



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

Employment strategy and European Social Fund policy development and coordination
Employment services/ EMPL A 3/EURESCO

HANDBOOK ON EURES CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES

EURES – EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

MARCH 2005

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I. Introduction:

EURES (European Employment Services) was launched in 1993 as a network for co-operation between employment services of the Member States, their partners and the Commission to exchange information concerning vacancies and applications for employment, information on the state and trends of the labour market as well as information concerning living and working conditions. Its purpose is to facilitate mobility on the European labour market by providing services for workers and employers as well as for any citizen wishing to take advantage of the right of free movement of workers in the EU.

The EURES co-operation is legally based on:

- The EC Treaty Article 40 (ex. 49),
- Regulation (EEC) 1612/68, part II,
- Commission decision (2003/8/EC) of 23 December 2002¹, and
- EURES Charter (2003/C 106/03) adopted by the European Co-ordination Office².
- Furthermore, the EURES co-operation has been fully extended to the EEA countries. Switzerland also co-operates within the EURES framework in accordance with the Agreement between the European Community and Switzerland on the free movement of persons that entered into force on 1 June 2002.

The EURES network is composed of members and partners. The members are the European Co-ordination Office (EURESCO) situated in the Employment and Social Affairs Directorate-General of the European Commission and the Public Employment Services (PES) of the Member States and/or other bodies nominated by them. The partners are local and regional authorities/bodies and the social partners, in particular with regard to the EURES tasks which they carry out in the framework of the EURES cross-border partnerships. The EURES network members and partners operate at different levels: European, national, regional, local. The support to cross-border activities on national, regional and local level constitutes a major element of EURES activities. For the concrete implementation of cross-border activities EURES members and partners may jointly develop cross-border co-operation, which can be organised in the framework of EURES cross-border partnerships (= EURES-T).

Following the EURES reform which has changed the role of the PES in the management of the EURES-T network there was a clear need for a revision of the handbook on EURES cross-border activities. The purpose of this handbook is to define common rules and criteria for existing and new EURES-T and to provide guidance on the main aspects of their functioning and development. The handbook is not a legal document and it does not change, overrule or revise any of the above-mentioned legal documents. This handbook is not exhaustive and is to be used in combination with other important documents such as the EURES call for proposals, the Vademecum on EURES grant agreements and the EURES guidelines. It is a dynamic document, which means that it can be updated according to the evolution and development within the Commission, the EURES network, the partnerships or their environment. The updated version will be available online on the EURES members' only page. This document was discussed in the EURES working party, but EURESCO is ultimately responsible for it.

The rules and provisions of this handbook enter into force on 1 April 2005 and will be directly applicable to EURES-T receiving financial support from the Commission and to candidate EURES-T applying for official recognition.

¹ OJ L 5 of 10 January 2003.

² OJ C 106/3 of 3 May 2003.

II. EURES support to cross-border activities

Support to EURES-T and to various forms of cross-border activities is a recognised priority. The challenge is to make the best possible use of the funds available for cross-border activities in both old and new Member States. Both the start of cross-border activities in the new Member States and the extension of the EURES-T network to the new Member States are EURES priorities for the coming years.

The EURES call for proposals calls for clearly identifiable activities undertaken jointly by two or more EURES members in the context of cross-border and trans-national co-operation. These cross-border activities may be implemented in close co-operation with relevant local, regional and national authorities and organisations including social partners. They also include activities to help support cross-border labour mobility in newly identified cross-border regions that demonstrate the need and potential for developing and supporting cross-border labour markets.

Cross-border activities focus on provision and exchange of information and on advice on vacancies and job applications. They will also include information on living and working conditions and other relevant information related to the labour markets in the cross-border region. Regular flow of information by direct contacts/meetings between the EURES actors in the region should contribute to the creation of a regional network.

The implementation of these cross-border activities does not a priori require the setting up of a formal cross-border partnership. The focus should be on cross-border activities that directly contribute to a better functioning of the cross-border labour market. Preference is given to activities involving several partner organisations from more than one country that clearly demonstrate the integrated and coherent approach of a EURES cross-border partnership/candidate cross-border partnership. The Commission will seek to channel the available financial resources in the first place to the meaningful cross-border activities rather than letting them to a large extent be absorbed by the costs of permanent organisational structures.

Details on conditions and rules for the inclusion of cross-border activities and/or activities of a EURES-T into the national subsidy requests can be found in the relevant documents such as the text of the call for proposals, the Vademecum on EURES grant agreements and the EURES guidelines.

The development of cross-border activities can be organised in two stages

A: Cross-border activities can be included in the annual subsidy request of the EURES member. A formal partnership is no pre-condition for co-operation between PES and/or other partners. Client services in cross-border regions can be delivered by the respective PES in co-operation with relevant local, regional and national authorities and organisations including social partners. The PES (regional and/or national) can act as coordinator of the different cross-border activities.

Such cross-border activities may prepare the ground for the subsequent request of recognition of a new formalised cross-border partnership. The duration of this stage is not fixed in advance and support for the creation of a formal partnership is subject to the conditions referred to in chapter III. With regard to regions where the conditions are not yet fully met, the EURES members concerned may still opt for including activities supporting the development of a cross-border labour market in their annual subsidy request. The EURES member may also opt for including relevant cross-border activities – see for example chapter III.3 – in his subsidy request for regions where the setting up of a permanent EURES-T structure is not (yet) envisaged. With regard to all above-mentioned options preference will be given to activities undertaken jointly by two or more EURES members in the

context of cross-border co-operation. These activities may also include as beneficiaries relevant local, regional and national authorities and organisations including social partners. Proposed activities to support cross-border labour mobility in newly identified cross-border regions should be based on the clearly demonstrated need and potential for developing and supporting cross-border labour markets.

B: The second stage of cross-border activities takes place within formally established cross-border partnerships, like the ones already now existing. Such cross-border partnerships concentrate on activities with direct impact on the cross-border labour market.

III. Life cycle of cross-border partnerships

1. What is a EURES cross-border partnership?

EURES has a particularly important role to play in cross-border regions. These are employment catchment areas in which there are significant levels of cross-border commuting or a clear potential for it. People who live in one country and work in another have to cope with different national practices and legal systems. They encounter administrative, legal or tax obstacles to mobility.

The EURES cross-border network is a group of collaborative bodies – called EURES cross-border partnerships or EURES-T - which, within the framework of the European EURES network, aim to meet the needs for information and advice connected with labour mobility in the border regions. EURES-T bring together in a partnership the public employment and vocational training services, employers and trades union organisations, local authorities, institutions dealing with employment and vocational training problems in the border regions. EURES advisers based in one of the partner organisations of the partnership provide specific advice and guidance on the rights and obligations of workers living in one country and working in another. They are a valuable point of contact among employment administrations, both regional and national, and the social partners.

As defined in the EURES decision the main tasks of a cross-border partnership are:

- To provide and exchange information and advice on vacancies and job applications as well as on living and working conditions and other relevant information related to the labour markets in the cross-border region;
- To contribute to the development of this flow of information by direct and regular contacts between the EURES advisers in the region;
- To draw up and maintain an inventory of vocational training opportunities in the region concerned and to contribute to the further development of such training opportunities;
- To contribute to and develop projects aimed at improving the labour market in the cross-border regions, including co-operation with other relevant programmes.

