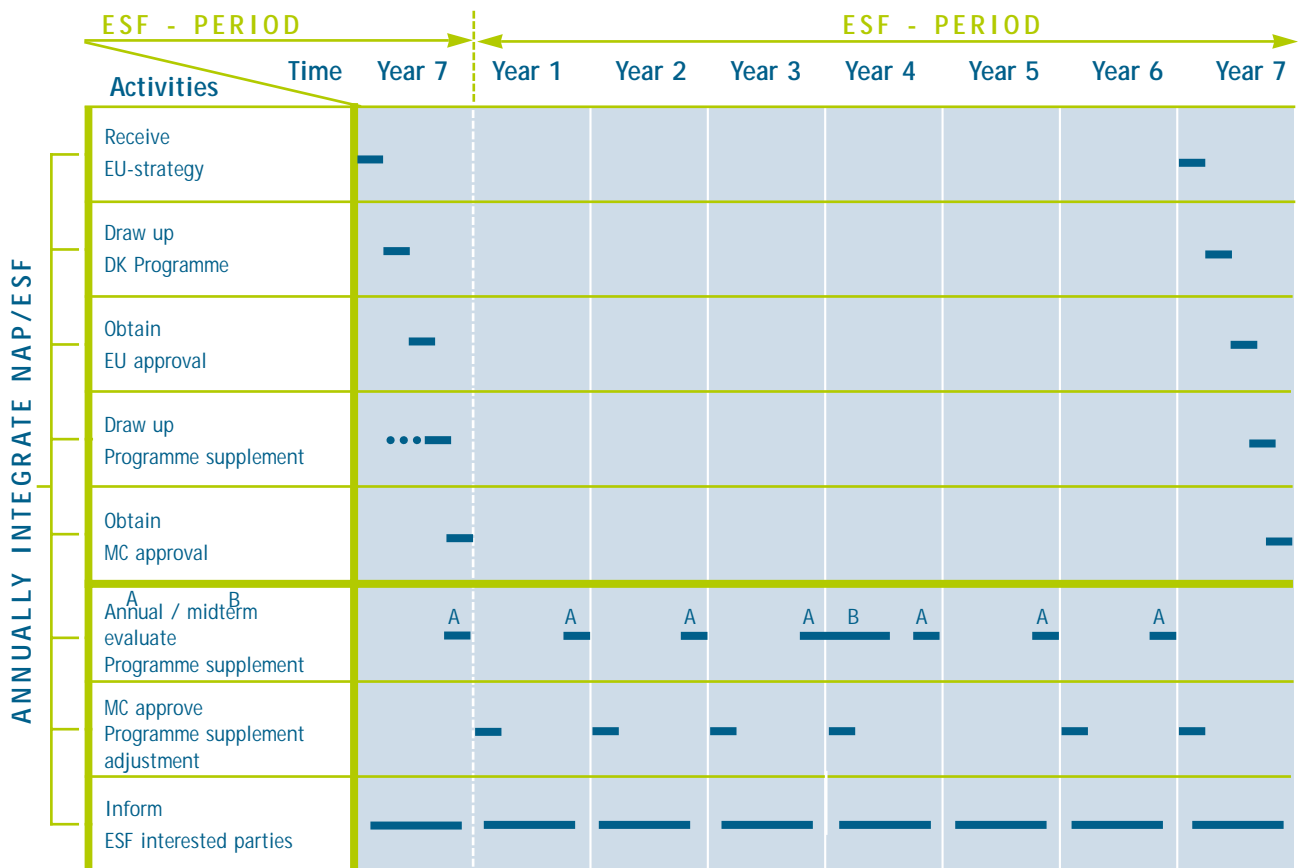
The labour market's dynamic, changes to the NAP and the ongoing gathering of specific ESF experiences, impose requirements for a smooth adaptation to, and adjustment of the programme supplement. It is therefore arranged for the Monitoring Committee to assess, once a year, the need for changes and additions to the programme supplement's objectives and activities. The adjustment should be carried out before the end of the first quarter, so that the revised programme supplement is ready in time to be included in the regional planning process.

As soon as the adjusted programme supplement plan is available, it is important that the Social Fund's interested parties are informed regarding the plan's contents, so that the new priorities are also reflected in future applications.

Midterm evaluation should be available and any measures should be communicated at the start of the 2nd half-year in year 4.

It is recommended that the activity plan/timetable overleaf be followed.

ANNUALLY INTEGRATE NAP/ESF



DRAW UP REGIONAL ESF PLANS

Principal player: The County Regional Social Fund Committee (RSC) and Secretariat

Basis

The programme supplement, with the associated adjustments, annually and midterm, constitutes the overall plan for the use of ESF funds for Objective 3 projects during the period 2000-2006.

The programme supplement thus constitutes the framework for the central administration of ESF funds for Objective 3-projects.

The regional ESF plan

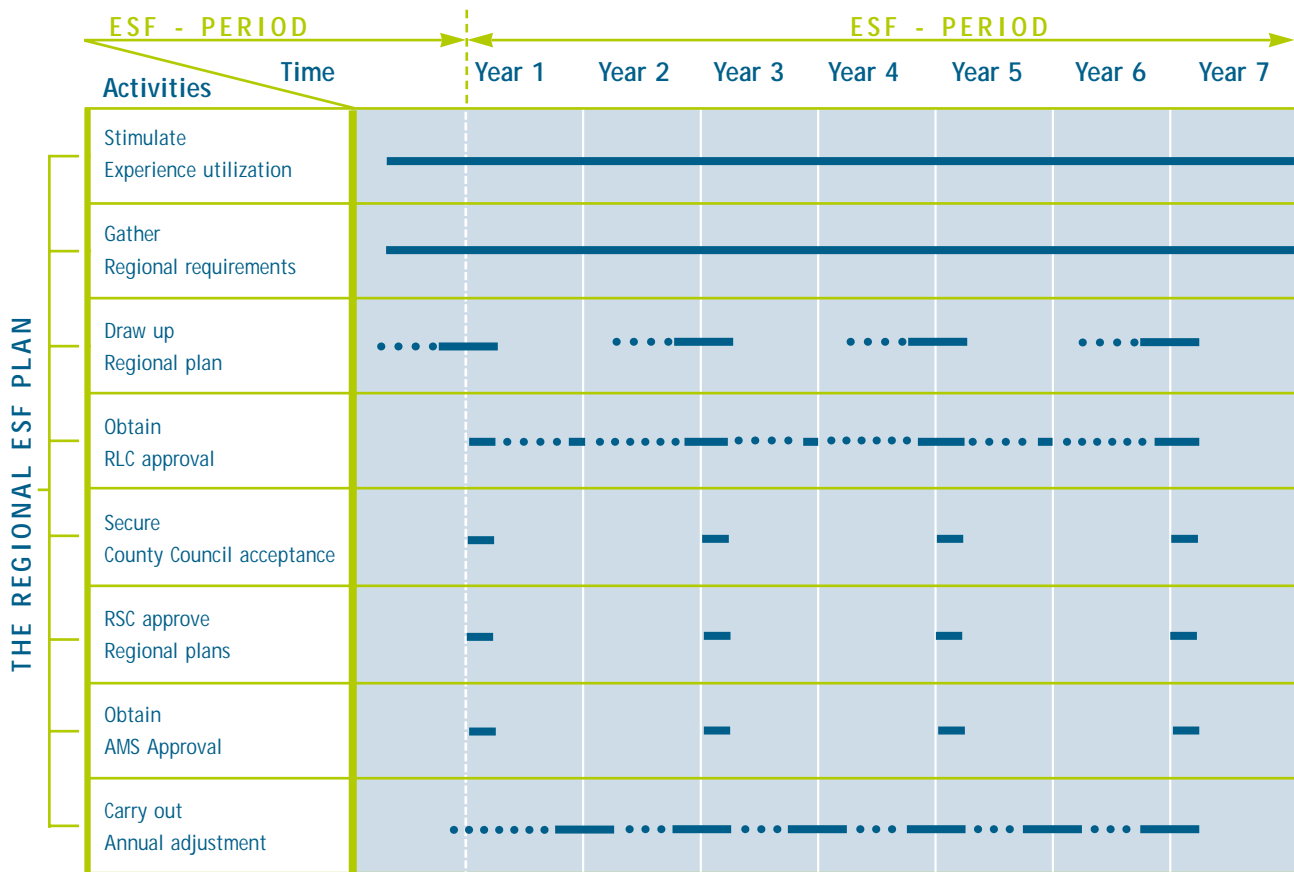
The regional administration of ESF funds under Objective 3 should take place with reference to a regional ESF plan that is drafted regionally on the basis of the Programme Supplement and regional needs collected from businesses, employees, labour market parties, RLC and public authorities.

The regional ESF plan serves as an annual plan, and adjustment should be completed and approved no later than the end of the 4th quarter. The plan is adjusted on a continual basis year by year in accordance with changes to the Programme Supplement and the regional requirements. See activity plan and timetable.

As the aim of the regional plans is to inspire towards a quality utilization of the ESF funds, it is important that the plans are drawn up and communicated in a manner whereby they attract and inspire the best and most innovative players to offer project idea development and project idea realization.

There should be a general appraisal as to whether the procedure to date for the approval of regional plans is suitable –or whether it could be simplified. As is seen from the activity plan/timetable overleaf, each regional ESF plan has, until now, been approved by Regional Labour Market Councils (RLC), RSC and AMS following acceptance by the County Council and consideration by the Association of Local Authorities in Denmark.

DRAW UP REGIONAL ESF PLANS



IDENTIFY PROJECT IDEA POTENTIAL

Principal players: **The National Labour Market Authority**
 The county's regional Social Fund Committee (RSC) and secretariat
 The monitoring committee (MC) for Objective 3

It is the National Labour Market Authority's responsibility – in co-operation with the regional administrators – to register the regional ESF plans as well as the national programme supplement in a form that makes it possible to compare the plans with the actual measures and results in the regions and nationally.

On this basis the Social Fund's administration and committees can undertake an ongoing assessment of the plans' execution, with two main objectives in mind:

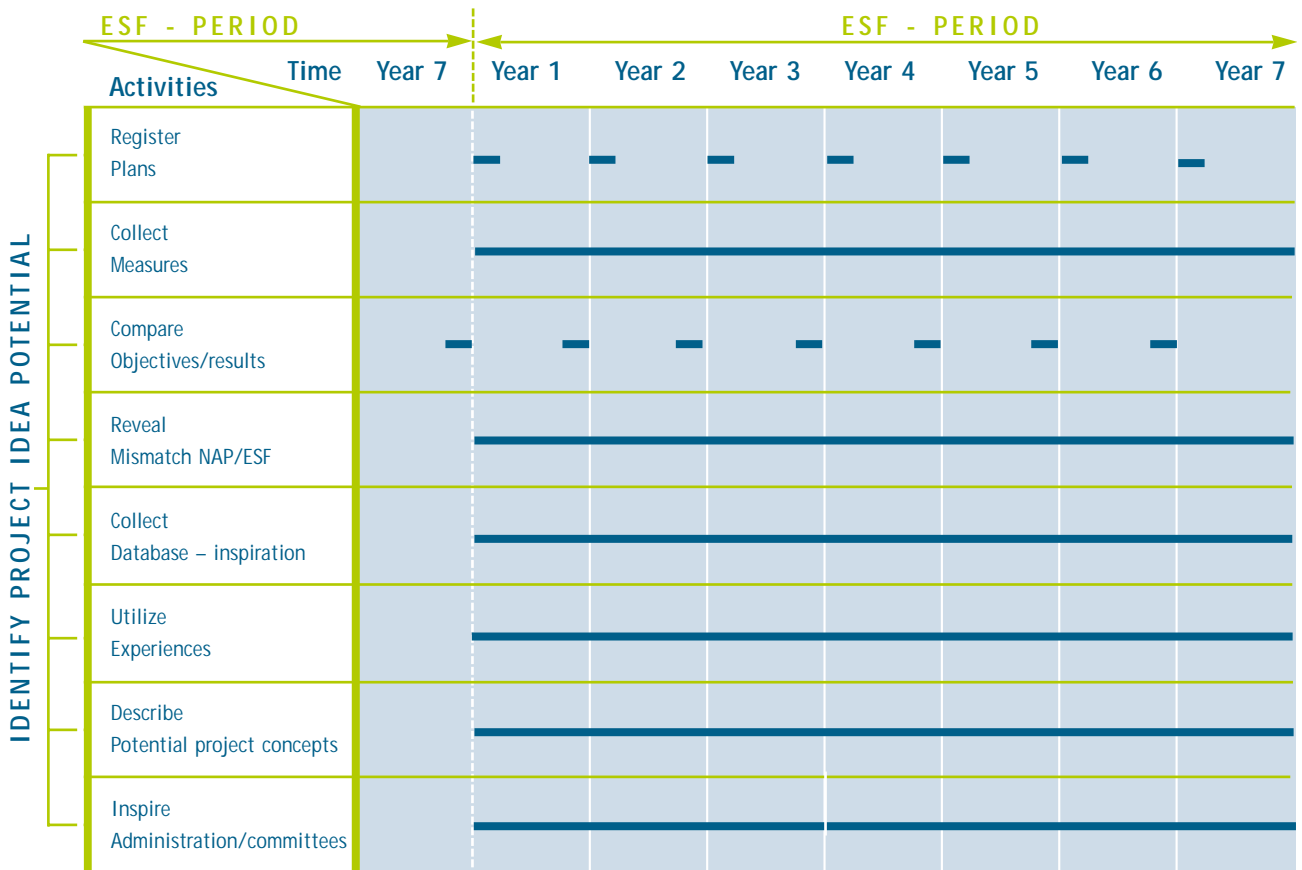
- **To ensure that the actual implementation agrees with the formulated plans/objectives**
- **To identify and exchange project ideas and types of effort, that can inspire projects regionally and centrally**

If it transpires that there is a gap between the established objective and the actual measures and results, this can give rise to adjusting and targeting the forward-looking ESF effort (e.g. by advertising for specific project types). The gap can also be a sign of a breakdown in the planning (e.g. that an identified target group is only present to a limited degree) and thereby be a reason for adjusting the programme supplement/the regional plans.

The benefit in comparing objectives and results within the overall Social Fund exists to a large extent in the opportunities for exchanging experiences and project ideas right across the country. The National Labour Market Authority is responsible for organising a gathering and exchange of experience, that can inspire the ESF administration and committees in their work in searching for and handling project ideas (see the section "Target project idea search" in the next chapter).

