



EUROPEISKA UNIONEN
Europeiska socialfonden

Diarienummer
2009-00076

European year for combating poverty and social exclusion (2010)

National Programme for Sweden

Introduction and summary

Since 1983, the European Union has focused on a different central theme each year in order to put the spotlight on important political and social issues. 2010 is the European year for combating poverty and social exclusion. All Member States will recognize this by organizing a number of activities, campaigns and projects.

The theme of the European Year aims to confirm and strengthen the political pledge, made by the EU in connection with the launch of the Lisbon strategy for growth and employment, to "*make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty*". The current international economic and financial crisis has further emphasized the relevance and importance of this theme. The crisis can have long-term consequences for growth and employment in the EU and excluded people run the greatest risk of being hit the hardest.

Each Member State adopts a national programme for the thematic year specifying what goals are adopted and what activities will take place. The programme must be approved by the EU Commission which then approves co-funding to implement the programme on the condition that the Member State itself contributes an equal amount of co-funding.

The annual thematic programme and its implementation shall be done in close consultation with those affected by poverty and social exclusion, their representative organisations as well as other concerned actors in civil society. The Swedish national programme has been produced in consultation with, among others, the organisational network the Network against social exclusion (Nätverket mot socialt utanförskap), which represents approximately 40 organisations, and has been approved by the Commission for service user influence in social development issues in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (The Service User Commission).

The EU Commission has set a number of goals and guidelines for the implementation of the 2010 theme, among others the following four being the most important; recognition of rights, shared responsibility and participation, cohesion, commitment and concrete action.

The government has designated the Swedish ESF Council to be the responsible National Implementing Body and will, in consultation with the government and concerned government agencies and organisations, plan and prepare the Swedish implementation of the thematic year.

The main aim of the thematic year is to improve opportunities for people to climb out of poverty and social exclusion. It is also important to improve one's understanding of poverty and social exclusion as well as of who can be considered living in poverty and why poverty and social exclusion exist.

Sweden has, based on this aim and EU's guidelines, chosen the following three national objectives for the thematic year:

<p>Svenska ESF-rådet, Huvudkontoret Besöksadress: Liljeholmsvägen 30 B, 3 tr Postadress: Box 471 41, 100 74 Stockholm</p>	<p>Telefon: 08-579 171 00 Fax: 08-579 171 01 Webbplats: www.esf.se</p>
---	--



(1) Knowledge and advocacy in order to raise awareness among the general population, politicians and decision makers, both locally and nationally, about poverty and social exclusion.



Svenska
ESF-rådet

Through a nation-wide consultation and collaboration process, those affected by poverty and social exclusion will be given the opportunity to put forward their story, their demands and proposals to politicians, decision makers/representatives of the private, public and NGO sectors and to the media and researchers. By involving *Folketshusrörelsen* (Peoples Houses-community centres) and using new technology, such as Digital Houses, the campaign, which includes films, seminars and artistic expressions, will also reach the general population and media.

(2) Mobilisation of, and support to, voluntary organisations in civil society in the battle against poverty and social exclusion and, thereby, underscore everybody's responsibility in this pressing social issue.

By opening the doors to dialogue between the voluntary, public and private sectors, everybody's responsibility to combat poverty and social exclusion is underlined and various actors' efforts in this field, including best practices, are highlighted. With regards to child poverty, the human rights perspective will get special focus. Differences between the material living standards of children living in different family constellations and of different ethnic backgrounds will be highlighted. In connection with a special campaign activity, suggestions and clear demands will be raised for discussion with responsible politicians and decision makers.

A rights perspective will also be underscored for people belonging to other socially excluded groups. There are large differences when it comes to health care (resulting in poorer health for some) and structural discrimination which excludes certain groups from the labour, housing and education markets. Factors excluding people from political participation will also be highlighted.

(3) Give people experiencing poverty and social exclusion a voice and the opportunity to leave poverty and social exclusion behind them.