New formal cross-border partnerships may be created if relevant joint activities and studies clearly demonstrate their need and potential. New cross-border partnerships may be set up between new and old Member States, between new Member States and also between old Member States. The to be established cross-border partnership should as minimum partners be composed of the Public Employment Services of all the regions involved, together with the relevant trade unions and employer organisations. Other partners can include regional and local authorities or associations of these, organisations dealing with vocational training, universities and institutes of higher education, and other relevant actors on the cross-border labour market. The partnership should be open to significant regional organisations with the knowledge and expertise to contribute to the solution of cross-border employment problems. There is no single, uniform, ideal ‘mix’ of

partners. Membership will vary significantly, from region to region, even within the same Member State.

However, past experience suggests a number of key guiding principles for the partnership:

- A genuine ‘bottom up’ approach that encourages initiatives and ideas from the ‘grassroots’ level;
- A broad-based membership of public, private and third sector organisations that have knowledge of and an interest in cross-border employment issues;
- A common purpose to bind them together regardless of their individual responsibilities;
- A partnership framework agreement that strengthens accountability by clearly distributing responsibilities between partners;
- A formal structure, whether as a distinct legal entity or a looser association of partners;
- Regular open and honest dialogue between partners.

2. Questions to be answered before starting cross-border activities and/or a EURES-T

Before starting try to answer the following questions:

1. Define exactly the region and the right size of your partnership: A partnership should be big enough to be strategic, yet small enough to remain regional. Partners need sufficient knowledge of and influence over the region to be able to make a difference. Who are the actors most interested in cross-border employment issues. Is a partnership approach the right way to tackle the identified needs of the target groups? Experience shows that a partnership can add value that cannot be gained in other ways. But it has to be a real partnership. Where, for example, partnerships are merely symbolic or ‘marriages of convenience’, the outcomes will be less secure.

2. Understand the cross-border labour market: A EURES-T needs to understand the problems that it wishes to address. This is best done by collecting information about cross-border employment in a systematic way. Its analysis will guide the choice of objectives and actions. As an initial step – before embarking on cross-border activities or applying for recognition – it is recommended to gather in its cross-border region information about:

- Levels of employment and unemployment;
- Commuting flows;
- Characteristics of the employed and unemployed (age, skill levels, location, etc.);
- Skills needed by employers;
- Skill available in the workforce;
- Key occupations;
- Key economic sectors;
- Gender equality;
- Demography;
- Wider social and economic trends;
- Future trends.

What are the needs of the target groups? A needs analysis among the potential clients – jobseekers, cross-border commuters, employers, self-employed persons, seasonal cross-border workers, graduates, etc. – should identify their actual needs in terms of information, advice, support for placements, etc.

3. What are the services the partnership wants to offer? PES and possible partner organisations find an agreement how their actual client services/potential client services should satisfy the identified needs.

4. Develop a strategic approach for the EURES-T. Knowing the cross-border region and its labour market is a pre-condition to develop a strategy. The strategy should identify objectives, tools, activities and combine them with the time dimension. The partnership's long-term strategy should be sustainable and not only depend on the EU funding that might be available. Answering these questions helps to prepare for cross-border activities.

3. Preliminary and preparatory studies and activities, pilot actions in cross-border regions

EURES Members/PES on national/regional level are expected to coordinate the creation of new EURES-T. They may include preliminary and preparatory studies and activities in their annual subsidy request that prepare the ground for the formal recognition of new partnerships.

These preliminary and preparatory studies and activities may include:

- Identification of all stakeholders, familiarisation of possible partners with EURES, development of strategy how to tackle mobility obstacles, definition of the exact tasks of possible partners, etc.;
- Working groups or joint studies between PES and/or EURES advisers, social partners, etc. with a view to identifying mobility obstacles and bottlenecks in the regional labour markets;
- Common mobility studies including the counting of commuters, and/or an estimate of the flows of commuters, forecasts of flows of commuters, description of available transport infrastructures for commuters, etc.;
- Studies intended to analyse the existence of needs for the type of EURES services and to identify most appropriate sectors for co-operation, including joint training activities and co-operation in vocational training;
- Common activities to standardize labour market statistics or make them comparable;
- Common activities relating to possible taxation or social security problems of cross-border workers;
- Common recruitment fairs, exchange of job offers, connecting databases;
- Studies and activities that may deliver data and information to respond to the assessment parameters listed under III 4.A.

At this stage activities should be mainly designed as pilot actions allowing the testing of approaches. They will provide feedback from practical experience and comments from target groups. These can be used to refine the approach and strategy. The size and extent of pilot projects will depend upon the aims and objectives of the strategy.

4. Minimum requirements for recognizing new EURES-T partnerships

The main requirements for setting up new cross-border partnerships will reside in the needs of local or regional labour markets that go beyond the borders of one or two other neighbouring countries and in the needs of individual commuters and jobseekers in the regions concerned. In order to demonstrate these needs, the following information and statistical data needs to be collected and processed.

A. Assessment parameters

Statistical and macroeconomic data

Relevant socio-economic data describing the cross-border region and giving first indications about the suitability of the cross-border region and its development in previous years:

- Clear definition of cross-border region (listing all involved cross-border regions on NUTS-III level);
- The area of the cross-border region in square kilometres;
- The total number of inhabitants and population density in the cross-border region;
- The total number of employees in the cross-border region;
- The average share of cross-border commuters among the total work force for the regions;
- Existence of a cross-border labour market pool; the number of cross-border commuters for the last five years clearly indicating the decrease and/or increase in cross-border movement within the region from the year 2000 to 2004;
- N° of seasonal cross-border workers;
- Main economic sectors per NUTS III region with relevant data including the number of employees in those sectors;
- Relevant quantitative labour market data such as income per capita per NUTS III region for the last five years, employment rate/unemployment rate per NUTS III region for the last years and annual average number of job vacancies per NUTS III region for the last five years;
- Number of companies that have establishments or subsidiary companies on the other side of the border;
- Level of the cross-border trade (in % of the total trade of the regions concerned);
- All kind of trends and forecasts concerning the medium term (3 to 5 years) situation of the economic development and of the labour market at cross-border level (expected growth in employment/unemployment and principal sectors and skills concerned).

Geographic parameters:

- Description of transport infrastructure (type of road connections, border control stations, public transport, etc.);
- Classification of population (numbers) on the basis of travelling time to the neighbouring cross-border regions; average travel time of existing commuters;
- Description of geographic mobility obstacles in the region;
- Existence of a land border or of a fixed link (tunnel, bridge) between the regions concerned.

Specific local or regional parameters:

- Description of mobility obstacles in the region;
- Analysis of the bottlenecks in the labour market (skills shortages and surpluses) and eventual complementarities between the different sides of the border;
- Specific local or regional characteristics like successful cross-border co-operation activities in other areas that could positively influence the cross-border partnership.

Organisational requirements

- The willingness of local partners to create/maintain such a partnership and to engage in joint activities within its framework;
- Meaningful contribution that a possible cross-border partnership could make to the elimination of clearly identified mobility obstacles;
- Elaborated proposal concerning the optimum size of the partnership and of the geographical areas to be covered by it;

- Firm commitment of possible partner organisations to be members of the partnership (letter of intent, if framework agreement has not yet been elaborated and signed);
- A draft 3-years activity plan.