These activities will form a natural part of the co-operation between the central and regional administration. See the activity plan/timetable overleaf.

IDENTIFY PROJECT IDEA POTENTIAL



RE-APPRAISE ESF OBJECTIVES

Principal players: The National Labour Market Authority
The Monitoring Committee (MC) for Objective 3

As the Objective 3 over a 7-year period invests approx. DKK 5 billion (including co-financing), a status should be reported at all the national MC's meetings with regard to the ongoing work aimed at the management and following-up of the ESF interventions. The status should be assessed with regard to any decision concerning changes in the prioritizing of the interventions.

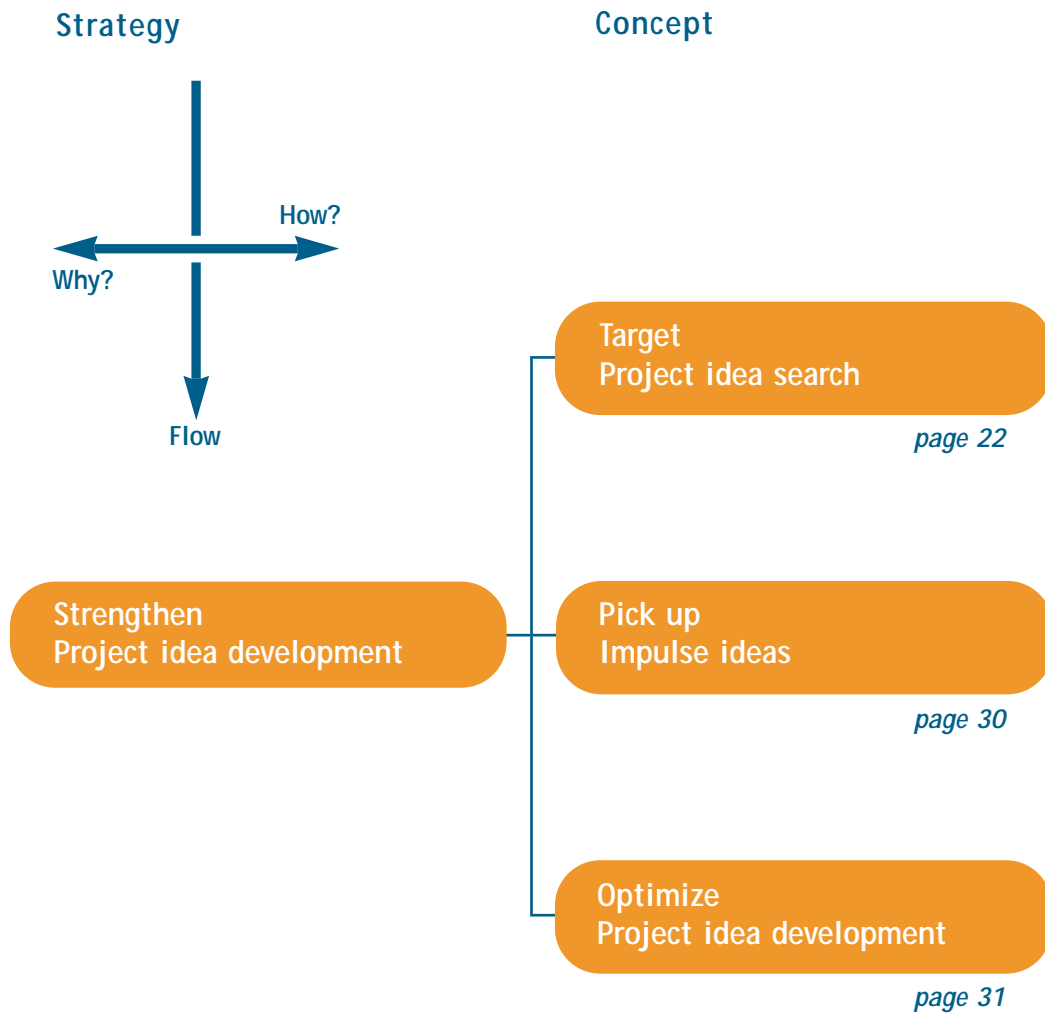
The circle in relation to the chapter's point of departure "Annually integrate NAP/ESF", where the actual adjustment of the programme supplement takes place, is thereby closed.

STRENGTHEN PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT

In order to improve the general level of project ideas the administration, in co-operation with the monitoring committees, RSC's and other interested parties, must contribute more in the future towards strengthening the actual development of project ideas. The administration can play an active role in several areas by, for example,

- being more precise and targeted in its application criteria and application materials
- itself initiating and inspiring project idea development
- serving as a sparring partner to the individual project idea maker/applicant
- inserting project idea development in calls for tenders
- heightening attention in relation to atypical project concepts and applicants
- improving the project approval committee's basis for decision

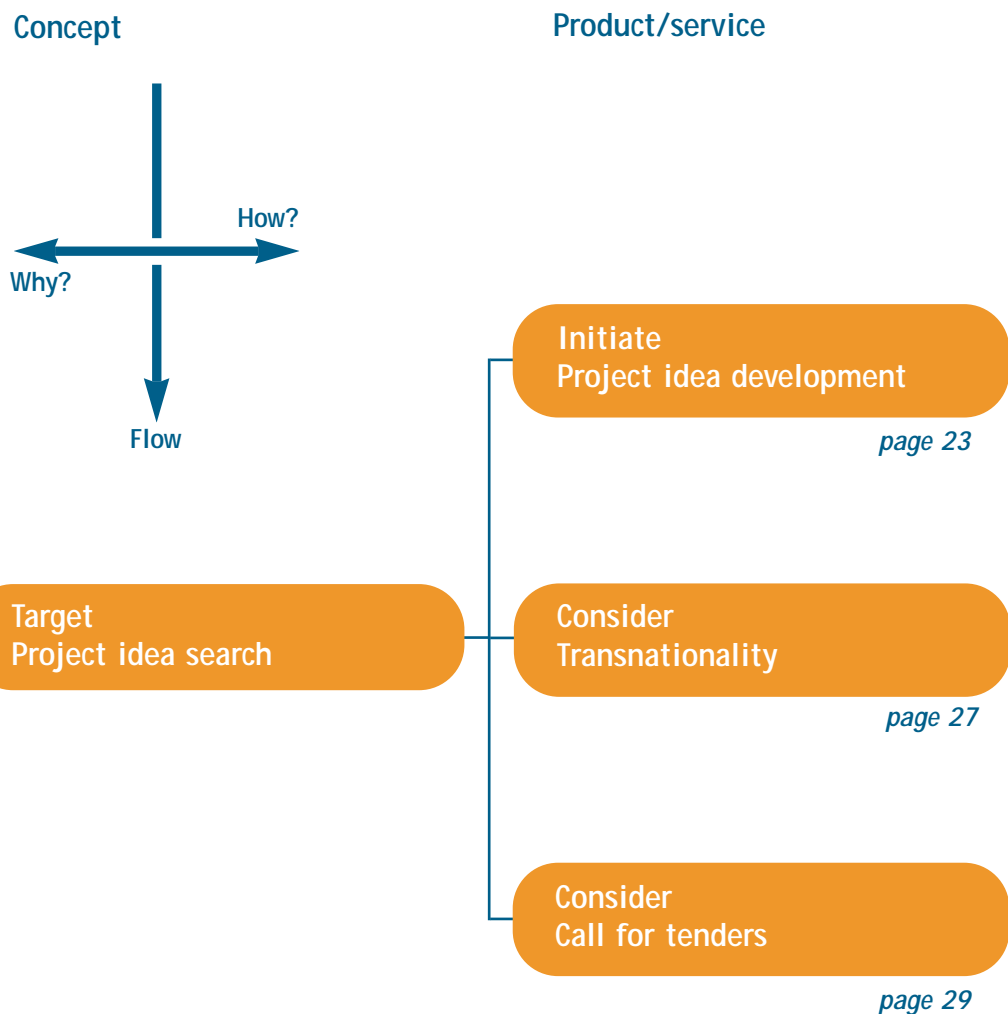
STRENGTHEN PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT



TARGET PROJECT IDEA SEARCH

To date, the Social Fund's project idea search has primarily consisted of the Fund's committees and administration issuing relatively wide national and regional frameworks for support. It was then up to the administration and approval committee to discover quality by selecting the best project ideas from among the applications received.

The Social Fund strives to promote innovative projects with a large dissemination potential, which impose major demands upon the quality of the project ideas. It is therefore important that the administration, in co-operation with interested parties, targets and specifies the project application, initiates and inspires project development, considers opportunities for transnational co-operation and concept development, and experiments with putting the project development out to tender.



INITIATE PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT

The Social Fund administration has many opportunities for providing impetus for the development of project ideas. The opportunities extend across the working-out of precise application materials and the execution of various idea-generating activities within a delineated area, to specific invitations to tender:

Precise information materials

Precisely because many project ideas and applications occur “spontaneously”, it is important that there is precisely drawn up information material with clearly described objectives, targets and prioritized success parameters for the Social Fund’s co-financing of the projects. Layout and choice of words have considerable signal value for potential applicants and have, indirectly, considerable importance for the formulation of the projects that are subsequently developed and forwarded to the Social Fund. The need for precision applies, of course, to other information channels, such as information meetings, workshops, verbal advisory services, home pages etc.

It should be made clear how applications received are prioritized and weighted:

- Does the Social Fund wish to further develop well-tested concepts, which have demonstrated their efficiency?
- Is there a wish for experimental and cross-frontier projects in order to test new ways?
- Are there moves afoot to attract new types or constellations of applicants?

The administration should be aware of questions of this kind and allow the choices and expectations of the applicants to be expressed in the text and in the discussions.

INITIATE PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT

Look for project ideas

Instead of merely waiting for the good ideas to turn up, it can be an advantage to actively search for project concepts within specifically prioritized areas defined by administration and committees. There can, for example, be new opportunities in the Social Fund, which are required to be emphasized and tested. Or there are, perhaps, areas that have previously been touched upon without having led to any great success, but that are considered to possess promising prospects if they can be approached in a different way. By employing advertising in the daily press the message/challenge can reach a wider circle than those people who are normally aware of the Social Fund's activity. It can afford new opportunities for new co-operation constellations and, thus, ideas for new concepts and ways of carrying out projects.

Inspiration for the procedure may, for example, be obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency, which is on the lookout for special projects within selected concentration areas under the support programme "Cleaner Technology". Another institution, the Institute for Service Development (www.serviceudvikling.dk), works systematically in prioritizing and covering the needs of selected problem areas, and afterwards in advertising for new project ideas.

Café-needs seminars

Invite a range of partners and resource people to debates and dialogues based upon the Social Fund's overall objectives and success parameters. The event can be structured with a number of debate-provoking submissions and subsequent discussions in smaller groups. The groups deal with their respective problems and come up with ideas for new measures. Then the submitted ideas are presented to the other participants and put out on www.Socialfonden.dk as well as regional sites to inspire applicants. The event can be held over 1-2 days.

Several subcontractors offer to arrange and manage such café events. AMS can, if required, assist in recommending a firm.

Systematic idea generation

The expression "the first idea is the best" reflects that man's brain is liable to stop its search for a solution to a problem when a workable solution has been found. It is not necessarily the best or the most original idea that has evolved, but it is workable. Often much better ideas emerge when more systematic work is involved, and especially when the process is carried out in groups of people with different knowledge. Where café-needs seminars are a more open discussion forum, the

INITIATE PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT

systematic idea generation is based upon an unambiguous clarification of the problem and a common acceptance of the problem from the very start. The working process subsequently consists of stimulating new ideas for the solution to the problem by means of idea-generating techniques and getting them sorted and evaluated in relation to the success criteria that have been set up, after which they can be published on www.socialfonden.dk and other relevant sites as an inspiration to potential project applicants.

AMS can, if required, recommend subcontractors/consultants that can lead the idea-generating process.

Buy idea catalogue

Encourage consultancies, businesses, educational institutions, professional organizations and the like to systematically and creatively reveal user requirements and come up with ideas for new effort areas and concepts. The task will lead to new perspectives and new ideas for concepts that may not otherwise arise, for example by introducing valuable overseas experiences. The catalogue can, for example, be put on the Internet to serve as inspiration for potential applicants.

Casebook

Draw up a casebook with examples of inspiring, cross-border and/or well-executed projects. The examples may each afford readers inspiration for new ideas, new ways of doing things and perhaps lead to new co-operation constellations that would not otherwise have come about. The cases should be selected so that they reflect the priorities and thoughts that administrators have made in respect of the projects that they would like to see in the coming period. The cases can also be of overseas origin, where exciting and well-executed projects are to be found, which give inspiration for new project ideas.

There is a range of project databases with overviews of executed projects that can form the point of departure for finding suitable cases. See, for example, chapter 4 under the section "establish database".

Project Flagship

A number of years ago the Ministry of Industry wished to demonstrate the skills Danish businesses in developing and producing parts for shipbuilding, and how much more the businesses were able to do if they pooled their knowledge and forces in a joint project. A common vision was created in respect of the ship of the future and a plan of action evolved in "Project Ship", a project that

INITIATE PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT

has had considerable professional and exposure significance for the businesses that participated in the project, and also for the industry as a whole. In the construction sector a corresponding outcome is about to be achieved in "Project House". The aim is to create new development and dynamism in the building trades that have not managed to follow the general increase in productivity in society as a whole.

The idea the projects are based on is that the individual project participant cannot solve such a large task by itself, but, by several coming together in respect of the task, they are able to get more out of it than they contribute individually.

Administrators can employ the above in order to inspire the formulation of "Project Social Fund" by investigating the opportunities for bringing a group of projects together into one single joint project, whereupon it will become possible to exploit the best in each project right across the new project organization. It will be able to contribute towards creating new network co-operation and towards creating larger and more visible Social Fund projects.

Active searching for project idea developers

Creativity and the occurrence of new ideas are often stimulated by bringing people together with different backgrounds and experiences. Administrators can actively exploit this by encouraging people other than the usual applicants to the Social Fund to submit project plans. An advertising bureau, a large business, a commercial group or similar will each be bound to have other and new angles on the problems that the Social Fund deals with, which will be able to be expressed in new cross-frontier project ideas.