In Sweden there are a growing number of social exclusion areas that are characterised by housing segregation. The voices of those living in these areas will be heard; meetings between the majority and minority populations will be encouraged which lead to co-operation projects and neighbourhood efforts aiming to promote social cohesion at local level.

Strategies for self-empowerment and social innovations/social entrepreneurship will be given special attention and linked to increasing opportunities for work and self sufficiency.

Certain extremely poor groups, such as homeless people, irregular migrants/"sans papiers"/hidden former asylum seekers and beggars, represent a new phenomena in Sweden and which influences social cohesion. Organisations that work with these groups will be given a prominent role throughout the year and be given the opportunity to, through artistic expression forms, campaigns and activities, raise awareness among the general public, politicians and media. Here, as well, a rights perspective will be emphasized.

--	--	--



1. National situation and challenges

Sweden has been successful in combating poverty and social exclusion. Sweden also has a relatively low proportion of people living in poverty, both in terms of relative and absolute poverty. Society is relatively egalitarian and has a stable, publicly financed welfare system.

According to many people, poverty is practically speaking eradicated and those who are afflicted by unemployment, illness or other accident will be supported by society (state or local).

At the same time, however, the economic crisis during the 1990's carried with it an increase of poverty and social exclusion for many and an accelerating segregation when it comes to housing and social life. This is especially the case among foreign born persons. Other groups as well have suffered and previously unknown phenomena have appeared, including homelessness, a growing number of homeless people, irregular migrants/"sans papiers"/hidden former asylum seekers and beggars on the street and in the metro, rising child poverty in certain family constellations and a growing group of young people, often with another ethnic background, which find themselves outside of the labour market, education system and social insurance system.

On the other hand, there are a number of positive signs. Since 2000, an increasing number of people earn an income which allows them to be self-sufficient, fewer people live in poverty (4.5% in absolute poverty in 2006) and fewer rely on social welfare benefits.

1.1 Challenges and the national strategy for combating poverty

Economic poverty in Sweden

Sweden's strategy report for social protection and social inclusion 2008-2010¹ confirms that from 1994 the rate of *relative poverty* has risen due to a widening gap in income between low income earners on the one hand and middle and high income earners on the other. Relative poverty was almost 11% in 2006. In contrast to the development of relative poverty, the rate of *absolute poverty* has declined since the mid 1990's to 4.5% in 2006. Even the share of persons receiving social welfare benefits has fallen by 44% over the last 10 years and is now lower than what it was at the start of the 1990's.

¹ Sweden's strategy report for social protection and social inclusion 2008-2010

--	--	--



Both relative and absolute poverty vary among the various population groups. In 2006, the rate of poverty, both absolute and relative, was approximately three times higher for *foreign born persons* compared to those born in Sweden. This relationship has not varied since 2000. As the labour market situation improves for foreign born persons, the number of persons living in poverty declines in this group. There are also large groups among *functionally disabled persons* who are in a precarious economic situation. One reason for this is that many have never had the opportunity to enter the labour market and instead have been relegated to life long dependency on the social security system.

In comparison with other EU Member States, disparities in income distribution in Sweden are small. Government financial transfers have a considerable redistribution effect, especially so for *families with children*. In 2006, 6%, or 130,000 of all children in Sweden lived in families where disposable income was below the absolute poverty level, which can be compared with 18% in the mid 1990's. Even the proportion of children in households which receive social welfare has dropped to 6%, only half of what it was in the early 1990's.

Relative child poverty is moving, however, in a different direction. In 2006 approx. 15% of all children lived in households which can be classified as relatively poor. This marks an increase over previous decades. Poverty is greatest among families where *both parents are born abroad*. Approx. 20% of these families live in absolute poverty. This percentage has been halved, however, since 2000. Single parent households have a considerably more difficult economic situation than households where both parents live together, irrespective of whether the parents are foreign or Swedish born. For *single parent households*, relative poverty has increased from 11% in the early 1990's to over 20% in 2006.