B. Indications of the needs for EURES services in the region

A needs analysis among the potential clients – jobseekers, cross-border commuters, employers, self-employed persons, seasonal cross-border workers, graduates, etc. – should identify their actual needs in terms of information, advice, support for placements, etc. As a second step PES and possible partner organisations should describe how their actual client services/potential client services satisfy the identified needs.

C. Examination of results already obtained through previous cross-border activities

Description of the previous activities and their results, lessons learned, etc.

In order to take account of specific local and regional characteristics there is no exact definition of the quantitative minimum requirement, for example in terms of commuters. When assessing the candidature of a new EURES-T, EURESCO will look at the parameters in combination with the results from pilot activities. The specific regional situation will be taken into account.

If the EURES members and potential EURES partners are not in a position to collect and process these data and information, the respective EURES member(s) may include in his/their annual subsidy request(s) a proposal for a feasibility study to be carried out by a third party. Such a feasibility study is not a formal requirement for the recognition of a EURES-T. EURES members and potential EURES partners may be able to collect and process the requested information without relying on a feasibility study carried out by a third party.

5. Assessment procedure

After preliminary and preparatory studies and activities, pilot actions, etc. have delivered first meaningful and significant results the EURES Members/PES may request the official recognition of the candidate cross-border partnership. The request to create such a partnership shall be submitted to the EURESCO.

The formal request will include the following items:

- Formal request letter signed by the concerned EURES member(s);
- Information on the assessment parameters and organisational requirements;
- A needs analysis for EURES services in the region;
- Results already obtained through previous cross-border activities;
- A draft strategy what the potential EURES-T wants to achieve over the next years (see chapter on activity plan);
- Letters of intent/framework agreement to be signed by potential partners.

On the basis of the information provided, EURESCO jointly with the respective EURES members will assess the results. The assessment will mainly focus on the question what contribution a candidate EURES-T and its planned activities will make to satisfy the needs of the target groups in a cross-border labour market. In principle, three different results of the assessment are possible:

- immediate official recognition of the cross-border partnership: a request for activities and the setting up of organisational structures in line with the provisions of the relevant call for proposals

and the EURES Vademecum on grant agreements may be included in the next subsidy request by the EURES member(s).

- **the results obtained so far do not justify the immediate creation of a cross-border partnership:** further preliminary and preparatory studies and activities need to be carried out in order to collect additional data and information, extension of the period in which the EURES member(s) can include these studies and activities in its annual subsidy request.

- **the results and findings do not justify the creation of a cross-border partnership:** nevertheless activities supporting the development of a cross-border labour market in this region can be included in the annual subsidy request by EURES member(s).

6. Regular review of existing cross-border partnerships

Also after the creation of a cross-border partnership there is a need to review regularly its contribution to achieving the relevant objectives and commitments made under the respective country-specific activity plan, under its own activity plan, the annual subsidy request and to a better functioning of cross border labour markets. As stipulated in the EURES charter the bi-lateral review will be carried out at least once every three years, preferably in the middle of the three-year period of the activity plans. All reviews should be completed in the first half of the year so that findings and results will be available well before the launch of the annual EURES call for proposals. Reviewing allows a partnership to:

- demonstrate its achievements with regard to the EURES-T main tasks;
- assess regularly the implementation of the EURES guidelines;
- identify good practice to share with others; and
- highlight new problems and opportunities requiring further research and/or activities.

The regular review of the recognised EURES-T will be subject of a meeting between the respective EURES-T coordinator and the concerned EURES Member. A common methodology including a questionnaire will facilitate benchmarking between the partnerships. The different parts of the review questionnaire are:

- Statistical and macroeconomic data;
- Geographic parameters;
- Specific local or regional parameters;
- Quantitative EURES-T specific indicators;
- Performance review on the basis of the EURES-T main tasks.

In order to prepare for the review meeting the respective EURES-T will supply the answers to the review questionnaire in advance. If requested, the other concerned EURES members may also participate in the meeting. The review report including the section on main conclusions and recommendations will be made under the responsibility of the concerned EURES member. The review should focus on the results and the relevance of the results to achieving the objectives defined both by the EURES-T in its own activity plan, its annual subsidy request and the EURES member in its own country-specific activity plan.

The review report submitted to EURESco by the concerned EURES member should have the following structure:

1. Completed questionnaires on statistical and macroeconomic data, on geographic parameters, on specific local or regional parameters, and on quantitative EURES-T specific indicators.
2. Basic tasks sheets completed by the EURES-T.

3. Main conclusions and recommendations (this part should be short but understandable and usable as standing-alone document. Indicate the main conclusions, lessons learned and specific recommendations).

Results of the review will be interpreted in relation to the specific circumstances of each partnership. The findings of the review may lead to recommendations and fine-tuning with regard to the activity plan and the annual subsidy request of the cross-border partnership.

7. Activities during different development stages of a partnership

All cross-border activities are chosen on the basis of the specific local or regional circumstances and may cover the full range of priorities as established in the EURES guidelines. In addition, and within the framework of the priorities identified in the respective EURES members' activity plans, the cross-border partnerships may receive Community financial support through the EURES member for activities that are considered essential to fulfil their tasks as defined in section 2.4.3 of the EURES Charter.

Both the EURES-T activity plan and the annual subsidy request will have to take account of the lifetime of the partnership. For example, a partnership which has just started will have to place the emphasis on:

- the provision of basic EURES services, i.e. ensuring the exchange of the employment vacancies at cross-border level and ensuring public access to information on living and working conditions (social Security, taxation, labour law, etc.);
- the organisation of the EURES advisers' network by identifying the needs in terms of number, type of organisation concerned and location;
- the development of the network at local level by realising training and regular EURES advisers' and correspondents' meetings as well as information sessions for line managers and other personnel of the partner organisations who are in liaison with the public.

After this first phase, the partnership will focus more on the consolidation of the provision of services and on promotion:

- to increase the number of cross-border employment vacancies exchanged and work on sectors of the labour market which are complementary;
- to put mechanisms in place to regularly update and make available information on living and working conditions within a short time;
- to use various means to disseminate this information: Internet site, booklets, consultation counters in self-service and to increase the number of persons in the partner organisations who have access to this information;
- to use various kinds of promotional activities: seminars, participation in trade fairs, notices or articles in specialised magazines, interviews or participation in radio or television programmes, printing of information sheets;
- to widen the network of associated organisations which could serve as relays to pass on information and publications from the partnership: municipalities, universities and higher education colleges, organisations connected with vocational training, etc.

A partnership which has already succeeded in providing these basic services will be able to move towards more complex activities like:

- observation and possibly the analysis of the cross-border labour market or of the promotion actions targeted at relevant sectors from the cross-border point of view;

- identification of the obstacles to mobility specific to the cross-border region and the proposal for solutions to the appropriate authorities;
- production of an inventory of the training opportunities and its provision to the public; possibly trying to study the cross-border needs for vocational training and to propose the organisation of cross-border training activities by using funds from other programmes, in particular Interreg III;
- carrying out of a plan of promotion of the partnership in the medium-term, by identifying the objectives and the target audiences and by conveying a consistent image, a coherent strategy for each audience, concrete lines of action as well as a timetable.

Regardless the stage of development of the EURES-T, activities should preferably involve several partner organisations from more than one country in order to demonstrate the integrated and coherent approach of the partnership.