CONSIDER TRANSNATIONALITY

When the administration decides to inspire, to initiate or extend the project idea development, it is evident in each individual case to consider whether overseas experiences and possible transnational co-operation can be of value in this process.

Why consider transnational co-operation projects?

Transnational co-operation projects are a binding form of international transfer of knowledge. There can be many different benefits associated with entering into a transnational co-operation. For the project organization the main benefits are, for example, that one gains access to new ideas at the same time as being able to discuss and question one's own methods and working practices, through the co-operation with overseas partners. This can contribute towards the project organization moving to the forefront of its field in relation to European trends or the Danish market. The people who are involved in a transnational co-operation (project managers, instructors etc.) can expect to improve and develop their working methods further, as well as their personal areas of expertise, such as languages and the ability to communicate and solve problems. As an extension of this, cultural differences and practical problems that one learns to understand and overcome are brought into the open in international co-operation. Finally, transnational co-operation can result in an enriched new view of the strengths and weaknesses of the national systems, in general, and those of the project organisation in question, in particular.

Learning from international experiences

Irrespective of whether they derive from Social Fund projects or other activities, overseas experiences often contain valuable insights that have an inspiring effect and that can be developed further in Danish projects. The major employment policy differences that are to be found in the EU and OECD alone are thus a strong source of mutual influence and inspiration. It is thus useful to consider at all times whether, within a given area, there are overseas experiences that can contribute towards raising the project quality and are therefore to be "imported", i.e. woven into the project development.

CONSIDER TRANSNATIONALITY

Challenges from transnationality:

To enter into a transnational partnership is time-consuming and requires a genuine and lasting commitment and thus both financial and human resources. Transnational co-operation will also necessarily involve increased demands upon the project organisation's following up, control and evaluation of this part of the project's work. Finally there is the risk that in the course of the project period, one or the other of the transnational partners will fall by the wayside or prove to be less committed or less relevant co-operation partners than expected, which can lead to actual problems for the Danish organisation.

The Social Fund's financing opportunities in respect of transnational work:

Among the three major Social Fund programmes during the current programming period, EQUAL is the only one where there is a definite requirement for transnational co-operation. This co-operation will typically be concluded with projects in other EU countries that have also received support from the EQUAL programme. The transnational co-operation should be an integrated and significant element in all EQUAL projects. Even though the two other Social Fund programmes, Objective 2 and 3, are nationally based, one should at all times consider whether it is possible to support international transfer of experience or transnational co-operation.

Where can one find out more about transnational co-operation?

Under "Promote Use of Experience" (chapter 4) there are a number of databases on the Internet where one can obtain knowledge of the some of projects supported by the Social Fund that have been carried out in Denmark and in other EU countries. These databases contain, for example, descriptions of projects that have been supported by the "old" transnational Social Fund programmes, Adapt, Employment and Interreg, during the period 1995-2000. Over and above the descriptions of the projects that are provided by the project databases, it will also be possible to order evaluation reports and similar, directly from the projects or from the relevant programme administration. Finally, the "Guide to Transnationality for project promoters" can be ordered from AMS.

CONSIDER INVITATION TO TENDER

If one has a limited, relatively well-defined task that has to be undertaken in the form of a project, the administration (+ committees) should consider putting it out to tender. It can, for example, be a matter of a delineated problem area with particular political ramifications or, perhaps, further processing and realization of specific project outlines that occurred in connection with earlier idea-generating activities. The process of putting out to tender can take many forms.

Limited tender

One can select a circle of competent idea originators who are invited to submit proposals as to how the task in question can be undertaken in the form of a project application. The selection thereby serves as a kind of pre-qualification of project idea originators.

Open tender

Through the daily press, the Social Fund's homepage(s), direct mail and similar, specific project applications are invited that provide possible solutions to the problem or task that is put out to tender.

Invitation to tender:

Actual invitation to tender for a project assignment can also be a possibility. One should, however, consider whether the invitation to tender form is so attractive in the individual instance that one will use up the necessary resources in carrying out the requisite procedures. www.konkurrencestyrelsen.dk/udbud/index/html specifies the detailed rules and directions in connection with the preparation of tenders and invitations to tender.

Previous experiences with putting out to tender

There is already a range of experience from tenders within, and in close association with, the Social Fund. During the previous Objective 3 programme funds have been allocated to specific purposes on many occasions, and then an open or limited tender round has been undertaken. In the County of Vejle, daily press advertisements were used to seek education and training courses for the unemployed with occupational injuries. Corresponding invitations have been issued here and in other counties regarding immigrant projects, adult education courses etc.

Putting out to tender is often employed in connection with state-funded measures. The County of North Jutland is carrying out The Digital North Jutland, which is a kind of competitive tender – something between an application and invitation to tender. Similarly, there is an extensive MOC project (Management, Organization and Competence Development) based upon a tender round.

PICK UP IMPULSE IDEAS

In line with the Social Fund attempting to target idea development to a greater degree in the future, there is a risk that the “lopsided” project ideas that lie at the edge of the Social Fund’s focus areas will not be forwarded or assessed. It can, for example, be a matter of a project idea that does not have an immediately clear labour market political content, but that can give rise to a good project if it is supplemented by other objectives, elements or co-operation partners. The question is, quite simply: how does the administration get sight of “lopsided” projects with particular potential?

Knowledge of other programmes and areas

The administration’s ability to discover the potential in an atypical project draft or, conversely, to contribute with new thoughts and input in a specific development process is dependent upon the knowledge that one has of other programmes and initiatives in the area. It is therefore important for the administration to acquire a broad knowledge of EU support schemes and national funds/investments, via personal and professional networks, databases of support possibilities and so on. This also relates to an active distribution of knowledge via the joint home page www.social-fonden.dk. Personal and professional networks, in particular, are of importance for awareness and access to the growth stratum. Finally one could consider specific measures that contribute towards a stimulation of the administration’s curiosity and openness in relation to investigating the potential in atypical project ideas.

Knowledge of project idea development and realization:

When the administration first becomes aware of the “hidden” potential in a project idea, there may be a need for supporting the further development of the specific project description. Here it is important that the administration, possibly in co-operation with the regional EPMS¹, is able to direct and advise with regard to both the idea development and project realization. This catalogue is intended to serve as a support for the administration in this work.

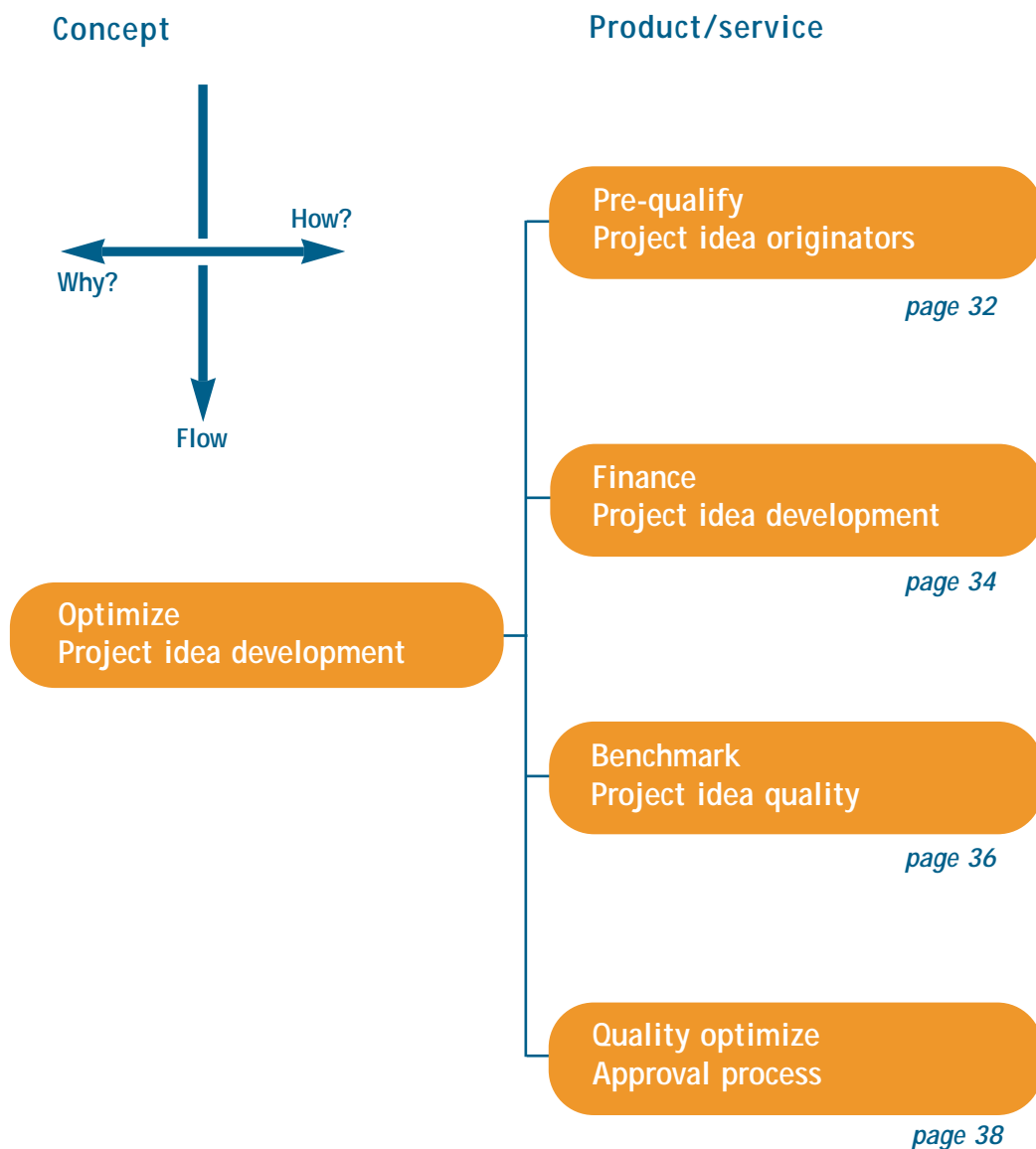
The formulation of the programme

In order to communicate openness to more atypical project ideas and application groups, it should be seen from the objectives, success and evaluation criteria that are set up in connection with the Social Fund’s programmes that these project ideas will also be viewed positively.

¹ AMS has trained 40 regional European Project Managers, who are experience and knowing in the fields of idea development and -realization.

OPTIMIZE PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT

The optimizing of project idea development involves both giving the project idea originators the best possible sparring and service, co-financing the project idea development and, finally, creating the best possible decision basis for project approval:



PRE-QUALIFY PROJECT IDEA ORIGINATORS

As an extension of the tender concept, it is natural to also set the focus upon the project idea originators.

Impose requirements

Set-up objectives and success criteria for the use of the Social Fund reflect the requirements that must necessarily be imposed in respect of the project idea originators' qualifications and abilities. If the project idea originator does not possess these qualities, he must organize himself in respect of the requisite resources or abandon his project. The project idea originators should therefore know the requirements that are imposed upon them at the earliest possible stage. Administrators can appropriately draw up a guide/checklist of required prioritized qualities on the part of the project idea originator/consortium out of consideration of the various project types the administrator wishes to promote.

A guide/checklist can contain such elements as:

- Knowledge of the problem/target group
- Previous references in the area
- Experience with project administration of this magnitude/degree of difficulty
- Project management experience with several participants
- Ability to utilize and market the project results
- Network and recommendation to co-operate with others regarding the project
- International experiences and network
- Financial basis

PRE-QUALIFY PROJECT IDEA ORIGINATORS

Training and contacts

A lot of project idea originators may have excellent basic ideas for new projects, but they are unable to formulate, organize or execute them. An administrator may elect to hold a seminar in which guidance is provided in project formulation, evaluation criteria, result formulation and project management. The approval process and requirements governing an application are gone through and explained. An administrator may encourage project idea originators to find co-operation partners with the requisite resources and expertise and perhaps arrange contact between the parties directly or by means of a contact exchange.

Application service

An administrator can select a number of persons (task force) from across the country, who can be contacted by both the potential applicants and the regional case officers. The task force can make its experience available and give guidance in legal, financial and technical matters relating to applications, etc.

FINANCE PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT

If, at all times, requirements are imposed that a project idea must be completely described before it can be granted Social Fund support, there is the risk that the project idea applicant gives a lower priority to the actual idea development for resource-related reasons. In order to secure the project ideas' innovative content and ability to be implemented, it should therefore be possible to finance the idea development after prior assessment of a specific project outline.

Support for preliminary projects

A number of projects may be of a size and complexity, possess transnational aspects, be particularly cross-frontier, be inadequately illustrated etc., so it may be appropriate to grant money for the undertaking of a preliminary project. The frameworks for the employment of preliminary projects should be specified.

Elements are:

- Which projects can be co-financed?
- What degree of finance can be offered?
- What minimum and maximum sum can be requested?
- Which budget items can the financing cover?
- Are there limitations in the price level that have to be specified?
- Which disbursement procedures are relevant?
- What documentation and reporting forms are required?
- The timeframe for the preliminary project (e.g. max. 6 months)?

FINANCE PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT

Supplementary financing

The Social Fund co-finances only a part of the overall project costs, which means that a preliminary project is also dependent upon other sources of finance or co-financing from the project holder. It is therefore a central task for the administration to gather and distribute knowledge about the forms and sources of finance (e.g. related development funds). The National Labour Market Authority has a special responsibility for ensuring that this knowledge is gathered together and is available to all those interested.

A financing possibility that can be mentioned here is to regard the preliminary project as a part of an overall project, and thereby also a part of an overall project account. If the Social Fund support is calculated on the basis of the overall project sequence, there is nothing to prevent there from being a high degree of ESF financing in the preliminary project, as long as the maximum support percentage is respected in the overall project. One should be aware that the project holder in this financing model bears the “risk” (the co-financing obligation), if the main project does not achieve Social Fund support.

Splitting of grants in the idea development and realization phase

In order to focus upon the idea development phase and to improve the overall assessment of a specific project idea, a decided splitting up of the total grant should be made in an idea development (planning) and realization phase. The part of the grant that is allocated to project realization will only be released if the idea development is brought to an end and the project at that time is assessed as possessing the required quality.

BENCHMARK PROJECT IDEA QUALITY

The possibility of comparing specific projects with standard-setting activities and projects of similar character is of great importance for the administration's ability to advise project idea originators as well as to assess projects in connection with an approval procedure.