Studies have shown that countries such as Sweden and the other Nordic countries with a well developed welfare system tend to have exhibited a lower degree of economic vulnerability. Public sector services play an important role in the low proportion of economically vulnerable single parent households.

Combating poverty and social exclusion

Sweden's national strategy report 2008-2010 details the Swedish Government's policies for combating poverty and social exclusion.

The Swedish social model is characterized by a general welfare policy and an active labour market policy. The overarching political objective between 2008 and 2010 is to create more jobs and reduce exclusion. The number of excluded persons is expected to decrease by over 190,000 persons by 2010. It is unclear, however, what effect the current financial crisis will have on this development.

Reducing exclusion and putting more people into work is essential to achieving a high level of welfare and thereby the government's overarching and most important goal. For 2007, the number of people that received government support from welfare systems concerning poor health, unemployment and social welfare declined by as much as 121,000. Despite this strong and positive development, the government deems it necessary to continue efforts to permanently raise employment and lower exclusion.

--	--	--



The government deems especially serious the fact that certain groups in the population exhibit a higher degree of exclusion than other groups. The government's policies aim, therefore, to increase employment, especially among those groups with a weak standing on the labour market, such as young and older people, foreign born and part-time working women.

In order to be able to finance the welfare system in the future, it is essential that more people work and that the number of working hours increases. A high rate of employment is a precondition for high growth and a generous welfare policy. Through work and self-sufficiency, the individual increases her level of security and freedom. The challenge in the future is to create conditions which improve opportunities and motivation for people to work. The *work first* principle is the most important one in the government's economic policy.

All too many people leave work life prematurely due to illness. Over the last few years a number of measures have been adopted aimed at lowering absence from work due to illness. In 2008, the number of days during which compensation for absence from work due to illness has dropped by 50% compared with 2002. The number of people who were receiving *sickness or disability benefits* has declined somewhat though continues to remain high. The government has launched a broad reform programme for the social security system in order to increase impetuses and opportunities to return to work.

1.2 Administrative structure

Under this heading are details of how national efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion are organised, which actors are involved and how results are monitored and evaluated.

The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs has been responsible for preparing Sweden's national strategy report 2008-2010. The structure of the report is based on guidelines set down by the Social Protection Committee. Work with the strategy report began with an information and consultation meeting with representatives of NGO's, government agencies, labour unions and employer organisations. The meeting proved very valuable and gave rise to a number of inspiring ideas which have consequently been used in drafting the report.

The government has designated the Swedish ESF Council to be the responsible National Implementating Body which will, in consultation with the government and concerned government agencies and organisations, plan and prepare Swedish implementation of the thematic year.

In preparing the *National Programme*, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, together with the Swedish ESF Council, organised an idea seminar with representatives from the *National Network Against Social Exclusion*². All organisations in the network have had the opportunity to submit their

² See annex 1 List of organisations active in the Network against social exclusion

--	--	--



views and ideas. The network and the, to the Ministry affiliated Commission for service user influence in social development issues – The Service user Commission³, will over the course of the year be continually consulted within the frame of the national implementation body's work.

Combating poverty and social exclusion is part of the democratic and political process which also involves close co-operation with civil society and its organisations. Voluntary organisations and religious organisations play an important role in this work, having come to play an increasingly important role due in part to support from the European Social Fund.

Monitoring and evaluation of the government and government agencies' work in this area is ongoing. The government presented annual results of its policies as regards employment and exclusion. *Statistics Sweden* regularly publishes reports on the development of various welfare indicators. The *National Board of Health and Welfare* produces a *Social Report* every fourth year which details the situation throughout the country in a number of welfare policy fields. The next Social Report will be published in 2010 and will be an important contribution to increasing and improving the collective body of knowledge, as is the ambition of the thematic year. The *Swedish National Institute of Public Health* will publish in 2010 a highly relevant health policy report. Furthermore, the *Nordic Council of Ministers* will publish next year a comparative study of the Nordic countries' welfare systems and efforts to combat poverty.