8. End of financial support and/or withdrawal of recognition

The formal requirements for the recognition of a EURES-T are outlined above. Any major shortcoming in fulfilling the basic requirements may lead to the decision of discontinuing the financial support and/or the withdrawal of the official recognition. For this reason the framework agreement should foresee procedures how to deal with both the withdrawal of partner organisations and the dissolution of the partnership. If EURESco from its side intends to withdraw the recognition of a EURES-T and to discontinue the financial support because certain criteria are not fulfilled anymore, it will inform the respective Steering Committee accordingly and will invite it to comment within a reasonable deadline.

Among the circumstances leading to an end of EURESco support are:

- Serious case of breach of the grant agreement, fraud within the EURES-T, other contractual and administrative irregularities,
- Failure to conclude a framework agreement with the requested minimum participation of partners,
- End of support of the EURES-T by the concerned EURES members,
- Negative assessment expressed by the concerned EURES members following the regular review,
- Insufficient reporting on results in annual report and final accounts, insufficient value for money, no sound financial management within the EURES-T,
- Performance problems such as lack of coherence and relevance of the activities proposed, lack of genuine joint activities, badly implemented activities, EURES-T has de-facto ceased to exist, activities are not implemented anymore, etc.,
- The impact of the EURES-T on the functioning of the cross-border labour market is only marginal and the specific regional circumstances of the cross-border labour market do not justify anymore the existence of the organisational structure of a EURES-T.

EURESco may discontinue its financial support but allow the partnership continue using the EURES name and logo if the Steering Committee decides maintaining the partnership for the implementation of cross-border activities. If EURESco discontinues its financial support and officially withdraws the recognition of the EURES-T, the partnership may no longer avail itself of the EURES name and logo. Even in the case of the dissolution of a EURES-T it might be possible under certain conditions to give financial support to specific meaningful activities such as the work of individual EURES advisers. In this case the concerned EURES member may include them in his annual subsidy request (see also chapters 2 and 3.5).

IV. Strategy of cross-border partnership

1. Framework agreement

The framework agreement is the document signed by all the partners which specifies the objectives, organisational structures and operational rules of the partnership. By signing this agreement the partners commit themselves to participate in the activities of the cross-border partnership and to deliver the EURES services to their target-public, in a spirit of cooperation, partnership and mutual respect with the other co-signatories.

The duration of the agreement is normally three years, coinciding with the activity plan period and can thereafter be renewed for another three-years-period. The acceptance by the Commission of the creation of a new partnership depends on the signature by at least the minimum partners (public employment services, trade unions and employers' organisations representing all involved countries/regions) of such an agreement. For existing partnerships the framework agreement needs to be renewed every three years. The framework agreement must be written in all the EU official languages used in the regions concerned by the partnership and at least two originals must be signed by all partner organisations. A copy of the agreement, duly signed, must be sent to the concerned EURES members and EURESco.

The content

The framework agreement contains:

- the aims/objectives of the partnership, in line with the legal basis of EURES;
- the name of the partnership;
- the list of the partner organisations;
- the role and responsibilities of the partners;
- the composition and responsibilities of the Steering Committee;
- the existence of a coordinator, the reporting to the Steering Committee and short description of his main tasks;
- the account holder organisation responsible for the budget management of the partnership;
- the EURES member in which national subsidy application the request for financial assistance for the carrying out of activities should be included;
- the principle of an activity plan for a three-year-period;
- the principle of an annual subsidy request and its management by one single organisation;
- the duration of the agreement;
- the conditions of the withdrawal of one of the partners;
- the procedures to resolve the partnership.

Other points could also be specified in the framework agreement or in the internal procedures regulation approved by the Steering Committee:

- role, duration of the mandate and selection procedure of the chairperson of the Steering Committee;
- decision taking procedures within the Steering Committee;
- role, duration of the mandate and selection procedure of the coordinator;
- operational aspects related to the coordination: secretariat, premises, equipment, etc;
- division of responsibilities between the Steering Committee, the coordinator and eventual working groups.

2. Activity plan

The Steering Committee adopts for every three-year period the activity plan of the partnership. This plan takes account of the priorities established under the EURES guidelines for the respective

period and can become part – in the section dealing with cross-border activities – of the 3-years activity plan of the concerned EURES member(s). The plan covers a three-year period and will contain a timetable of the actions envisaged over this period. Each year, the Steering Committee evaluates the progress achieved in the implementation of the plan and may revise it in the light of this progress and of new developments.

The plan normally covers the following points:

I. Current state of the EURES cross-border partnership including a: general context, b: organisation of the EURES services, c: significant recent developments concerning EURES at cross-border level

II. Implementation of the relevant priorities of the EURES guidelines for the 3-year period (specify each priority, describe the current position of the cross-border partnership (needs analysis, strengths and weaknesses, obstacles to be surmounted etc.) and its medium-term objectives, propose actions for each of the three years including the quantified objectives for the first year, describe the monitoring and evaluation system, provide a brief justification why certain priorities are not adopted).

III. Other priorities for the partnership for this period (if applicable).

3. The annual subsidy request

Based on the adopted 3-years activity plan the Steering Committee will have to identify the concrete measures/activities to be realised and to be included in the subsidy request of the concerned EURES member. Details on conditions and rules for their inclusion can be found in the relevant documents such as the text of the annual call for proposals, the Vademecum on EURES grant agreements and the EURES guidelines. With regard to all proposed activities EURES-T are required to comply with the principles of sound financial management and value for money. They will also use adequate management tools for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating their activities.

V. Organisational structure of cross-border partnerships

1. Steering Committee

All partnerships shall undertake to create a Steering Committee, which shall be the principal decision-making body of the partnership. It ensures the overall cohesion of the partnership and sets out the strategy of the partnership in accordance with the EURES guidelines. In particular, the Steering Committee shall:

- set out the strategy for the partnership in the framework of its own 3-years-activity plan, revisable annually, taking into account the respective EURES guidelines defined for the EURES network as a whole;
- approve a proposal for an annual subsidy request to be included in the subsidy request of the concerned EURES member (including possible requests for changes);
- define the practical details and the partners responsible for the implementation of activities;
- approve intermediate and final reports and accounts concerning the implementation of the activity plan before their transmission to the concerned EURES member;
- ensure the overall cohesion of the partnership, in particular with regard to activity plans to be implemented;
- appoint jointly with the EURES member concerned the coordinator of the partnership;
- ensure an effective monitoring and evaluation of activities, including their financing, and carry out regular assessments of the results;
- approve internal rules of procedures for forming working groups, for missions, etc.

Composition of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee's composition should reflect a balanced representation of the partner organisations. The EURES members concerned, representatives of public employment services (regional level), representatives of trade-union organisations and representatives of employer organisations plus representatives of regional and local administrations, universities, vocational training organisations, etc. may become members of the Steering Committee. The public employment services, trade unions and employers' organisations constitute the core partners and should be represented in the Steering Committee. If there are too many partner organisations of the same type the possibility of joint representatives should be envisaged in order to avoid that the Steering Committee becomes too big.

The following is an example of a balanced Steering Committee composition based on a 2- country-partnership:

- EURES member(s) as representatives of public employment services (national level)
- 2 representatives of public employment services (regional level)
- 2 representatives of trade-union organisations
- 2 representatives of employer organisations
- + maximum 4 representatives coming from governments/regional administrations, local authorities, university/high school, other organisations (study centres, vocational training organisations, etc.)