Innovation and added value

The Social Fund places great weight upon supporting innovative project ideas that challenge established precepts and ways of doing things. The education, trade and industry and labour market area is under constant development, making it difficult for the administration to assess whether a given project idea is innovative and to provide the idea with new elements in dialogue with the project idea originator. In the next section there are a number of suggestions concerning how the administration can benchmark project ideas and, thereupon, also assess whether a project idea is innovative. First there are grounds for considering a number of questions that help to clarify the degree of innovation and type in a project:

- **Does the project idea offer new thinking in its description of the overall mission and the specific objectives?**
- **Does the project contribute towards development and/or testing of new methods and instruments? (e.g. within education, teaching, analysis)**
- **Will known methods and approaches be used in a different manner in the project?**
- **Does the project introduce new players in the solution of well-known problems? (does the project contribute, for example, to the establishment of important co-operation and network relations locally, regionally or nationally)**
- **Is the project idea innovative in relation to what has previously been tested at a national level, regional level or within a specific sector or trade?**

Transparency.

It can be difficult to compare the quality of different types of projects from several different regions. There is, however, always a qualified position to be adopted in respect of a grant for a given project, a position that is based upon given parameters and in relation to regional or national success criteria. An administrator is better able to impose requirements regarding the quality of the appli-

BENCHMARK PROJECT IDEA QUALITY

cations submitted if he has knowledge of projects of a higher quality or knows of qualitative norms in other regions. The administrator's knowledge will be indirectly involved in raising the requirements of the qualitative norm, and he will be able to spread the best project experiences to the other projects.

The administration can set up a joint project database with associated trunk data card for all processed applications right across the geography. The trunk data card can be formulated so that it reflects the administrator's qualitative assessment of the project in question in relation to a range of predetermined project assessment parameters. The database makes it possible for the administrator to compare his own assessments with those that others have made and thus gives him the opportunity to adjust his expectations and requirements in respect of the applicants.

Experience groups

The creation of experience sharing groups between the Social Fund administration's case officers can contribute towards affording greater joint insight into the quality of Social Fund projects. In these groups the assessment criteria can be turned upside down, and the good projects emphasized. The groups can similarly seek information about other programme administrators' work, working procedures and auxiliary instruments. This relates both to programme administration in other ministries, authorities and foreign programmes.

In connection with the assessment of a specific project idea, an administrator may have a need to call upon know-how resources both inside and outside the overall Social Fund administration. The network that occurs around the experience groups should also be used for ad hoc assessments of that nature.

QUALITY OPTIMIZE APPROVAL PROCESS

“Project idea originator” and “case officer”

The dialogue with the applicants can have a value-optimizing effect upon the project, and honesty and precision in the attitudes can have a clarifying effect in the initial screening phase, so that the applicants obtain a realistic picture of their project's possibilities and the time horizon for being approved. The applicants' experience of the approval process depends greatly upon whether the administrator acts in a helpful, guiding, inspiring, inventive and network-creating manner (like a project idea originator) as opposed to merely focusing upon the formalities and details in the application that are incorrect and insufficient in relation to the administrative procedures (like a traditional case officer).

Urgent contact

An administrator can draw up a form with questions based upon some of the most important selection criteria for a project's approval. If the applicant is in doubt as to whether the project falls within the Social Fund's frameworks, they can fill in the “Urgent contact” form and send it to the administrator, who can then without delay decide whether the applicant should pursue the application further.

The Growth Fund under the Ministry of Trade and Industry has a similar system, from where inspiration can be sought.

Self-assessment on the Internet

An administrator can build up a kind of expert scale on the Internet by which the potential applicants can guide themselves through the questions and information required of an application. The expert scale's guidelines can afford the potential applicants an insight into their projects' prospects and into the requirements that are imposed upon the management of the projects.

Checklist

An administrator can work out a checklist to be used by potential applicants, so that it is ensured that all relevant questions are answered in the application, and that all the requisite documentation, appendices and mutual contractual agreements are included in the application material. Applicants may, in this way, direct their attention at the things that constitute the application material at an early stage of the approval process.

QUALITY OPTIMIZE APPROVAL PROCESS

Scorecard

An administrator can work out an internal guide with a kind of grade assessment for selected prioritized parts of the project. A project's novelty value can be great, because it is cross-frontier in relation to what has been tried before and, conversely, there can be a kind of reproduction of previously known themes. Each parameter can be accorded a figure value and form the background for a discussion of the decision to co-finance one project rather than another. The scorecard serves as an instrument for establishing the priority between different applications, but it cannot stand alone. There will always be a need for a broader discussion of the project ideas' strengths and weaknesses.

Specific experiences from the County of North Jutland with the use of scorecards in connection with the recommendation and processing of project applications show that it is important for all members of the project approval committee to accept the scorecard's formulation and significance.

Gatekeeper meetings

The individual administrator is often inclined to allow his subjective assessments and favourites to be expressed in the decision process, regarding whether a project is to be promoted or rejected. A project is often better served by being subjected to a panel that looks upon it with other eyes, and is able to discuss the project's positive and weak aspects without prejudice. This can lead to a more widely based debate on the project's possibilities, and it can provide input for a better approval process and reporting back to the project applicant.

Presentation

An administrator can choose to allow applicants to supplement their written applications by a verbal presentation of the project idea and the aim of the project. Many people find it easier to express themselves verbally, and deficient information and shades in a project can more easily be put forward in this way. The presentation may also provide the administrator with a better picture of the applicant's personal qualities as project manager and his ability as a communicator of the project results.

Approval frequency

The applicants' qualitative perception of an administration is also related to flexible decision process, by which is meant how long it takes from a qualified application being received to written notification of an acceptance of the application being given. If, for example, applications are only accepted once a year, this is not perceived as being a flexible and service-orientated administration

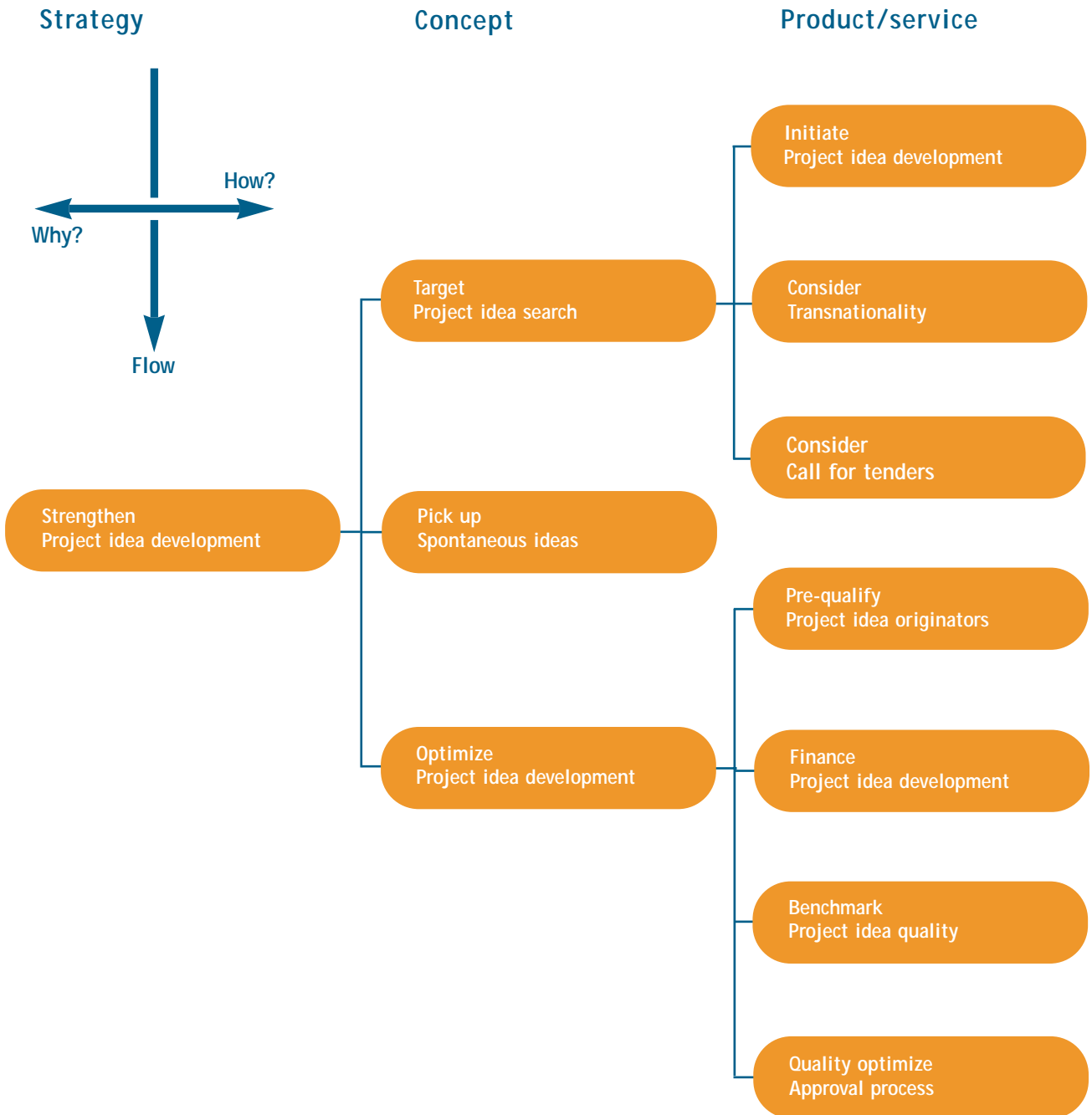
QUALITY OPTIMIZE APPROVAL PROCESS

and, conversely, ongoing submission of projects with a decision process occupying only a few weeks is perceived as being smooth and efficient. An administrator should therefore ask himself the question of whether the administrative handling of the projects, and the associated decision processes, are as optimal as they can be.

Appeals

An appeal instance is not strongly relevant, but there should be a contingency for tackling criticism appearing in the press, or complaints sent in to local politicians and the Ministry.

STRENGTHEN PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT

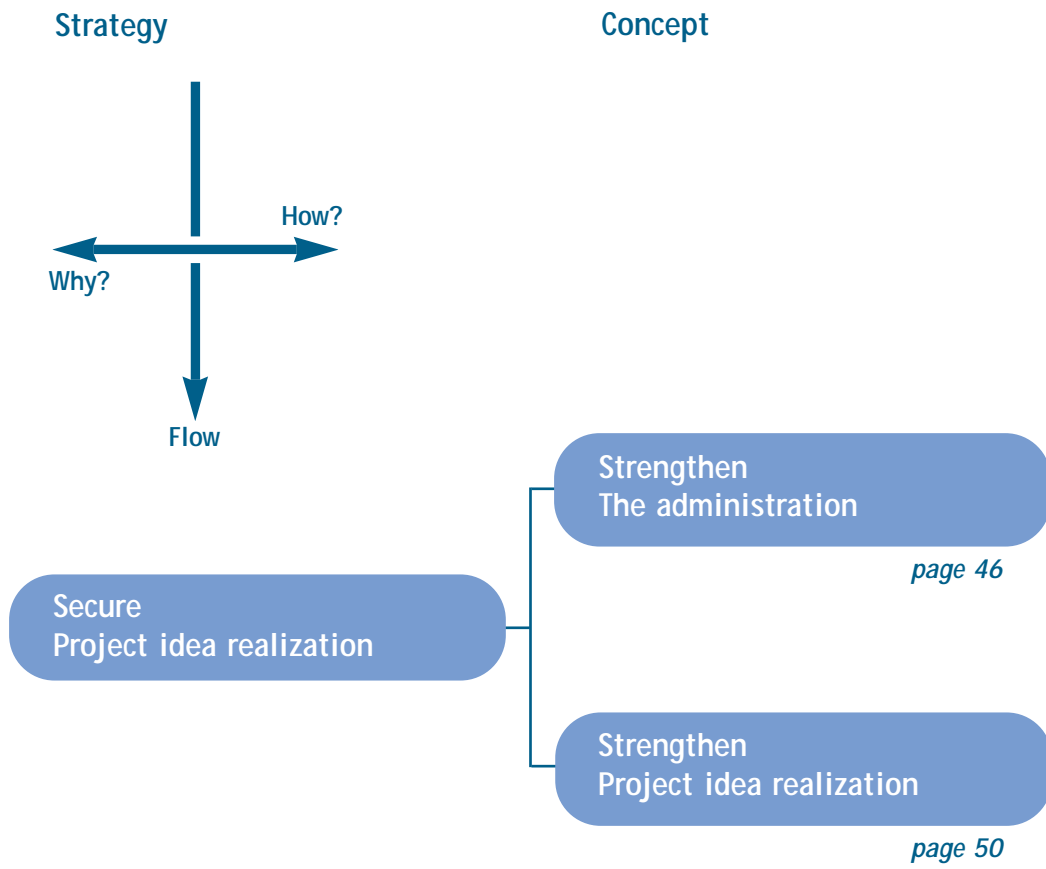


SECURE PROJECT IDEA REALIZATION

Poor or deficient project idea realization can take the shine off even the best project idea – and often does so in reality. It is therefore an important objective to improve the administration and project holders' conditions for, respectively, supporting and carrying out the projects.

With a point of departure taken in two overall approaches, the catalogue gives a number of proposals as to how the realization of project ideas can be improved. One approach aims at a definite increase in the administration's capacity for supporting the carrying out of Social Fund projects. The other approach has, to a greater degree, the aim of developing, advising and guiding project managers in connection with the realization of Social Fund projects.