In addition to this there is an extensive body of research in the field. At a number of universities research is taking place into various aspects of poverty and social exclusion, the results of which will be used in connection with various activities during the European thematic year. Special focus will be placed on using and highlighting research into the priority areas and link these to planned activities.

2. National Programme and Communications Strategy

Under this heading are details of national goals for the thematic year and how these are linked to the EU Commission's goals, guidelines and priorities. In connection with the thematic year's four specific goals/guidelines which govern the activities which will take place, an overarching presentation is also given of planned activities and main orientations in Sweden.

2.1 Activities in connection with the thematic year

The main aim of the thematic year is to improve opportunities for people to climb out of poverty and social exclusion. It is also important to improve one's understanding of poverty and social exclusion as well as of who can be considered living in poverty and why poverty and social exclusion exist.

The EU Commission's overall objectives, and its four specific goals/guidelines, are indicated in the strategic framework document⁴. The various opinions, suggestions and ideas that have come forth during consultations with organisations and with those concerned have been structured under these various goals and guidelines and linked to the national objectives.

³ See annex 2 List of organisations represented in the Commission for service user influence on social development issues (The Service User Commission)

⁴ See the EU Commission's framework document <http://2010againstpoverity.europa.eu>

--	--	--



Svenska
FSE-förbundet

The national goals for the thematic year include:

(1) Knowledge accumulation and advocacy in order to raise awareness among the general public, politicians and decision makers, both locally and nationally, about poverty and social exclusion.

This goal is linked to the EU Commission's goal "*Raising awareness of poverty and social exclusion*", "*Confirm the importance of collective responsibility*", "*Counter the view that combating poverty is only the responsibility of society*", and "*Prove that poverty and exclusion damage social cohesion*".

The goal is also linked to the (A) Recognition of rights, and (B) Shared responsibility and partnership.

(2) Mobilisation of, and support to, NGOs and civil society in combating poverty and social exclusion and thereby underscoring everyone's responsibility in this urgent social issue.

The Swedish goal is linked to the EU Commission's goal "*Strengthening those organisations that are combating poverty*", and "*Confirm the importance of collective responsibility*".

The Swedish goal is also linked to the goal/guideline (B) Shared responsibility and partnership, and (D) Engagement and concrete measures.

(3) Give people experiencing poverty and social exclusion a voice and opportunities to leave poverty and social exclusion behind them.

The Swedish goal is linked to the EU Commission's goal "*Help those who live in poverty and social exclusion to have the means to speak out*" and "*Prove that poverty and exclusion undermine social cohesion*".

The Swedish goal is also linked the goal/guideline (A) Recognition of rights, (C) Cohesion, and (D) Commitment and concrete actions.

Of the three national goals, this last one is the most important, proactive and change oriented. A precondition for reaching this goal is, however, that the other two goals are first met, namely an increase in knowledge and awareness among all concerned actors in the various sectors of society as regards poverty and social exclusion.

A description is given of the proposed activities and the national orientation to the thematic year and planned local and regional activities.

In a number of cases the proposed activities and the national orientation coincide with issues noted under the heading "Priority policy areas" in the Joint Report on Social protection and Social Inclusion which the EU Commission has produced based on Member States' national strategy reports.

--	--	--



The following issues are especially relevant in Sweden in the frame of the thematic year: multidimensional strategies to combat and limit severe poverty; combating child poverty and raise awareness about single parents' situation; highlight the need for make work pay; combat discrimination and promote social integration of migrants and ethnic minorities; take into consideration the needs of people with disabilities, homeless and other groups in vulnerable situations.

The above mentioned goals at EU and national level will be realized within the frame of Article 2 defined goals and guidelines according to the following:

(A) Recognition of rights

When it comes to children, a rights perspective will be given special focus. Differences that exist in the material living conditions between children in different family constellations and of different ethnic backgrounds will be highlighted. Suggestions and demands will be put forward to responsible politicians and decision makers during a special campaign.