Voting in the Steering Committee

In general, Steering Committee decisions are taken by consensus. However, in the event of disagreement matters may be put to a vote. The practical details for voting should be provided for in the framework agreement or the internal rules of procedure that must be approved unanimously by the members. The framework agreement or the internal rules of procedure will also define the minimum number of Steering Committee members to be present in order for a decision to be valid.

Steering Committee decisions should ideally be taken by a simple majority of the members present. The adoption of the annual subsidy request requires the agreement of the concerned EURES member. The Steering Committee may be made up of full members with the right to vote and temporary or substitute members who are permitted, with the mandate of a full member, to vote in their place.

2. Chairmanship/President of the Steering Committee

The role of the chairperson shall be undertaken by a representative of a partner organisation according to rules to be specified by the Steering Committee in their internal rules of procedure. The following general rules shall be applied in order to ensure certain homogeneity among the EURES partnerships. The President of the Steering Committee must be a representative of one of the organisations that has signed the framework agreement and should be chosen by consensus or otherwise by simple majority. The President chairs the meetings of the Steering Committee and acts as the representative of the partnership. Steering Committees may agree on further specific duties and rules in relation to the chairmanship and procedures related to the Steering Committee provided that they do so in accordance with the following points:

Main tasks of the president

- To determine the agenda of Steering Committee meetings in conjunction with the co-ordinator;
- To chair the meetings of the Steering Committee;
- To prepare the meetings together with the co-ordinator and the partners;

- The president shall not have special voting rights;
- To represent the partnership.

Selection of the president

- The president is required to be a representative of one of the organisations that has signed the framework agreement;
- The co-ordinator is not permitted to be president;
- The president should be prepared to invest time to improve and promote the development of the partnership;
- He or she must be able to encourage effective co-operation within the partnership and to be able to communicate with all the partners;
- He or she should be chosen as far as possible by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, the president must be approved by a majority of the Steering Committee members;
- The Committee must agree on a replacement procedure in the event of the absence of the President.

The president's mandate shall be for a minimum duration of 1 year and a maximum of 3 years. His or her mandate may be renewed, however, it is recommended to alternate the presidency between all partner organisations. The Steering Committee may also designate a Vice-President who shall take the place of the former in unforeseen circumstances. The Steering Committee may also decide that the Vice-President should automatically become president the following year (or equivalent rotation mechanisms), thereby eliminating the need to elect a new president each year.

Relations between the president, the co-ordinator and the EURES Member

- The co-ordinator is responsible to the Steering Committee and is not under the direct authority of the president; however, they shall undertake to work in close co-operation;
- The secretariat and the technical organisation of Steering Committee meetings fall within the co-ordinator's responsibility;
- The EURES member(s) ensures the consistency of the EURES-T strategy (including the activity-plan and annual subsidy requests) in relation to the overall objectives and priorities for EURES; he or she also ensures compliance with the financial rules of the Commission, in particular the EURES call for proposals.

3. The coordinator

The coordinator assists the Steering Committee in directing and monitoring the implementation of the agreed and approved activities. In this respect, his main tasks are:

- To prepare the meetings of the Steering Committee;
- To promote and represent the partnership in conjunction with the President of the Steering Committee;
- To prepare (and regularly update) the draft activity plan for the partnership that is in line with EURES priorities and rules;
- To develop proposals for activities in line with the EURES Guidelines;
- To ensure a coherent and integrated approach of the EURES-T' activities;
- To provide and implement, in conjunction with the Steering Committee, a monitoring and evaluation system;
- To prepare in co-operation with the Steering Committee the review of the EURES-T and meet the concerned EURES member for the actual review meeting;

- To initiate and supervise activities to evaluate measures carried out by the partners;
- To monitor the quality of the supporting activities of the partners in accordance with the criteria and methods adopted for EURES;
- Daily follow-up and, where applicable, implementation of the approved activities of the partnership;
- To monitor, on a regular basis, the quality of basic services delivered, in particular by the EURES advisers and ensure their participation in the EURES reporting system;
- To encourage synergy with other Community programmes.
- To ensure good communication with other cross-border partnerships, EURES members and the Commission;

The actual implementation of these tasks will also depend on the operational arrangements in each partnership. The nature of these tasks varies widely and the coordinator often will make sure that someone in the partnership deals with something.

Regular tasks

The following non-exhaustive list of tasks is those that the coordinator regularly performs in cooperation with the partners. This list is given by way of example:

- To encourage cooperation and joint actions and remedy obstacles to cooperation;
- To assist the partners in distributing responsibilities amongst themselves;
- To assist the partners in planning suitable actions in line with the agreed strategy;
- To deal with the practical organisation and the secretarial functions of the Steering Committee;
- To prepare the summary of monthly statistics on the activity of EURES advisers;
- To prepare the summary of EURES advisers' reports on obstacles to mobility;
- To ensure the development and operation of a mechanism for the description of the cross-border labour market, in particular through the use of statistical data;
- To ensure the implementation of a promotion and communication plan for the partnership;
- To assure the quality of the promotion actions;
- To assist the account holder organisation in preparing the budget;
- To prepare/check subsidy applications sent to the EURES member;
- To supervise the implementation and the accounts of the partnership budget;
- To draw up the annual report of the partnership;
- To assure the quality and compliance with the rules of EURESCO of the final accounts and final report of the partnership as a whole;
- To manage the EURES advisers' network in the cross-border region;
- To ensure that EURES is promoted amongst EURES advisers' line managers and that they are involved;
- To maintain contacts with the partners' central services (meetings at national level);
- To take part in meetings of coordinators at European level;
- To maintain contacts with other regional partners and coordinators of the EURES network;
- To act in conjunction with the coordinators of the partnerships adjoining the same border in order to identify synergies in their activities;

Minimum qualification requirements for coordinators

The coordinator to be appointed will have at least three years relevant experience in project management and labour market affairs. In addition he/she should have:

- Higher education qualifications (or equivalent work experience);
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written;

- Language skills in at least one of the EURES main working languages (EN, FR, DE) and the languages spoken in the EURES-T;
- Knowledge of computers at users' level;
- Knowledge of relevant institutions and networks existing in the regions concerned;
- Experience regarding the preparation of proposals and reports;
- Excellent interpersonal skills.

Ideally the successful applicant will have experience of managing EU action programmes and/or cross-border programmes. In addition, the successful applicant will have access to a car and be prepared to travel and work non-standard hours in the regions covered by the partnership.

Appointment of the coordinator

The Steering Committee approves the job description for the coordinator including the envisaged working time and other possible conditions (e.g. possession of a driving licence, availability to travel abroad). Subsequently the coordinator shall be jointly appointed by the Steering Committee and the EURES member concerned. There are three formulas possible:

1. The Steering Committee may opt to appoint a candidate from the public employment service meeting the requirements. The Steering Committee interviews the candidate(s) and takes jointly with the concerned EURES member the decision on the appointment. The candidate thus selected is considered to act in the best interest of the partner organisations.
2. The Steering Committee may opt to appoint a suitable candidate currently already employed by one of the partner organisations. The Steering Committee interviews the candidate(s) and takes jointly with the concerned EURES member the decision on the appointment.
3. The Steering Committee and the concerned EURES member agree to appoint a candidate following an open call for candidates. Normally, the procedure is as follows:
 - The Steering Committee appoints a Selection Committee which will be required to follow the procedure and to submit to the Steering Committee a list of the three best candidates selected;
 - The call for candidates, which contains the job description for the coordinator, the remuneration level envisaged, working time and other possible conditions, is published through the appropriate channels used by the public employment services and the partner organisations.
 - The Selection Committee carries out an initial selection of the applications received on the basis of CVs, and shortlists between suitable candidates for interview;
 - The short-listed candidates are interviewed by the Selection Committee and the best candidates are submitted to the Steering Committee including the EURES member concerned in order of preference.
 - The Steering Committee jointly with the EURES Manager concerned make a decision on the basis of the proposal made by the Selection Committee.