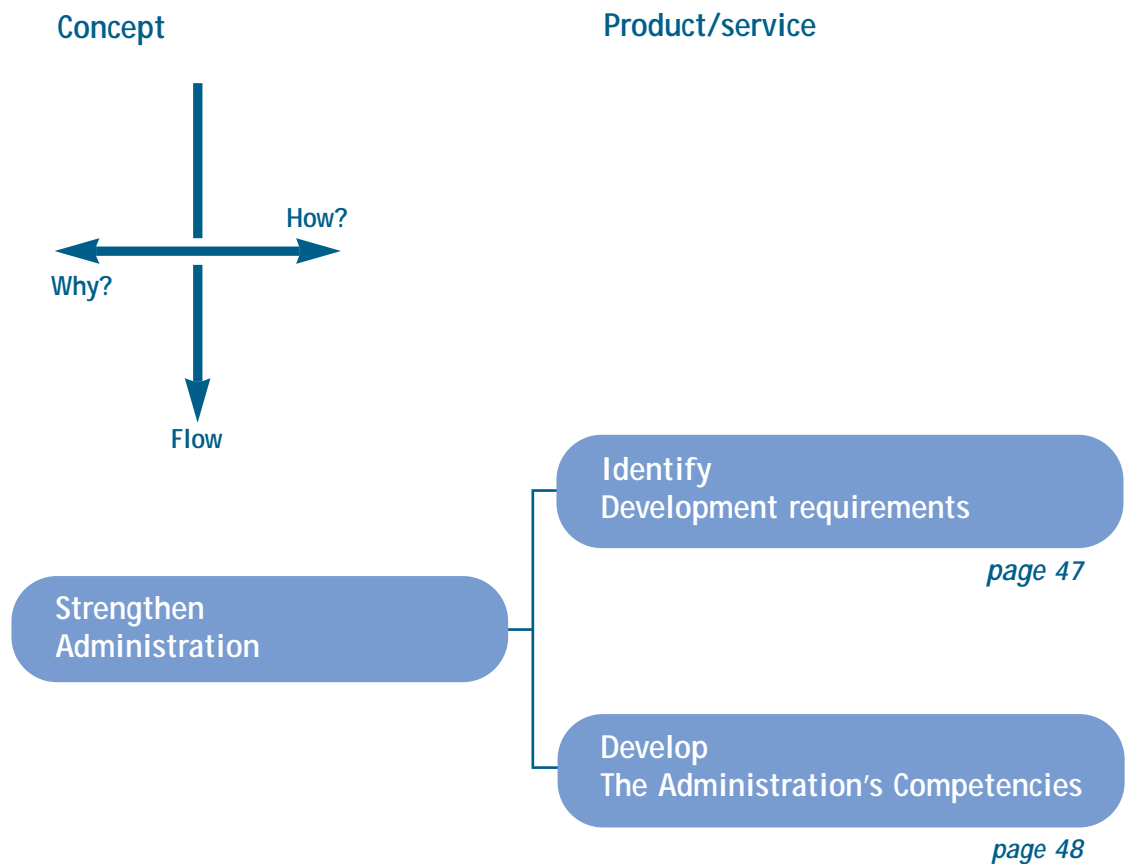
SECURE PROJECT IDEA REALIZATION



STRENGTHEN THE ADMINISTRATION

The inspiration catalogue is based upon a fundamental expectation that the overall ESF administration – in co-operation with the Social Fund committees, project holders and other interested parties – can contribute to increasing the quality of the overall Social Fund interventions. An important prerequisite for the administration to be able to take on a more front-line role in this work is for an ongoing development and updating of the administration's competencies to be offered within a number of areas – new as well as familiar ones.

It is not the intention of the catalogue to present detailed proposals regarding what the development is to constitute. Instead, the goal is for the catalogue to inspire discussions on the administration's future role(s) and the needs of development associated with this.



IDENTIFY DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Stated below are a number of suggestions as to how the administrators– both individually and jointly– can contribute towards encompassing the need to strengthen and develop the competencies of the administration.

Feedback from projects and other interested parties

An important part of the inspiration aimed at developing the administration must necessarily come from the project holders, the Social Fund committees and other interested parties. How can the administration stimulate and utilize this important information flow? The measuring of user satisfaction is one - relatively resource-intensive - possibility. One may, however, consider allowing the project manager assessments of the administration's effort to be included in the general programme evaluation. A more obvious alternative is to hold focus group meetings or to set up a panel of project holders that will be asked to assess new administrative ideas and, at the same time, acknowledge the projects' needs for sparring and support. The focus group or the panel does not need to be convened especially for the purpose, but may – for example – consist of a group of project holders who are already gathered together in connection with a network arrangement or similar.

Benchmarking in relation to similar pool administrations regionally, nationally and internationally

There are many regional, national and transnational measures in the employment sector – and even more pools and programmes that support project development within other areas. In many of these efforts there is valuable experience to be gained for the Social Fund – as is, for example, shown in the preceding chapter on project idea development. The administration should, by means of personal networks, the Internet and written materials, attempt to keep itself up to date regarding the development of related areas. This information can, for example, be exchanged in a common Internet environment under www.socialfonden.dk

Systematic idea generation

The administration can itself initiate a systematic idea generation process directed at identifying specific needs of development. The basic structure in this catalogue may perhaps be employed as a point of departure for discussing and determining the core expertise areas that are associated with the administration's role within project idea development, project idea realization and the use of experience.

DEVELOP THE ADMINISTRATION'S COMPETENCIES

The catalogue reveals a range of challenges to the administration that may form the go-ahead for identifying and discussing the administration's need for the development of expertise. Some examples of these needs are given below, but no position is adopted regarding how the needs may be specifically covered.

New administrative roles:

The catalogue provides a picture of an administrator who functions both as a case officer and as a creative sparring partner (project idea initiator) in relation to the individual project. The administrative roles presuppose that each individual administrator, and the administration team as a whole, achieves and constantly develops competencies within the areas of project idea development, project idea realization and use of experience. Competence development could take place under the headings:

- **Project management.** How does one develop and render project ideas more specific? How does one organize and stage the project realization? What positive and negative success factors are there when one carries out projects?
- **Project financing and control.** How does one advise projects with regard to sources of finance and finance requirements? How are projects' budgets and support bases assessed? How can OPUS support the following up and control of the project realization (now and in the future)?
- **Utilization and dissemination of project experiences.** How (and with which tools) can the administration secure the dissemination and employment of the many valuable experiences and results that are achieved in ESF projects?
- **Development trends within the labour market, education, employment and social sectors,** that are relevant to the Social Fund's work. The trends could, for example, relate to changes in national legislation, new analysis-based knowledge, development of the European labour market, human resource development etc. Insight into these areas is of great importance for the administration's ability to recommend, advise and follow up projects.

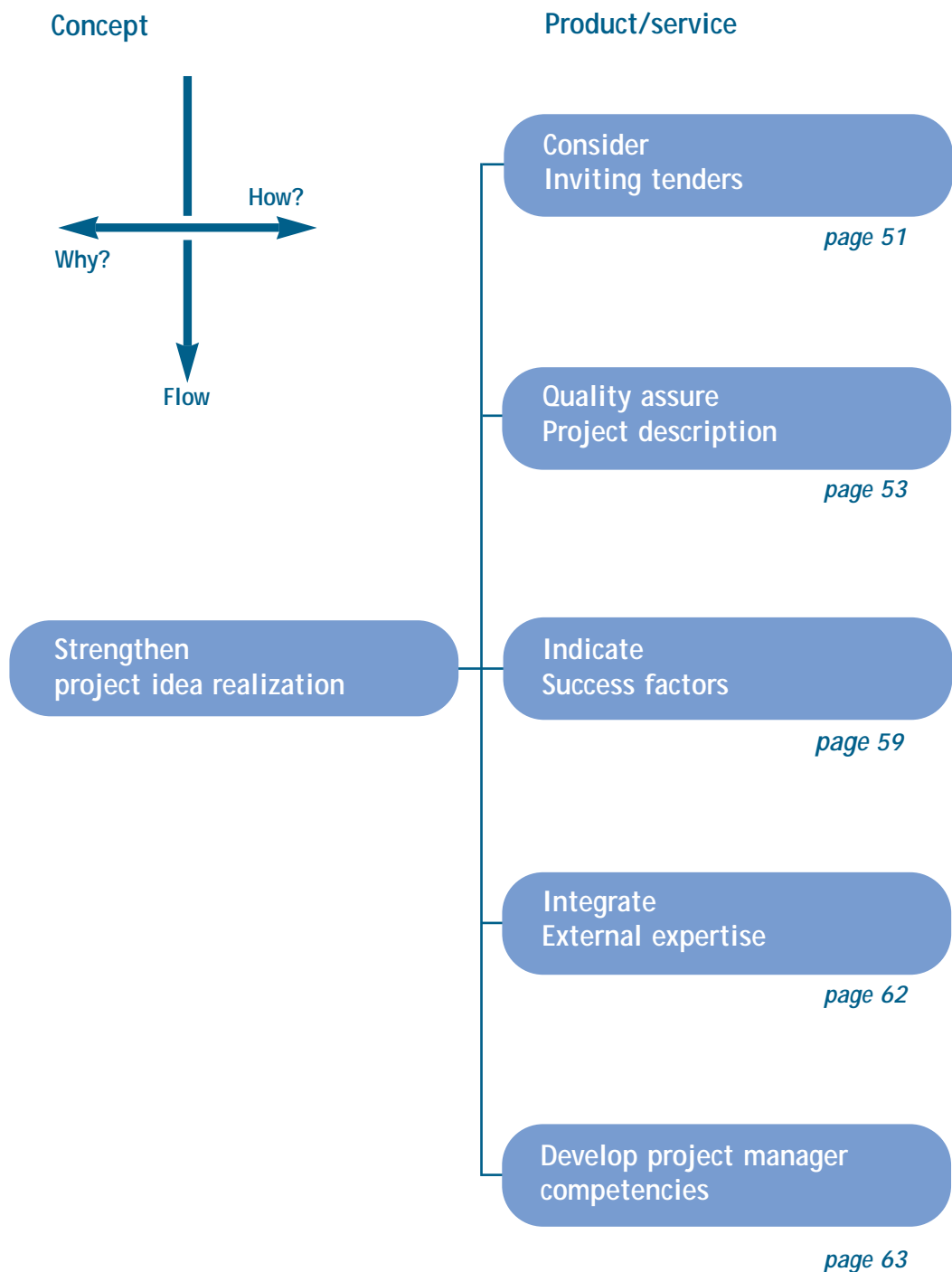
DEVELOP THE ADMINISTRATION'S COMPETENCIES

Competence development is an ongoing process that, for example, can be undertaken in a targeted course sequence, but can also take other forms such as network meetings between administrators, joint meetings with resource persons outside of the Social Fund, debate and exchange of experiences on www.socialfonden.dk.

Irrespective of which form is chosen in the individual cases, it is important that the exchange of expertise and the dissemination of experience occurs in an open forum that is accessible to all who work with the administration of ESF funds.

STRENGTHEN PROJECT IDEA REALIZATION

As a supplement to the strengthening of the administration just described, there are a number of areas where the administration – in co-ordination with the project management and the co-operation partners – can contribute to a strengthening of the project idea realization.



CONSIDER INVITING TENDERS

There can be occasions when the administration, in co-operation with the Social Fund committee, should consider putting the realization of a specific project idea out to tender. It may, for example, be a question of a project idea initiator who either does not wish, or does not possess the requisite conditions (professional and personal qualifications, network etc.) for, the realization of his project idea. The project ideas may also have come about as a result of idea-generating activities (cf. the point relating to the initiation of project idea development in chapter 2) or as a result of special political declarations.

Forms of tender:

As mentioned in connection with tendering for project development, three forms of tender are indicated:

- Limited tender is directed at a selected range of potential project managers that are regarded as possessing both the qualifications and the motivation for carrying out the project.
- Open tender affords, everybody with the opportunity to tender for the assignments. The strength of the open tender is that new interesting project managers can indicate their interest while, on the other hand, the procedure will often be more resource-intensive than the limited tender.
- Finally the competitive tender model can also offer an opportunity if it is a matter of undertaking a major project assignment. The decisive advantage of the traditional competitive tender is that the project is carried out at a fixed price. In this way the follow-up of the project will concern itself with the project's target achievement rather than the accounting side (How many resources does the project holder employ? Are the costs entitled to support? etc.). It will, at the same time, be permitted to earn money on Social Fund projects, which may possibly encourage new players to show an interest in the Social Fund.

Pre-qualify project managers:

Even if an actual competitive tender is not carried out for a project assignment, there can be good reasons to be inspired by the ideas surrounding pre-qualification. This applies in particular to an

CONSIDER INVITING TENDERS

open tender where one is able to undertake an initial screening of applicants/project managers, and then strengthen the dialogue with the remaining applicants (for example by means of actual meetings, extended applications etc.). A checklist in connection with the selection of a project manager/project undertaking organization may, for example, concern:

- knowledge of the presentation of the problem/target group
- previous references relating to the sector
- experience in project administration of this magnitude/degree of difficulty
- ability to exploit and market the project results
- networks and attitudes towards co-operation with others regarding the project
- international experience and networks
- financial foundation
- the project/project manager's back-up, both internally within the executing organization, and externally

Stimulate project ownership:

Project ownership is an acknowledged and important driving force when the objective is project realization. To realize a project idea often requires a lot more creativity than that involved in getting the actual idea. It is during realization of the project idea that one is confronted, time after time, by the unexpected, that can only be overcome by means of a high degree of insight, hard work and creativity carried out with limited freedom to effect changes – in brief, repeated top performances by the project manager and the project team.

Such performances are best promoted when the project manager and team are made aware that, on the part of the administration, every effort has been made from the very beginning to make it clear to all that the manager and the team have been chosen because they can provide the optimum solution for the task. The manager and team should be aware that the realization of the project idea will be to their merit. Upon each discussion – written and verbal – of the project, it should be shown on an equal footing who is realizing the idea and who originated it. The administration has a significant responsibility for stimulating project ownership.

QUALITY ASSURE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project description is of great importance for carrying out a project. The project team (project manager, co-workers, control group etc.) can employ the description in order to assess the ongoing performance of the project, secure the gathering of experience, decide upon adjustments, and maintain an overview and coordination in the whole project sequence. For the administration the project description is an agreement basis against which the project will be followed and evaluated. In cases of doubt it is the project description that determines whether the project has satisfied the objectives that were formulated at the beginning of the project. That is why adjustments to the project description should always be made with the approval of the administration.

The project description is a subsection of a project application, but there can be many reasons for adjusting and extending the description if the project application is granted Social Fund support. On the one hand the project approval committee may make its support contingent upon an adjustment being made or the project description being made more specific and, on the other hand, the project holder may himself wish to extend his project description after financing has fallen into place and the project is to be initiated, or during the course of the project.

In order to be useable in the practical project work, the description should satisfy three requirements as a point of departure:

- It should be easy to understand and clear. It is important that it clearly states the product's mission – what will the world miss if this project is not realized?
- It should be realistic and as precise as possible in its content. The description should thus present itself clearly and explicitly in relation to the project's specific implementation and the documentation that is to be produced.
- It should be adjustable – able to be adapted when the need arises – and, as far as possible, take account of obstacles to the execution of the project that may arise.