A rights perspective will be important for other excluded groups as well. Other factors which will be highlighted include big differences when it comes to health care (and thus poorer health), structural discrimination which leads to exclusion of certain groups from the labour, housing market and education system as well as factors which hinder people from political participation. The role of the private business sector and individual companies will also be addressed.

Ongoing consultation with those concerned, their organisations and other voluntary organisations will contribute to an accumulation of knowledge in the field and greater advocacy. The target group's proposals and demands will be presented to local and regional politicians and decision makers and representatives for government agencies, voluntary organisations and the private business sector.

(B) Shared responsibility and participation

The aim of this goal during the thematic year is to raise awareness and understanding among the general public, politicians and media of poverty based on the following four issues/questions:

- What is poverty and social exclusion?
- Who is poor and socially excluded?
- Why does poverty and social exclusion exist?
- How to combat poverty and social exclusion?

A number of informative and awareness raising activities will therefore be carried out in order to discuss and seek answers to these questions while at the same time underscoring everyone's responsibility for combating poverty and social exclusion. In addition to the broad consultation and co-operation process which will take place, on-going, with voluntary organisations and those concerned (see below), three activities/perspectives will be given special attention:

- Using artistic means of expression in order to portray and foster understanding for the phenomena of poverty; one way is to analyse the concept/metaphore of the People's home – *folkhemmet* (Swedish historical concept of welfare state) and how it has been used and interpreted in relation to different political ideologies.

--	--	--



In connection with this, the political dimension of working to combat poverty and social exclusion can be highlighted. Focus will also be put on social innovations and social entrepreneurship.

- Voluntary organisations' role in combating poverty and social exclusion is another important dimension, especially so as these can give important contributions to this work within the frame of the agreement between the government and non-governmental organisations within the social field⁵.

(C) Cohesion

As noted above, there are a growing number of socially excluded areas in Sweden which are characterized by, among else, extreme living segregation. Research into this phenomenon will be given extensive coverage during the thematic year in order to raise awareness among decision makers and politicians but also to highlight the issue's complexity for the general public and media. At the same time, those people living in these areas will be given the opportunity to make themselves heard. Meetings/encounters between the majority and minority populations will be encouraged and lead to co-operation and neighbourhood projects which promote social cohesion at local level. An intercultural and interreligious dialogue should also be included in these meetings. Projects co-financed by the European Integration Fund can play an important role here and provide support to organisations and religious communities which represent new migrant groups and minorities.

Certain groups of persons living in extreme poverty, including homeless people, irregular migrants/"sans papiers"/hidden former asyl seekers and beggars, represent a new dimension in the street picture. This affects social cohesion. Those organisations which work with these groups will be given a forefront position during the year and the opportunity to use artistic means of expression, campaigns and activities in order to raise awareness among the general public, politicians and media. A rights perspective will characterize also these activities.

(D) Commitment and concrete action

A main activity during the thematic year will be ongoing consultation and co-operation with those concerned, their organisations and other relevant voluntary organisations. A series of meetings/seminars in over 20 locations across Sweden will give these actors, under guidance of process facilitators⁶, and based on their view/story of poverty, work together with a panel of local and regional politicians, decision makers, representatives of government agencies and the private business sector and researchers in order to put forward concrete proposals and demands for reform.

The thematic year will open with an kick-off conference on the theme People Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion. Starting at this early stage, local and regional involvement and participation of

⁵ Agreement between the government, non-governmental organisations in the social sector and The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (October 23, 2008). The aim is to strengthen the collaboration between NGO's and the public in areas such as social inclusion and public health.

⁶ In the frame of the ESF in Sweden and in light of the thematic year, a training programme for functionaries working for NGOs to help them be able to lead this consultation and co-operation process. These process facilitators ensure that actions are rooted in the local community and close to, and in contact with those concerned.