Temporary nature of the coordination task

The coordinator reports and is accountable to the entire Steering Committee. The planned duration of the appointment normally corresponds to the duration of the framework agreement (3 years). The Steering Committee can also opt for annual appointments corresponding with the granting of the annual subsidies. The appointment should in this case be for a minimum of one year, the one-year appointment is renewable twice.

An extension/renewal of the appointment after three years is possible under the condition that the renewed appointment follows an open call for candidates (see chapter: appointment of the coordinator). In its internal procedures and/or the framework agreement the Steering Committee may stipulate that anonymous voting and/or a qualified majority are required for a renewed appointment. The concerned EURES manager will also need to agree with the renewed appointment.

The terms and conditions of the appointment of the coordinator, e.g. remuneration, extension and termination of the coordination task, termination in case of stop of financial support through EURESco, etc., should be exclusively governed by a written arrangement between the coordinator and the employing body. Under formula 1 and 2 the employing body will be the PES or one of the partner organisations; under formula 3 the employing body can be one of the partner organisations or a service provider to whom the coordination task has been assigned. With regard to all appointment formulas both the temporary nature of the coordination task and the applicable national law should be taken into account.

If a coordinator wishes to be relieved of its duties or the appointment is terminated by the Steering Committee, the Committee can temporarily appoint another coordinator. In general it is recommended that the framework agreement, or internal rules of procedure, should not specify any rotation of the coordinator between the countries involved or between types of partner organisations. The coordinators' main office can either be, if they are an employee, on the premises of their employer or in any office available to the partnership.

If the coordinator is employed by a partner organisation, they should be able to guarantee appropriate independence and freedom of action in respect of this organisation, in order to be able to carry out the role entrusted to them for the benefit of the entire partnership, and treating each partner in an impartial way.

4. EURES advisers

EURES advisers are among the main actors within the EURES network. They have a key role in delivering information, guidance and placement/recruitment assistance to both job seekers and employers. There are different types of EURES advisers; they may be experts on mobility issues at national or cross-border level (involving EURES advisers from trade unions and employers' organisations as well as from the PES), "agents for integration" within their own organisation, and contributors to the functioning of the European network of EURES advisers. This document focuses only on the role of the EURES advisers working in one of the EURES-T. As the PES EURES advisers the EURES advisers in the cross-border partnerships have followed the basic training organised under the aegis of the EURESco. Apart from the basic training, EURES advisers are entitled to further training – the advanced training - organised by a contractor on behalf of EURESco.

The EURES advisers working in a EURES-T have a mission consisting of information, advice and assistance in placement. They have to cover the cross-border aspects of living and working conditions and cross-border job offers as well. Moreover, the EURES advisers at cross-border level have also to give information on cross-border vocational training, in particular on the courses available at the cross-border level and the implications of following a course on the other side of the border. They normally work within the organisations to which they belong. However, for the EURES-T which share buildings, EURES advisers can work their hours open to the public in these buildings. The institutions to which they belong make available to the EURES advisers, with the

financial and technical aid of the Commission, the means necessary for the performance of their duties.

With regard to the work of EURES advisers in EURES-T, the Commission can finance a part of their salaries for public opening hours owing to the fact that these organisations have more limited financial resources than the public employment services and the fact that they are voluntary partners in the network.

The EURES advisers in the cross-border partnerships also belong to the network of EURES advisers. In this connection, they have contacts with their colleagues all over the EEA and exchange information and experience. Within each cross-border partnership, this network has to be developed in a more intense way, in particular by:

- the holding of regular meetings between EURES advisers, including at least one meeting per year with all the EURES advisers, whatever the type of organisation to which they belong. These meetings are normally organised and chaired by the coordinator;
- the involvement of the EURES advisers in the implementation of the activities, in particular external promotion activities, co-ordination of the network of partners, preparation of documentation or information for the use of the public;
- the organisation of sessions of training or exchange of experience on the aspects specific to cross-border mobility.

The EURES advisers in cross-border partnerships:

- Follow up of the job vacancies for which they are responsible;
- Promote EURES to employers, job seekers and other target groups;
- Provide information on skill surpluses and shortages at cross-border level;
- Provide information on living and working conditions in the cross-border area;
- Provide information on obstacles to cross-border mobility and suggest appropriate solutions to such obstacles;
- Provide guidance on social security, taxation, industrial legislation etc. to jobseekers and employers wishing to engage migrant workers;
- Co-operate with other relevant local employment initiatives and structures;
- Promote and raise the level of awareness of EURES in the partner organisations.

Call for applicants / new EURES advisers

EURESCO will regularly publish a call for applicants to be trained as new EURES advisers. EURES-T then indicate the candidates they wish to propose to undergo basic training as EURES advisers during the year concerned. In order to qualify, EURES advisers must comply with the common selection criteria established in the calls for applicants. The immediate superiors of the candidates EURES advisers have to commit themselves to allowing them to work for EURES (that it is for advisory activities or for supporting activities) at least 50% of their time as well as allowing them to work as EURES advisers for at least three years, except cases of force majeure. These proposals have to take account of the geographical size of the territory covered by the partnership as well as of the main commuter flows. For new partnerships, the number of EURES advisers to be trained in the first year cannot normally be higher than the number of regions involved in the partnership. Any additional request for training to be carried out in subsequent years will have to be properly justified with respect to the needs and the number of the users. These points have to be properly justified and approved by the Steering Committee. The proposal has then to be sent to the concerned EURES managers who draw up a national list of candidates and submit it to EURESCO. EURESCO reserves the right to accept or reject these candidatures based on the justifications given or the number of places available for training.

5. The role of the EURES member(s)

The EURES reform has reinforced the role of EURES member(s) in the cross-border partnerships. As pointed out in the EURES charter the activities of the cross-border partnerships shall be included in the activity plans and annual subsidy requests of the EURES member(s) concerned (details see chapter VI). The cross-border activities proposed by the EURES-T need to make a significant contribution to the respective country-specific activity plan. The EURES member ensures the coherence of the cross-border activities with the objectives of his own activity plan and will therefore propose to the Steering Committee, of which the EURES member is a voting member, to change, adapt or delete activities proposed within the EURES-T when they are not coherent with the activity plan. By including the planned activities of the cross-border partnership in the national activity plan and submitting the plan to EURESCO the EURES member signals the endorsement of these activities.

The EURES member(s) shall be accountable to the Commission for the management of any Community funds allocated in the grant agreement for the implementation of cross-border activities. In this respect a contractual arrangement between the EURES member(s) and the EURES-T should govern this relation. In order to take account of country-specific rules, procedures and conditions the contractual arrangement between the two parties may cover additional rules, procedures and principles regarding the submission of documents, the fund management, the reporting, the auditing, the awarding of contracts, the appointment of the co-ordinator and all other responsibilities under this grant agreement with the Commission. The framework agreement of the partnership should be compatible with this specific responsibility of the EURES member.