The project description can be formulated in many ways but should, as a minimum, relate itself to the following main questions¹:

The project's mission:

The mission is a description of the project's overall purpose and "raison d'être". What is the back-

¹ The following requirements for a project description are merely to provide an overview of the areas to which the description should relate. There is thus a need for the requirements to be extended and described in the application material from the individual Social Fund programmes in the new period.

QUALITY ASSURE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

ground to the project? What needs does it address? What does the project's added value and innovation consist of? If the project has a specific target group this should also be described and delineated here. The mission should be clear and understandable for all who are involved in the project.

An example of a mission could be: "to build up capacity among smaller businesses (e.g. < 20 employees) within the electronics industry to carry out systematic competence development and thereby counteract the unemployment risks and strengthen the businesses' competitiveness"²

The project's objectives and success criteria:

The project's sub-objectives and success criteria (anticipated effects) should be so specific, measurable and understandable that there is no subsequent doubt about whether they have been achieved. Considerable expectations are imposed in respect of Social Fund projects, but the objectives must never be over-ambitious, just to please the administration and the project approval committee.

As an extension of the above example, the project's targets and success criteria may, for example, consist of: "1) developing specific education planning tools adapted to the needs of the industry, 2) creating conditions/capacity for education planning in all the participating businesses, as well as an increased educational input in at least the participating businesses, 3) to consolidate and disseminate the project's experiences and results among named organizations as well as individual businesses within the industry".

Development strategy

The development strategy points the way towards achieving the set project objectives. Specifically the strategy will contain a description, divided into phases, of which activities are to be initiated and which methods are to be employed. In connection with the individual phases a number of milestones are set up, against which programme progress is measured. The milestones specify when a subtask is to be completed and how the achievement is to be documented.

The strategy should also clarify the project's organizational frameworks: Who takes care of the project management? How is the co-operation with the internal and external co-operation partners to be organized? And how will the project achieve the necessary back-up and resource allocation?

² In practice the project's mission, objectives and success criteria should be far more specific than is the case in this example.

QUALITY ASSURE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Evaluating and status reporting

Planning and organization of ongoing evaluation and status reporting is an important part of the project description. Traditional evaluation and status reporting are often based upon a retrospective assessment of the project's execution and target achievement. The evaluation should, however, also have a dynamic and motivating objective. It is therefore important that the evaluation contributes towards an ongoing gathering of experience and forward-looking discussion of the project. In order to fully exploit the forward-looking discussions, it is of great importance that the project team has an eye for experimental/untraditional experiences as well as good and bad experiences/observations one can learn from.

Seen as a whole the evaluation and status reporting should, as a minimum, answer the following main questions:

- Are the project's objectives/subobjectives achieved? If not, why?
- What experiences and observations have been made on the way? What networks have been created?
- What can experiences and networks be used for in the subsequent project sequence and after the completion of the project?
- How has the project's plan for the dissemination of experience been implemented?

The project description should, from the start, determine which documentation is to be submitted in the individual project phases in connection with the ongoing status reporting and final evaluation. The evaluation can, for example, base itself upon joint discussions in the project team, a questionnaire survey among project managers and interested parties, or an actual user survey, where the effect of the project is measured.

It is often instructive and beneficial for the project as a whole, for both co-workers, managers and participants etc., to be involved in the ongoing evaluations and status meetings.

The evaluations can be carried out by both internal and external parties. It can be especially recommended to get an external evaluator to undertake the project's final evaluation, in that "fresh" eyes

QUALITY ASSURE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

often notice other further development potential for the project which the project's core participants may have overlooked. An external (impartial) evaluation can also be included in subsequent marketing of the project and its results. Even if the external evaluation is only carried out with regard to the concluding evaluation, it should nevertheless occur at an early stage of the project sequence.

Overleaf there is a proposal regarding how ongoing status reporting can be undertaken. The form has four main areas. The first two areas describe, on the one hand, what knowledge has been garnered since the last status and, on the other hand, which new networks and resource persons the project calls upon. The descriptions should be brief and precise. The third area states which realizations (conclusions) and which decisions the project has reached on the basis of the new information, knowledge and networks. This relates both to decisions that are taken and decisions that are under consideration. The fourth area is for a more traditional status regarding whether the project is keeping to its milestones (in terms of time and activity) and its budget. This last area is also employed for accounting for the implementation of the project's plan for experience dissemination.

QUALITY ASSURE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project title and no.:

Report no.:

Drawn up on the:

Addition of information and knowledge:

New network and resource persons:

New perceptions and decisions:

Status in relation to the project's time/activity and resource plan of:

Signature (project manager)

QUALITY ASSURE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Consolidation and dissemination of experiences and results

Consistent documentation, employment and further dissemination of project results is of great importance for the final effect of a project. The project description should therefore clearly relate to how the garnered experiences can be consolidated and employed in everyday life when the project is concluded. In addition a carefully prepared information strategy should be drawn up, that identifies the interested parties in the project, and indicates how the achieved experiences are further disseminated among the interested parties (both during the project and after its conclusion).

Obstacles against project realization

The project description should consider and anticipate which obstacles there will be to the execution of the project, both inside and outside the project team, and what can be done in order to avoid or limit the anticipated problems. The obstacles can, for example, consist of co-operation problems within the project or in relation to the project's external partners, difficulties in relating the planned target group to an activation project or difficulties in attracting a sufficient number of businesses that wish to participate in an overall competence development project.

INDICATE SUCCESS FACTORS

Why do some projects enjoy greater success than others? How is it possible to get organized in order to carry out a good project? Answers to questions of this nature can be of importance for the administration's prerequisites for guiding, advising and helping project holders towards a better execution. The National Labour Market Authority has requested the firm Sociologisk Analyse [Sociological Analysis] to investigate general success factors in projects (within and in connection with the Social Fund). The investigation, which is primarily based upon a questionnaire survey among the project managers³, forms the background to the recommendations in the following.

Planning and project description:

Experience shows that there are far too many projects that never get close to realising their objectives. This may be the result of deficient project development, a lack of prioritization of the project, or practical problems in recruiting participants and co-operation partners. These pitfalls underline the importance of the administration, helping with advice, guidance and possibly financing of project development/pilot trials, and contributing towards quality assuring the project's planning phase.

The survey confirms, moreover, that a project description that is drawn up and employed correctly, in practice serves as a valuable planning and project control tool for the project team (project manager, co-workers, control group etc.) and as a binding contract between the project and the granting instance. There is thus a major responsibility incumbent upon the administration to ensure that the supported projects have a project description that is easy to understand, clear, realistic and precise with regard to the project's mission, aims, development strategy and documentation practice (see above).

Project management:

The survey shows, not surprisingly, that previous project experience, professional insight and personal qualifications such as ability to co-operate, personal forthrightness and capacity for innovative thinking, are significant project manager qualities – irrespective of the nature of the project. Most important of all, however, is choosing a project manager who is totally committed to the project (feels ownership) and sees an excellent opportunity for personal development in the realization of the project. If an appointed project manager has major gaps in terms of qualifications, it is important that the project team, possibly in co-operation with the ESF administration – ensures that the missing expertise is provided, either via education, training or bringing the requisite resource persons into the project team.

³ A total of 41 project managers with an average of 7 years project experience took part in the questionnaire survey. The survey which, to a considerable degree, addressed itself to project managers with an interest in activation projects, is described in greater detail in a separate memorandum on www.socialfonden.dk/projektrealisering/successfaktorer.

INDICATE SUCCESS FACTORS

The project manager's key role may, at the same time, be a source of vulnerability if he/she chooses to change jobs in the middle of the project. This vulnerability emphasises the necessity for an on-going documentation of the execution of the project in relation to the milestones that are set up, and the addition of information and networks, as well as emphasis being placed on the dissemination of knowledge and forward-looking evaluation within the framework of the entire project team.

Internal and external co-operation relations – communication and management

The survey shows that commitment on the part of the parties involved is something that truly promotes a project's quality. The feeling of ownership is the most important means of securing commitment among both internal and external co-operation partners. The ownership feeling should, at the same time, be real, i.e. based upon a common understanding of the project's mission, aims and means. In this context it is crucial for the apportionment of tasks and responsibility to also be in position.

The fostering of a common project understanding and, consequently, strong internal and external co-operation relations, is an important tool for creating and sustaining a common understanding and feeling of ownership. But it cannot stand alone. Ongoing discussions and associated adjustments to the project will often be decisive in securing the parties' commitment throughout the whole process. If the project is embedded in a larger organization or at a workplace, it is important to secure support from the management and colleagues so that the project is given sufficient priority. External parties should be kept constantly informed as well as be invited to a dialogue that affords opportunities for real influence upon the circumstances. At all levels there must be careful consideration given to who has a need to be kept informed. The participants in the dialogue can, for example, be:

- The project team (project management, employees and control group)
- The organization in which the project is embedded (other management, colleagues, finance department/accounts department)
- The project's participants/users (the project's direct target group)
- The project's reference group together with other external co-operation partners

INDICATE SUCCESS FACTORS

- Subcontractors
- Any target groups for the project's experience dissemination activities

Consolidation and dissemination of experiences

Evaluations of previous Social Fund programmes show that consolidation and dissemination of project results and experiences are often given a low priority and are put to one side and – not infrequently – totally omitted. There is usually a lack of a well-grounded plan for these activities, and planned activities are often shelved or minimized because of a lack of time and financial resources, or a mental tiredness seeps into the project organization. This practice is indefensible for all parties. The consolidation of project results and experiences is of crucial importance for the project work's effect in the organization carrying it out. It is just as important for the Social Fund – as a development fund – for there to be a targeted dissemination of experiences among other projects as well as to the political and administrative level.

The administration has considerable responsibility for contributing actively towards a plan for consolidation and experience dissemination being in place in each individual project – and also for the plan to be realized. The administration's alertness is essential, not least in relation to the project's broader dissemination activities, when the individual project does not necessarily possess a strong incentive for passing on good ideas, experiences etc., outside the organization.

The administration's role:

Experiences show that the ESF administration can provide a valuable contribution towards both project development, realization and employment of experience. A fundamental prerequisite for this to occur is that the administration sees itself – and acts – as an “active shareholder” in relation to the ESF-supported projects. It is necessary for the administration to follow each individual project closely and to assert its interests. By far the majority of projects will regard the administration's alertness as legitimate and useful. In order to strengthen the administration's project contact, it may be considered to set up service aims for the administrators – e.g. in the form of requirements regarding the number of project visits, network seminars etc.

INTEGRATE EXTERNAL EXPERTISE

For both the project's management and the Social Fund administration – that follow the project's development and realization – it is important to consider whether a project has a need to be provided with external expertise. The external expert will be paid out of the project's budget and can, for example, be used in connection with idea development, management of specific processes and evaluation. In general it is recommended that the internal "knowledge and expertise gaps" in the project are charted, and that consideration is then given to whether they can be filled in via external expertise.

Experts can be hired for very short periods of time for the solution of specified problems. As long as the need is well-defined and described, the introduction of external expertise and knowledge does not need to be very costly. If a project is sufficiently advanced or is meritorious in some other way, it can also be possible to attach external expertise free of charge.

In addition the National Labour Market Authority has trained almost 40 European Project Managers (EPMs), who can assist with considerable experience and knowledge of development, execution, consolidation and dissemination of Social Fund projects.

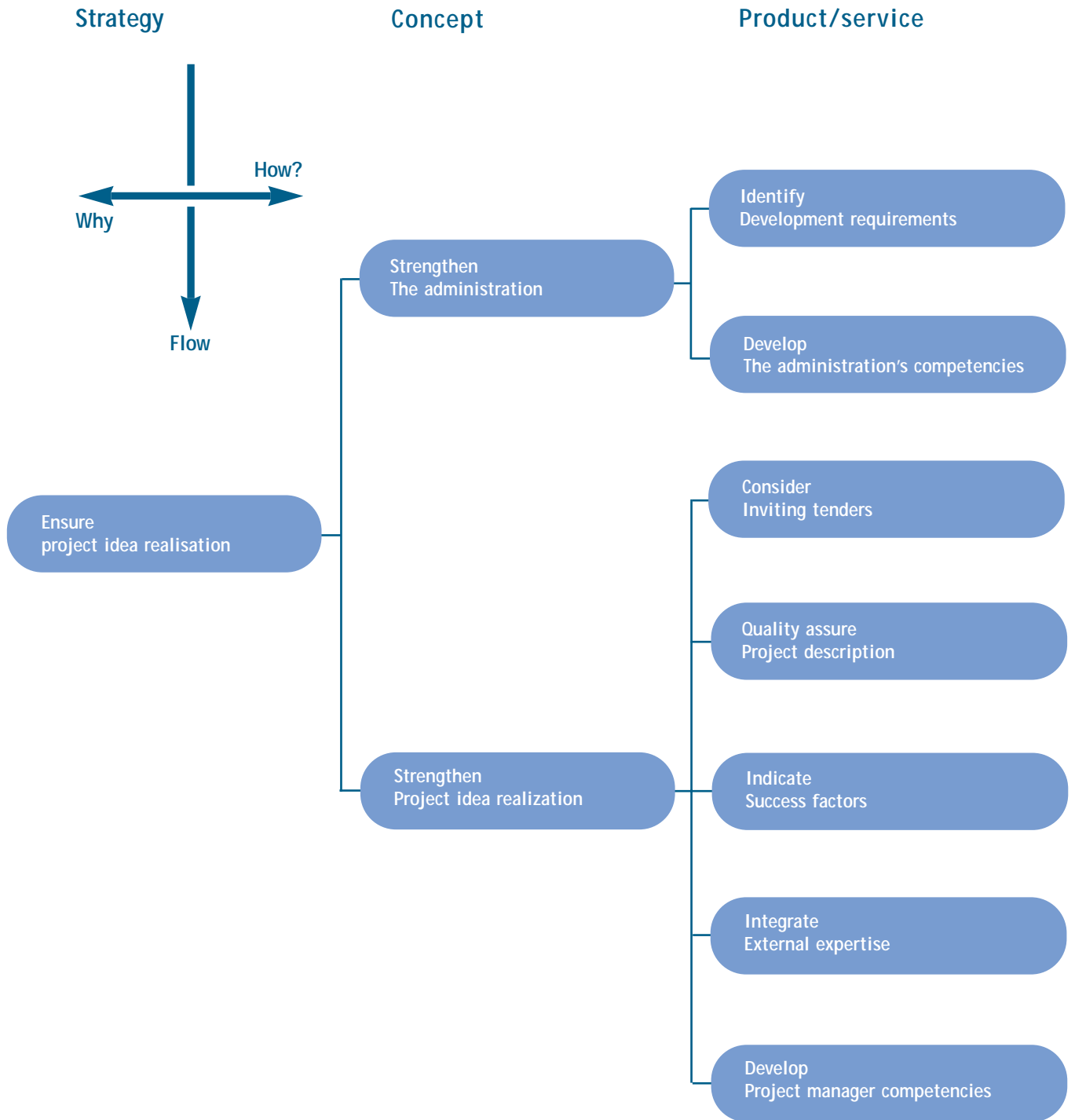
DEVELOP PROJECT MANAGER COMPETENCIES

The project managers' need for expertise development varies considerably – all according to their individual circumstances and the character of the project that is to be carried out. While specialized competence requirements can be difficult to cover, the administration should assure itself that all project managers possess the basic qualities and information/knowledge that are required in order to develop and realize an ESF project. Based upon the National Labour Market Authority's experiences with the EPM's education, expertise development will be of particular relevance in respect of:

- Development and assessment of project ideas
- Project planning, organization and description
- Budgeting, accounting and liquidity control for ESF projects (including use of OPUS+)
- Status reporting and evaluation
- Network creation and dissemination of experience

It can be advantageous to conduct a two-day course in project management immediately after the ESF support is granted, so that the participating project managers can, from the start, have the requisite expertise strengthened and be given the opportunity to establish networks with other projects (across industries and also, preferably, across regions).