--	--	--



user organisations will be given a key role. The conference is organised in collaboration with *Folkets Hus* (community centres) and all participants, in over 20 locations across Sweden, will be able to follow and participate in the conference with the help of facilities available through Digital Houses (*Digitala Hus*)⁷. The use of this technology gives user organisations, those concerned themselves and other actors across the country a unique opportunity to meet, develop ideas and formulate common proposals and demands in a cost-effective way.

The final conference will be organized in a similar manner. The collective materials, including stories, witness accounts, proposals and demands from those concerned, their organisations and other relevant actors, will be discussed with a panel comprised of national level politicians as well as decision makers/representatives of the private, public and voluntary sectors by way of a virtual meeting.

A broad consultation with user organisations has generated a large number of ideas and proposals for activities. The organisations have expressed a strong will to co-operate around specific sub-themes during the thematic year. For example, organisations which work with children can, through a series of activities over the course of the year, focus on various problems associated with children, families, health and poverty and exclusion.

Contacts with other Member States in preparation for the thematic year have generated a number of co-operation activities with, among others, Finland and Spain, the purpose of which is to share experiences and knowledge within a number of specific fields, including child poverty. These activities will be detailed in the work plan.

2.2 Communications strategy

As noted above, the opening ceremony is comprised of a kick-off conference organised by user organisations. A website devoted to the thematic year will be launched at the same time.

Starting already in the fall of 2009, a number of activities will be carried out to inform about the thematic year. During the concluding conference of the current thematic year for innovation and creativity, a special seminar will be held on the topic of social innovation, thereby creating an important link between the two thematic years in a number of very relevant issues, including the need for social innovation in times of economic crisis and decline and, linked to this, the necessity of safeguarding the rights of excluded groups. Decent living conditions for all are a precondition for maintaining social cohesion.


A special communications expert will be recruited to lead the information and communication strategy.

2.3 Integration and gender equality perspective

⁷ Folkets Hus (community centre) organisations are found in a very large number of places in Sweden and offer opportunities for communication and interactivity through digital/virtual meetings/seminars/conferences via broadband/satellite communication.

--	--	--



 Under the heading of 2.3 and 2.4 is a description of current policy and measures in the areas of gender equality and accessibility linked to the issue of combating poverty and social exclusion.

A number of policy fields of importance to social participation are cross-sectoral; the goals in these policy fields should be taken into consideration in the government's work and permeate all sectors in society. Examples include integration policy, gender equality policy, disability policy and children's rights according to the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child. These cross-sectoral policy fields - mainstreaming areas - can be seen as expressions of the necessity for women and men, girls and boys, irrespective of ethnic background or disability, to be included in the political agenda at national, regional and local levels. As these goals are taken into consideration in decision making at all levels, the goals for social participation make broad headway in the Swedish policy debate and political agenda.

General welfare policy aims to create equal opportunities for all and to create gender equality. Swedish family policy helps parents to combine work life and family life. The parental insurance system, along with a child care system that takes into account the varying needs and wishes of families, gives both women and men the possibility to combine family life and work life. This, in turn, contributes towards greater equality. Sweden has a high rate of women work force participation while at the same time the birth rate in Sweden is relatively high. Work force participation among women with small children is among the highest in Europe.

A supportive family policy which includes a child perspective and a well developed gender equality policy are fundamental factors which promote social and economic security and welfare for families. By designing support to families with children based on the work first principle, the large majority of families' income is comprised of their wages. Thus, the ability of families to support themselves is in large part dependent on the development of employment.

These and other key elements in the government's equality policy will be taken into consideration in recognizing the thematic year. Issues related to violence against women, and how they are linked to social, cultural and economic factors, will be given special attention. The situation of single parent households, as well as a child's perspective, will be highlighted.