VI. Financing EURES-T activities

By setting up a permanent EURES-T structure and by joining the partnership all partner organisations signal their willingness of providing support and adequate means to the EURES-T. Following an annual call for proposals the EU Commission may provide financial support for useful EURES-T activities.

This chapter contains the main principles and rules for the management of funds for EURES-T and some specific financing rules for EURES-T. Provisions are given each year in the relevant documents such the annual call for proposals and the respective version of the Vademecum for EURES grant agreements.

1. Management of the funds of the EURES cross-border partnerships

Following the EURES reform subsidy requests for the funding of activities carried out in the framework of the EURES cross-border partnerships must be included in the annual subsidy request of a EURES member. While the EURES members and partners may be final recipients of EU financial assistance from the EURES budget, the EURES member will be the only beneficiary under the terms of the agreement with the European Commission.

The Commission shall not, in any circumstances or on any grounds, be held liable in the event of a claim under the agreement relating to any damage caused during the action's execution. Consequently, the Commission will not entertain any request for indemnity or reimbursement accompanying any such claim.

The EURES member shall ensure that the partners' requests comply fully with the provisions of the relevant call for proposals, the Vademecum on EURES grant agreements, with the EURES Guidelines and with the country-specific three-year activity plan. After approval of a grant request, EURESCO concludes an agreement with the EURES member, including the funds reserved for the

financing of activities of the EURES cross-border partnerships. The EURES member will be fully accountable towards the Commission for the sound financial management of all grants included in the grant agreement, i.e. including the funds allocated to activities to be undertaken by EURES partners. The EURES member is also responsible for any recovery of funds allocated to the EURES partners in the event of failure on the part of a EURES partner to fulfil its obligations.

As beneficiary under the terms of an agreement with the European Commission, the EURES member must set the appropriate administrative and financial procedures for the management of the funds allocated to the EURES partners and ensure that the management of these funds is done in conformity with national and EU rules. EURES members may manage the grants allocated to a specific EURES cross-border partnership themselves, or transfer the responsibility for the daily management of this budget to one of the organisations participating in this partnership or to a third party not participating in a cross-border partnership. If the organisation in charge of the daily management of the cross-border budget is not a regional branch of the relevant EURES member itself, the EURES member shall conclude a written agreement with the organisation managing the budget at cross-border level and ensure that this organisation fulfils all national and European obligations related to the management of the grant. A copy of this agreement has to be submitted to the European Commission within 2 months after the entry into force of the EURES grant agreement between the European Commission and the EURES member. The EURES member remains accountable towards the Commission for any problem that may arise in course of the execution of the agreement.

A description of the main procedures put in place at the PES for the handling of the funds which will be allocated for activities of the EURES cross-border partnerships has to be included in the annual subsidy request of the concerned EURES member. This description shall cover the following elements:

- Legal framework of the allocation of the funds to the cross-border partnership;
- Provisions on the award of contracts;
- Procedures for advance payments;
- Monitoring;
- Reporting and auditing procedures;
- Settlement of final balance/recoveries.

The final accounts of the EURES-T need to be certified by an external auditor. The external audit shall be carried out by an independent body or expert officially authorised to carry out audits of accounts. With regard to the auditing of cross-border partnerships the respective EURES member as main beneficiary appoints the auditor for auditing the final accounts of all EURES-T covered by one particular grant agreement. In case, the contract covers a substantial number of activities implemented by various EURES-T partnerships, the EURES member may opt for several different auditors/auditing companies. If the EURES member is subject to public auditing, the final accounts of the EURES-T may instead be certified by the competent public auditing institution of the respective EEA member state.

2. Specific financing rules

Some financing rules specifically apply to EURES-T. The respective provisions are included in the relevant annual call for proposals and the corresponding version of the Vademecum for EURES grant agreements. Always the most recent versions need to be consulted. The most important specific financing rules cover:

- **Staff costs of EURES advisers**

EURES may co-finance the salaries of the EURES advisers not belonging to the PES under certain conditions and up to a defined ceiling.

- **Budget management and accounting costs**

EURES may co-finance budget management and accounting costs related to the EURES grants (assistants' salaries or external services) under certain conditions and up to a defined ceiling.

- **Financial support for the organisation of the meetings of the Steering Committee**

A EURES cross-border partnership may also receive financial support for the organisation of the meetings of the Steering Committee. This relates to travelling expenses and daily subsistence allowances of the Steering Committee members. However, the Presidents' and Steering Committee members' fees/salary costs' for meetings and their preparation are not eligible expenditure.

- **Equipment acquisition**

Under certain conditions the purchase of equipment - work stations, desks, cupboards, chairs, fixed communications equipment, durable promotional material, etc. – is eligible, but only in cases where such items are not already available. Equipment purchases need to be depreciated.

- **Costs of cross-border co-ordination**

The amount granted for the co-ordination of EURES cross-border activities is designed to support the co-ordinator to fulfil the tasks as described in chapter IV.3. The total coordination fee consists of different elements (a: salary b: travel and subsistence c: miscellaneous including workstation, equipment, training measures) for which maximum ceilings are fixed:

A: salaries/fees (including employers' social contributions) of the co-ordinator and his/her secretariat or administrative support staff. For the salary element of the coordination fee a maximum ceiling will be applied. The salary element of the coordination fee needs to be in line with the prevailing market wages for similar jobs in the country where the coordinator is based.

In case a PES employee/official or an employee of one of the partner organisations is appointed as coordinator his actual salary costs (including employers' social contributions) will be co-financed up to a maximum ceiling. If the coordinator is appointed following an open call for candidates the salary element will also be co-financed up to the maximum ceiling. The salaries may be paid to a beneficiary who is the employer of the person(s) concerned or to a beneficiary who has concluded a subcontract agreement with the person(s) concerned;

B: Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by the co-ordinator (both at regional level and for European level meetings) will be co-financed up to a pre-defined maximum amount, taking into account the size of the cross-border region.

C: Under the item miscellaneous the purchase of a workstation for the coordinator, equipment for his/her office, and his/her participation in training courses can be co-financed under certain conditions up to a pre-defined maximum amount.

In addition, indirect costs may be eligible for flat-rate funding up to a percentage of the corresponding total direct eligible costs of the activities. Unlike direct costs, indirect costs relate to the following categories of expenditure that are not identifiable as specific costs directly linked to and necessary for carrying out the activity and cannot therefore be booked directly to it: rental costs for offices (except for seminars and occasional meetings), communication costs, office supplies, maintenance, electricity, heating, and other similar costs.

The details of the different components of the coordination fee such as the maximum ceilings are further explained in the annual call for proposals and the corresponding version of the Vademecum for EURES grant agreements.

The coordination fee granted by the Commission may be supplemented by the partner organisations if they consider it necessary for carrying out all coordination tasks.

VII. Cooperation between EURES-T

1. Encourage co-operation between EURES-T

The network of cross-border partnerships needs to provide valuable services to its clients on cross-border labour markets. In order to reap the benefits of this network each EURES-T is expected to share relevant information, to update the network members on latest development and co-operate with network members. A few examples of such cooperation:

Information products

With regard to the creation and publication of information products cross-border partnerships should seek for synergies and use economies of scale.