ENSURE PROJECT REALIZATION



PROMOTE
USE OF EXPERIENCE

PROMOTE USE OF EXPERIENCE

The Social Fund must contribute towards development and innovation in the Danish employment efforts to the benefit of the unemployed, the employed, businesses, entrepreneurs etc. The fund's focus upon innovative activities means that the dissemination and employment of the specific project experiences and results are given an entirely central importance. In the following, the catalogue provides a range of ideas about how the administration can contribute towards the promotion of the use of the experiences – positive and negative – that have been harvested.

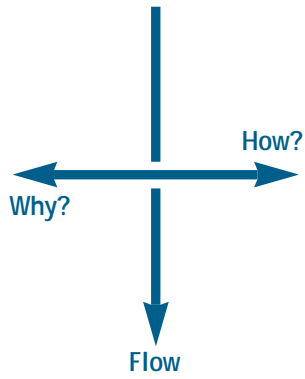
The heading “use of experience” has been chosen to emphasize that one cannot be satisfied with a broadly based information effort that only affords the Social Fund visibility and publicity. It is at least as important to ensure the dissemination of experience that can potentially alter the recipients' framework of understanding, acknowledgements and decisions. The chapter presents three approaches (concepts) for promoting the use of experience:

- **generally making visible individual projects and project experiences (communication at project level)**
- **utilization of experiences where the administration undertakes a responsibility for experiences and results from several projects being processed and communicated with selected recipient groups in mind**
- **secure the future of project results, where the aim is to lift concluded projects over into a more permanent operational phase**

PROMOTE USE OF EXPERIENCE

Strategy

Concept



Promote
Use of experience

Make
Experiences visible

page 68

Utilize
Experiences

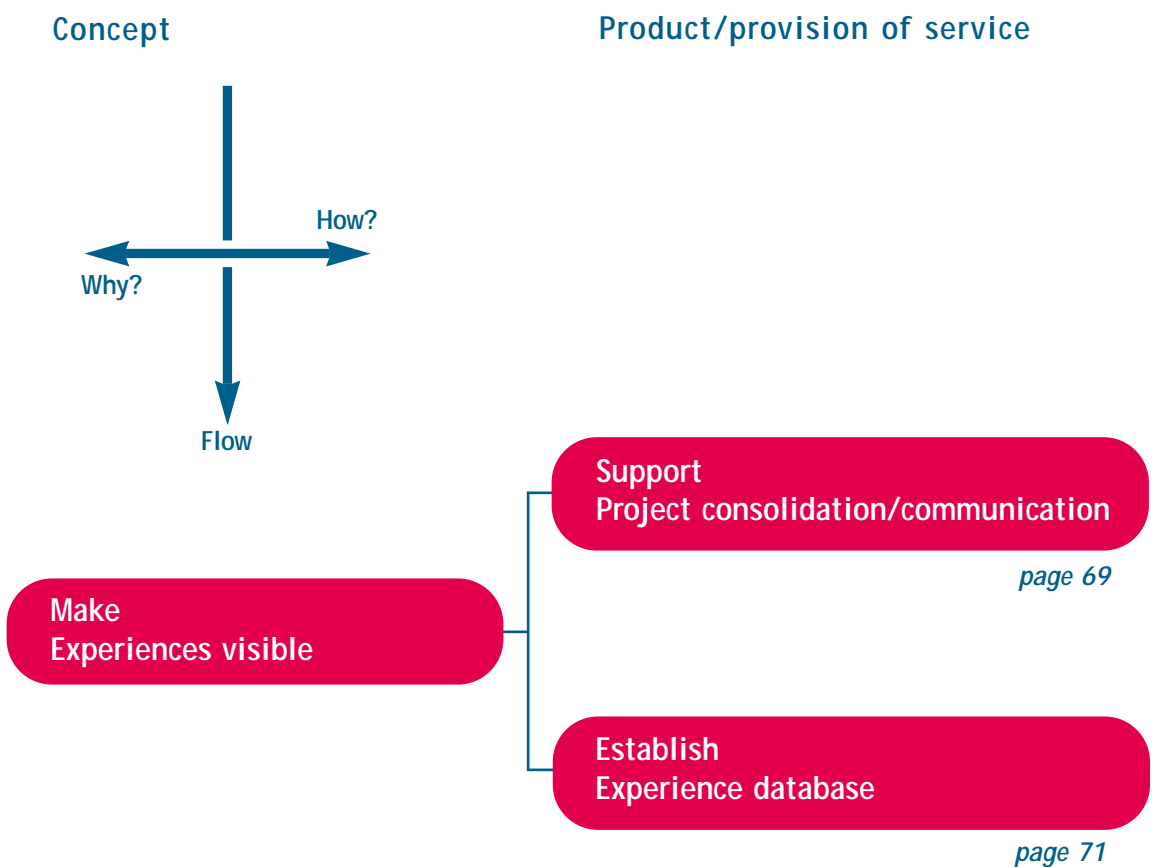
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Secure
Future of project results

page 79

MAKE EXPERIENCES VISIBLE

The efforts designed to make experiences visible are concerned with both drawing attention to the existence of specific projects, and strengthening the targeted consolidation and dissemination of experience in the individual projects.



Stated below are some pointers as to how the administration can contribute towards identifying experience potential in a project and supporting the consolidation and dissemination of the experiences and results that are achieved.

Identifying the experience potential:

Each project application and project description should state what experience potential the project is expected to have, how the experiences are to be consolidated within the organization, to whom the experiences are to be communicated and how it is to happen (through which information channels, etc.). The administration has a major responsibility for contributing – from the start of the project and subsequently – towards clarifying these questions. While the individual project manager has the best bases for deciding how the project experiences are to be consolidated internally within the organization, it will often be the task of the administration to ensure that relevant external interested parties are included in the dissemination strategy.

There exists a wide perception that the dissemination of experiences occurs, in terms of time, when a project is as good as finished. In practice, however, results and experiences are often generated in the middle of the project that deserve to be disseminated on an ongoing basis.

Consolidate project experiences:

It happens more often than one would think that a project is concluded and is put away and forgotten before the project organization has managed to collate and react to the important – positive and negative – experiences that have been gained in the course of the project. The reasons for this may be many. Perhaps status reporting and evaluation is only regarded as being an administrative requirement that is to be met in order to gain ESF support. Perhaps the project is forced into the background by new measures, operational problems etc.

The administration is faced with an important challenge. Namely to convince the ESF project managers that it pays off to employ the project description, the ongoing status reporting and the final evaluation actively in terms of documenting and discussing experiences and, against that background, to take future-orientated decisions. Should we carry on with the project or elements of it, from here on? What have we learned as a project organization? What can we use the new network and cooperation relations for? What can we do differently in the future? ... The administration must ensure that the consolidation of project experiences is made into a success criterion for the individual project manager.

SUPPORT PROJECT CONSOLIDATION/COMMUNICATION

Advise and direct regarding project communication:

The administration's firm requirement of dissemination of experiences will have limited effect if it is not followed up by a close dialogue with the project team, as well as relevant guidance about how the dissemination potential can unfold in the individual project. This part of the administration's input can, for example, consist of:

- Advising about – and creating understanding for – the ESF programmes' overall objective of dissemination of experience. The evaluation of the completed EMPLOYMENT programme shows that many project managers were uncertain about – and found it difficult to relate to – the programme's goal of experience dissemination and application (mainstreaming).
- Indicating specific dissemination methods and tools. For example AMS will draw up an "information timetable" for all ESF projects. The timetable provides advice regarding the choice of target groups, advertising, forms of communication access to regional media etc. Correspondingly there is a long list of experiences with information work in the regional Social Fund administrations, that can form the basis for a common dialogue about, and development of, the communication practice.
- Carrying out guidance on the individual project's premises. The direction can take the form of a dialogue between the administration and the individual project as seminars/workshops, where ESF projects are brought together and discussed jointly and specific communication strategies can be drawn up.

ESTABLISH EXPERIENCE DATABASE

The experience database is one of the most flexible means of making the Social Fund's projects, results and experiences visible. The database is updated continuously and affords the user the opportunity to target his experience search.

Establish database:

In connection with the inspiration catalogue a database has been set up on www.socialfonden.dk, which will contain all the projects that ESF support received in the period 2000-2006. The database addresses itself to all who wish to be inspired by project ideas, experiences and results or to seek cooperation partners/resource persons. The database is ready to be put into operation as soon as an opening is found in the social fund period.

Maintain database:

The database is drawn up so that any administrator may, by means of a password, add new information. The free access to updating the database obliges all administrators to ensure a rapid communication of project data and content after the start of the project, and a continuous updating in line with the project's sub-sections being realized and/or the project changing its focus.

Market database:

User-friendliness and ongoing updating of project information is of great importance for how much the new database will be employed. In addition it is necessary to market the database as soon as it comes on-line. Marketing should be worked into all information and application materials that are drawn up in connection with the new ESF programmes.

Involve other databases

At the same time as the establishment of an ESF database, it is important that the administration keeps itself advised about – and is aware of – other related databases that may be of benefit for project idea initiators, the administration itself and other interested parties in the Social Fund areas. Even now, reference can be made to:

National ESF databases:

www.socialfonden.dk (overview of all projects that have received Social Fund support 1995-1999)

www.a-e.dk (Adapt and Employment projects)

www.aciu.dk (Adapt, Youthstart, Target 4/Attak, Leonardo)

www.vejleamt-international.dk

ESTABLISH EXPERIENCE DATABASE

All the Danish counties have, in addition, their own home pages where, in the majority of cases, there is information about supported projects as well as links to, e.g. the municipalities, TIC, local employment councils etc., e.g.. www.vibamt.dk

The Employment Pacts can also be found on the Internet, e.g. www.af-soenderjylland.dk

Other national project databases:

www.ams.dk/puljer (The National Labour Market Authority's home page with an overview of pools and projects)

www.arbejdsliv.dk (pool for a better working life)

www.sm.dk/sociale_projekter (Social Ministry's home page with an overview of pools and projects)

www.oresundskomiteen.dk (Interregional projects in the Øresund region)

www.lace.dk (Experiences regarding regions' cross-border co-operation with neighbouring regions)

European ESF databases (French, English and German)

www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal (about Adapt and Employment as well as the new EQUAL)

www.racine.asso.fr (France – Adapt, Employment, Target 3, Target 4 and Leonardo)

www.efp-bonn.de (Germany – Employment and Adapt)

www.gip.at (Austria – Employment and Adapt)

www.esf.amv.se (Sweden)

www.employment.ecotec.co.uk (Great Britain – Employment)

www.adapt.ecotec.co.uk (Great Britain – Adapt)

www.buildingterritories.org (results and experiences with “territorial approaches” i.e. locally based partnerships in connection with the labour-market-related projects. Extract examples from Employment, Adapt, Target 4, Urban, Leader and the Peace-programme)

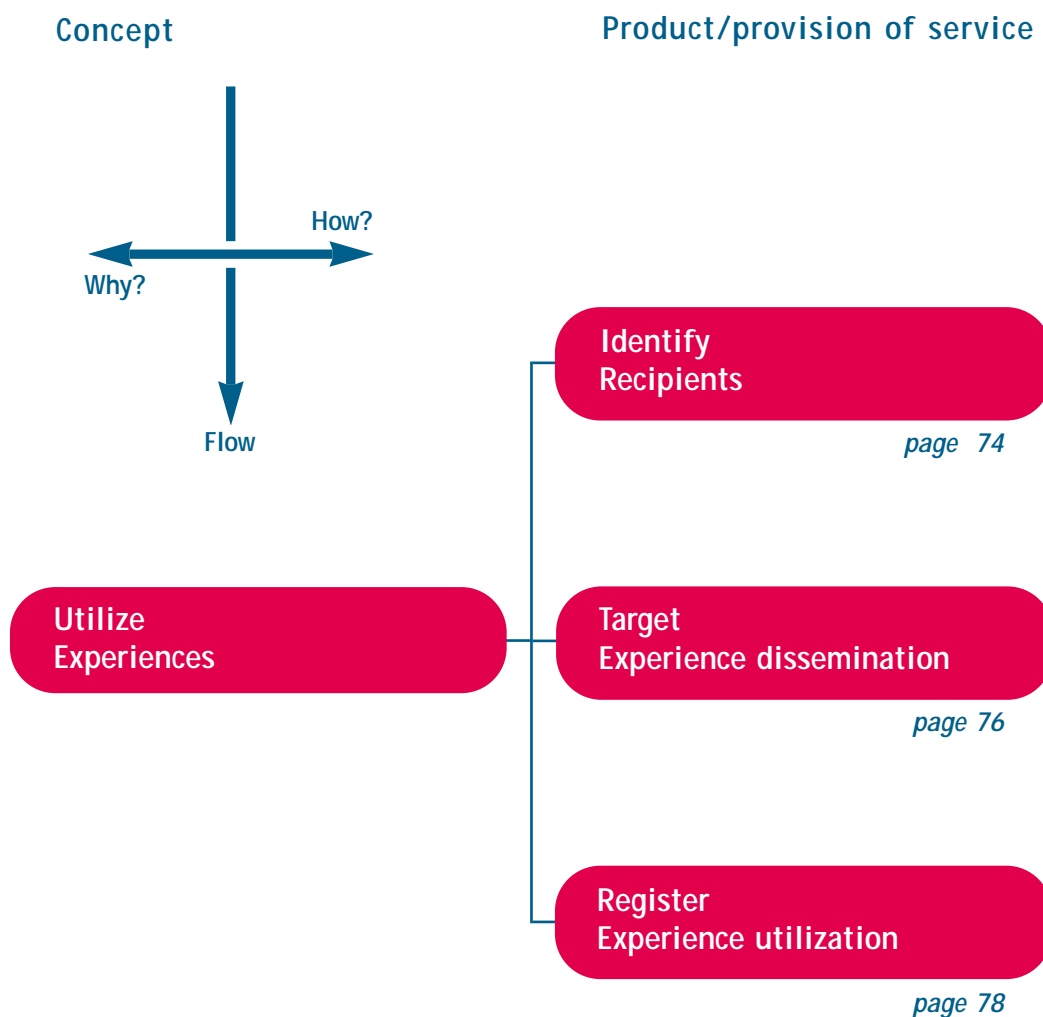
Other European databases

www.lace.aebr-ageg.de (Experiences from inter-regional projects regarding cross-border co-operation)

UTILIZE EXPERIENCES

The philosophy behind the utilization of experiences is that one first identifies the relevant target groups and then cultivates and communicates the project-based experiences in a manner whereby they are immediately usable by the recipients. The main emphasis is thus placed upon what knowledge is looked for by the recipient and in what form it is required.