A continuous analysis and exposure of issues related to poverty and social exclusion based on a gender perspective will be carried out during the thematic year through bought expertise with the help of process facilitators for equality within the European Social Fund⁸.

2.4 Accessibility, participation and transparency

⁸ The ESF in Sweden has introduced a special process facilitator to support equality in order help project actors/applicants with advice and support in formulating and implementing project ideas.

--	--	--



A lack of accessibility in society leads to a situation where people born with, or who later acquire, a disability do not have the same opportunities as others to make their own choices. According to the Swedish National Institute of Public Health, this is also the reason why disabled persons have poorer health than the population at large. A group of under secretaries of state has been convened and charged with the task of combining forces to improve accessibility. Co-operation has even come about between Swedish municipalities and regions with the aim of producing a strategy to increase accessibility and thereby achieve by 2010 the stated goals of the national action plan for disability policy.

The thematic year has been planned and will be implemented through close co-operation with those concerned, their organisations and other organisations which work to combat poverty and social exclusion.

By way of the planned consultation and co-operation process, as well as involving special process facilitators from voluntary organisations, the involvement on equal terms of those concerned is safeguarded. Organisations which represent functionally disabled persons will have an especially important role in this respect. By using new technology, especially virtual meeting places, all those concerned will be afforded optimal opportunities to participate. As these meetings and activities will take place in *Folkets Hus* (community centres), which normally are natural meeting places, especially in smaller towns, the thematic year will be given a distinctive and clear profile.

Ongoing analysis and exposure of issues related to poverty and social exclusion based on an accessibility perspective will be carried out during the thematic year with the help of process facilitation within the European Social Fund⁹.

3. Consultation with civil society and concerned partners

The programme has been produced in close consultation with concerned actors, The Service User Commission and approx. 40 various voluntary and user organisations in the Network against social exclusion. In addition to individual interviews and dialogue with these organisations and representatives of those concerned, an idea seminar with the Network against social exclusion was held on May 5, 2009.

Both consultation bodies will be informed of activities, and consulted thereon, during the course of the thematic year.

The User Delegation, which was first set up in the fall of 2003, comprises 15 delegates, all of which have been appointed by the Network against social exclusion, as well as there being a delegate from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and the National Board of Health and Welfare.

⁹ The ESF in Sweden has introduced a special process facilitator to support equality in order help project actors/applicants with advice and support in formulating and implementing project ideas.

--	--	--



The Network against social exclusion was first established in 2000 and comprises people from approx. 40 organisations. These organisations differ in many ways - client, user, disability and migrant organisations, religious groups and many more - but share a common ambition to promote justice, empowerment and equal opportunities for people to be able to fully participate in society.

The Network works to influence the Swedish government's action plans for social security and participation by contributing with the experiences and knowledge they gain as socially oriented NGOs in their work. The action plans describe those groups of people who more often than others experience problems in getting access to key resources such as housing, work, education and a social community.

The final programme has been presented to, and approved by, The Service User Commission.

4. Implementation

4.1 Invitation to submit proposals, allocation criteria, selection process etc.

In connection with the call for proposals/procurement of projects/implementers, allocation criteria and selection process, the decisions and regulations of the European Social Fund will be applied. Procedures in connection with the call for proposals/procurement are specified in annex 2.

4.2 Time plan

After approval of the national programme, planning and implementation of the specified activities and projects will begin. A detailed work plan and time plan are being drafted. The activities which the EU Commission has initiated and planned co-operation with other Member States (primarily Spain and Finland) will be included in the work plan.

5. Preliminary budget

To implement the work plan for the thematic year, X SEK in national co-financing has been allocated to the budget. The EU Commission is contributing approx. 2.5 million SEK to Sweden for the work plan. A detailed budget will be produced once the work plan and time plan have been finalised. A detailed budget for each activity will also be produced while additional co-financing may occur.

6. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation

Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation will be in line with the EU Commission's guidelines and a detailed plan will be produced in connection with approval of the work plan.

--	--	--