The administration has the principal responsibility for ensuring that utilization takes place: Firstly the utilization of experiences will often impose greater demands upon the preparation and implementation of the dissemination of experience, than may be reasonably imposed upon the individual project. Secondly there will often be a need for gathering experiences and results from several projects and carrying out an overall communication.



IDENTIFY RECIPIENTS

It is the administration's responsibility to secure an overview of the overall project portfolio by means of the project database, through dialogue with projects etc. Against this background it is possible to reveal which project-based experiences can be made the subject of utilization. It will often be an advantage if several projects of the same kind are carried out (with comparable target groups, methods or the like) in order to ensure critical mass in the experience pool that is required to be communicated.

When the administration has identified, or has been made aware of, a major experience potential, the next step is to identify the recipients in the utilization process. Which players will be able to make special use of the collated experiences? – Is it other projects, a special industrial sector, business schools, the political level, or others?

It is important to have an ongoing dialogue with potential recipients of the experience dissemination, so that one knows what ideas and solutions the recipients are short of and therefore give a high priority to. If one takes a ministry or a county council as an example, it is of great importance for the effect of a future dissemination effort that one is aware of the problems that occupy a high position on the agenda.

The following stakeholder model may be employed as an inspiration for identifying recipients.

IDENTIFY RECIPIENTS

Project players:

- Managers of ongoing projects
- Potential applicants
- The projects' participants and co-operation partners
- The projects' general target group (e.g. cultural entrepreneurs)

Programme administrations

- The National Labour Market Authority
- The regional ESF co-ordinators (Target 3)
- Regionalized Objective 2 administrations
- The Business Promoting Authority
- The European Commission (incl. technical assistance offices)
- Other EU and national pool and programme administrators
- Members of the Social Fund's monitoring and approval committee



The labour market, industry and commerce and education-political players Employment Services

- Employment Services
- Municipalities, The National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark
- The Counties. The County Councils Association
- The Labour Market parties
- Educational institutions
- Businesses
- Local employment offices
- TIC
- Relevant ministries and authorities

Political players:

- Politicians (European, national, regional and local)
- National Labour Market Council (NLC)
- The regional labour market council (RLC)
- The regional social fund committee (RSC)
- County council
- Employment council
- Relevant local and regional committees for employment, education or labour market policies.

TARGET EXPERIENCE DISSEMINATION

When one has first revealed the experience potential and the relevant target groups, one is able to initiate a targeted dissemination effort. Much of the innovation and gathering of experience that occurs at the project level is closely connected to the needs of the individual project, the conditions and wishes. Therefore the processing and generalization of the collective experiences – with a view to making them usable in other contexts – will often be a major task in the dissemination process. Some pointers are given below as to how the dissemination of experience can take place.

Targeted written communications

The written communication contains many opportunities for dissemination of experience. Among good examples of this are, for example:

- **Tools folders.** The Business Promoting Authority has, for many years, been sending out brief descriptions of methods and tools that have been developed in various support programmes. The folders are both very precise and accessible in their description, and address themselves to practical people.
- **Cookery books.** As part of the Youthstart programme, ACIU has issued a number of “cookery books” in which the projects put forward ideas and experiences to inspire similar projects and initiatives. Each cookery book has its own theme, e.g. “Ideas for working with young criminals” and “Tools for describing target groups in social work”.
- **Theme numbers.** Regionally a number of thematic publications, together with special project evaluations, have been drawn up, that aim at both directing attention at the Social Fund and also communicating specific experiences and results for future-orientated use.

Network and thematic seminars

Networks are often a very efficient means of targeting experience dissemination – not least because the transfer of experience occurs in an ongoing dialogue. The administration should strive to hold network meetings for the Social Fund’s projects – both at the beginning and during the course of the project. The start-up meeting will, if the proposal from chapter 3 under “Develop project manager competencies” is followed, primarily have the objective of equipping the project managers for the execution of the projects. Subsequently the project managers can be invited to thematic seminars where there is an opportunity for extending the network and discussing experiences and results under a joint heading. ACIU has had good experiences in holding thematic seminars in the

TARGET EXPERIENCE DISSEMINATION

previous Social Fund period, regarding – for example – “new work organization”, “Use of IT in education” and “Lifelong learning”.

In each individual case one should consider opening networks and thematic seminars for participants outside of the Social Fund, if these persons have a special interest or knowledge in the area that is to be debated.

Work out Social Fund Account

In terms of experience it is very difficult to communicate specific project experiences to the political level. The Social Fund Account can be a means of creating vertical dissemination with a view to bringing about changes at policy level, i.e. in political priorities, efforts, rules etc. The account should communicate the fund's overall experiences within some annually determined main themes at the political level. The ongoing gathering of experiences occurs through a co-operation between the administration and a group (3-4) of independent experts. The experts work out, on that basis, a report (account) that points towards results and experiences that should give rise to political considerations in connection with national labour market legislation, preparation of the NAP, NLC and RLC's planning work etc.

Conferences

Major conferences and seminars may, for example, be employed in order to make the Social Fund visible, to attract new groups of applicants and to create networks. On the other hand the specific yield from these events is often limited with regard to dissemination.

Financing of the utilizations

Financing of the utilization can take many forms:

On the one hand one can give support to one or more projects that have the objective of gathering and disseminating results and experiences from a range of special fund projects that come under a specific heading. For example “Changes in work organization” and “New forms of learning”. The model has been successfully adopted in Ireland where, under the Adapt programme, one has given special support to “Thematic Impact Projects”.

On the one hand one might consider giving a small support sum to players who wish to process and utilize specific project experiences, possibly as part of the development of a new project. The reasoning for this is that the persons who have the greatest interest in the exploitation process are those who will utilize the results afterwards.

REGISTER EXPERIENCE UTILIZATION

It is difficult but, at the same time, a precondition in order to be able to prepare the consolidation and dissemination of experiences, that one also creates a status of the effects of this input. Both for individual projects and major utilization measures, it is relevant to examine whether project experiences and results are employed in practice.

Following up at project level

The projects' status reporting and final evaluation should evaluate whether they have lived up to the formulated strategy for dissemination of project experiences and results. Included in this there should, as far as possible, be an evaluation of the extent to which the communicated experiences have been employed by the target groups. The administration should ensure that there is a following up and discussion of the projects' reporting back in order to contribute towards promoting the employment of experiences.

Following up of utilization measures

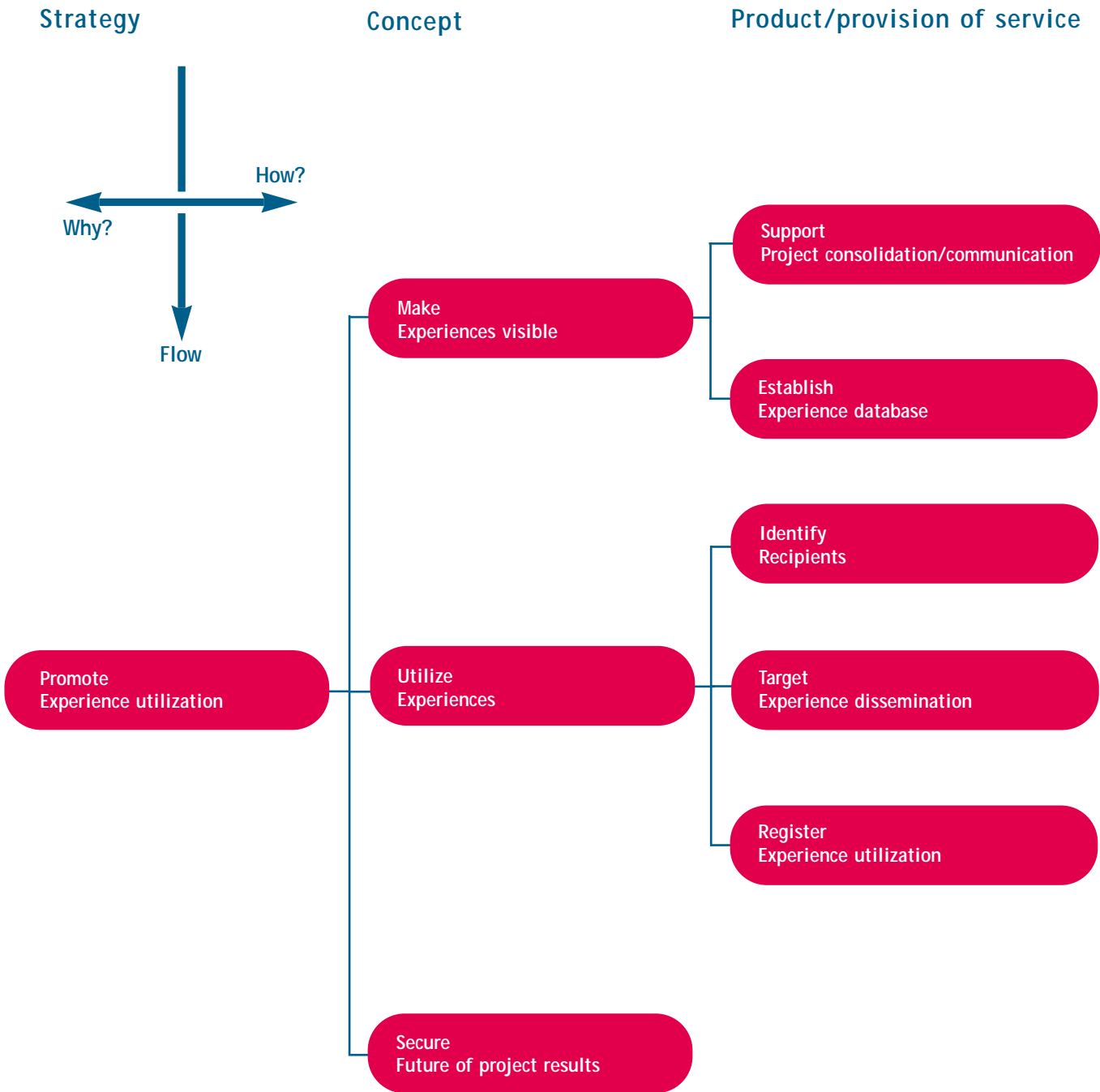
It appears to be self-evident to allow the following up of the effects of major utilization measures to form part of the external evaluation of the Social Fund's programmes. In addition it is the administration's responsibility to ensure that there is an ongoing reflection and discussion of questions such as: is the overall effort regarding the dissemination of experience and utilization, good enough? What activities have been effective, and where is there a need for development and improvement?

SECURE FUTURE OF PROJECT RESULTS

From time to time it happens that ESF projects, after a highly successful pilot phase, nevertheless get stopped because future financing is lacking. An example of this is the multi-media training “Space Invaders” for unemployed that had previously been supported by the Social Fund’s Objective 3. Even though the project was an undeniable success for both participants and the project organization, it was forced to close, because it was not possible to bring about a more permanent income foundation. The Social Fund is not able to provide a permanent operating grant for projects of this kind. Instead the ESF administration must have both an obligation, as well as the means, of working towards creating the future assurance of such good projects. The administration can, for example, contribute towards “delivering” a success project:

- **By indicating alternative finance sources (e.g. opportunities for Finance Act grants or private operation)**
- **By referring to resource persons who are able to advise on the project’s further execution**
- **Via networks and contacts, arranging contacts with organizations/structures, where the project idea can be carried forward.**

PROMOTE EXPERIENCE UTILIZATION



PROJECT IDEAS WITH EFFECT

Between 2000 and 2006 The European Social Fund will make more than DKK 3 billion available as support for development projects within the frameworks of the national action plan for employment. How is one to realize project ideas with effects that are to the direct benefit of the unemployed, the employed, businesses and entrepreneurs? This inspiration catalogue provides two overall ways as to how the challenge can be taken up:

In the first place the catalogue presents a broad access to quality idea development that leads to the development and testing of a vast range of ideas and initiatives within the main areas:

- **Planning and adaptation of the ESF efforts**
- **Development of project ideas**
- **Implementation of project ideas**
- **Distribution and employment of project experiences and results**

Secondly the catalogue issues an invitation to wide co-operation in order to optimize the overall Social Fund efforts. The co-operation shall, in the first instance, encompass the Social Fund's overall administration, but the perspective is much wider. The inspiration catalogue's ideas and thoughts can only be developed and realized in co-operation with project applicants, project managers and a wide circle of other players within the labour market, business and commerce, education and social sectors. Nationally as well as transnationally.

The inspiration catalogue is also to be found at www.socialfonden.dk.