- All EURES-T using the same working language(s) and/or located at the border of a particular country establish regular working relations and co-operate by sharing tasks on data collection, editing and printing, distribution, etc. of new information products. Each EURES-T willing to produce new information products needs to demonstrate in the activity sheet (submitted to the EURES member for inclusion in the subsidy request) that other relevant EURES-T have been consulted and that duplication of activities with other EURES-T is excluded. In terms of budgeting of joint activities for smaller amounts it is preferable that only one EURES-T budgets the entire estimated costs related to this activity.
- Regarding the update and maintenance of cross-border web sites EURES-T are encouraged to look for common solutions. Each EURES-T that proposes activities with regard to Web tools needs to demonstrate in the respective activity sheet that other EURES-T have been consulted and that duplication of activities with other EURES-T is avoided.

Exchange of best practice

- On the members section of the EURES portal a new section will be established in which EURES members and EURES-T present their examples of best practices in an easily accessible common format. All EURES-T are asked to contribute to this section with a number of examples of cross-border activities that would be of interest to the network.

Training/Personal:

- For training and familiarisation of newly appointed staff – coordinators, other key staff – with the cross-border business, short internships in nearby or related EURES-T are eligible in the subsidy request of the EURES-T that has appointed new staff.
- The EURES member preparing the creation of a new cross-border partnership may include in his subsidy request temporary activities aimed to obtain advice, coaching and other support from other existing cross-border partnerships. This knowledge transfer should be limited in time and it should be ensured that the EURES member(s) and regional partners of the candidate cross-border partnership remain the driving force in the process. EURESco needs to be consulted in advance about details of seminars, travels, etc. in support of candidate cross-border partnerships in order to ensure the proper coordination of such activities.
- Representatives of all EURES-T will be invited to the annual grant management training.

2. Annual conference of EURES-T

EURESCO convenes an annual conference of the EURES-T bringing together the EURES Working Party and the presidents/chairpersons of the EURES-T Steering Committees and the coordinators. The conference normally takes place in one of the cross-border regions. Objective of the annual conference is to increase synergy in the network and to support the exchange of best practise in the network. Candidatures or expressions of interests for organizing the conference can be put forward by all EURES-T/EURES members and should be sent to EURESCO as early as possible.

Annex I: Established framework for EURES cross-border co-operation

This annex presents an overview of a number of paragraphs from the EURES decision and the EURES charter that are directly applicable to cross-border activities.

The fundamental principle of EURES cross-border co-operation is established in **Art 8.2 of the EURES Decision**: "On the basis of the principle that all vacancies and applications for employment that are made public by any of the EURES members and partners must be accessible throughout the Community, the EURES Charter shall, in particular, establish...the development of transnational and cross-border cooperation, including employment and social services, the social partners and other institutions concerned, with a view to the improvement of the functioning of the labour markets, their integration and improved mobility;".

Article 9.2 of the EURES Decision stipulates that "On the basis of the guidelines, EURES members shall present their respective activity plans for the period covered by the guidelines to the EURES Co-ordination Office. The activity plan shall specify: (a)the main activities to be undertaken by the EURES member within the framework of the network, including the transnational, cross-border and sectoral activities provided for in Article 17 of Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68,...".

Article 1.1 of the EURES Charter on Job matching services stipulates that "EURES members and partners shall actively contribute to an increased mobility on the European labour market by exchanging information between themselves on vacancies and applications for employment. Vacancy information shall be valid, accurate and sufficient to allow job-seekers to make an informed decision about applying. Special attention shall be given to job vacancies where the employer is specifically interested in recruiting workers from other European countries. Vacancy notices shall be exchanged according to the uniform system referred to in part III. EURES members and partners shall provide information services, counselling and advice to job-seekers and employers, including persons with special information needs, such as workers in the cross-border areas, the young, the elderly, the disabled and women as well as to family members of EU migrant workers. These services shall include: ...".

Article 1.2 of the EURES Charter then stipulates that "EURES members shall support the development of cross-border co-operation together with local social partners, local authorities and other relevant local and regional organisations located in cross-border areas in order to improve the local labour market and facilitate the mobility of workers in these areas, with a view to contribute to the economic and social development of the area. They shall endeavour to integrate the cross-border co-operation with their other activities in order to exploit all possible synergies".

Article 1.3 of the EURES Charter stipulates that "With a view to establishing a co-ordinated monitoring of obstacles to mobility and to contributing to the removal of such obstacles, EURES members shall, in co-operation with the relevant EURES partners or other relevant sources, regularly provide the EURES Co-ordination Office with information on current migration flows, the existence of specific surpluses and shortages of skilled workers as well as any specific obstacles to mobility that they identify, including differences in legislation and administrative procedures".

Paragraph 2.4.3 on specific rules on cross-border activities stipulates: "As provided for in the Decision, Article 8 (2) (a) (ii), the EURES members and partners shall jointly develop cross-border co-operation, which should be organised in the framework of EURES cross-border partnerships. The main tasks of a cross-border partnership are:

- To provide and exchange information and advice on vacancies and job applications as well as on living and working conditions and other relevant information related to the labour markets in the cross-border region;
- To contribute to the development of this flow of information by direct and regular contacts between the EURES advisers in the region;
- To draw up and maintain an inventory of vocational training opportunities in the region concerned and to contribute to the further development of such training opportunities;
- To contribute to and develop projects aimed at improving the labour market in the cross-border regions, including co-operation with other relevant programmes.

Paragraph 2.4.3.1 on the organisation of EURES cross-border partnerships stipulates that "a cross-border partnership comprises the Public Employment Services of all the regions involved, together with trades union and employer organisations, as designated by the EURES members, within the framework of the relevant national rules and practices.

Other partners can include:

- regional and local authorities or associations of these;
- organisations dealing with vocational training;
- universities and institutes of higher education;
- other relevant actors on the cross-border labour market.

A new cross-border partnership may be established upon the initiative of one or several potential partners. The request to create such a partnership shall be submitted to the EURES Co-ordination office, who after examining it jointly with the EURES members concerned, will decide on its recognition.

Cross-border partnerships shall be governed by a Framework agreement, by which the partners commit themselves to participate in the activities of the cross-border partnership and deliver the EURES services to their target-public in accordance with the provisions of the EURES Charter. The framework agreement, specifying the partnership's objectives, organisational structures and operational rules, shall have a minimum duration of 3 years and may be revised and renewed.

As foreseen in the Decision Article 9 (2), the cross-border activities shall be included in the activity plans of the EURES members concerned. The cross-border partners and the EURES members concerned may agree to integrate the activities of the partnership entirely into the national activity of only one EURES member. The EURES member or members thus responsible for including the activities of the cross-border partnership in their respective national activity plans shall be identified in the Framework agreement.

The responsible EURES member or members shall submit the planned activities of the cross-border partnership to the EURES Co-ordination Office as part of their national activity plan and thereby signal their endorsement of these activities.

The EURES member or members responsible for the cross-border partnership shall be accountable to the Commission for the management of any Community funds allocated for the implementation of cross-border activities. The EURES members shall see to it that adequate procedures are in place to acquit these responsibilities."

Article 2.4.3.2 on Cross-border Steering Committee and Co-ordinator stipulates that "All partnerships shall create a Steering Committee in which the participating organisations are represented. It is the principal decision-making body of the partnership, which ensures the overall cohesion of the partnership and sets out its strategy in accordance with the EURES guidelines. In particular, it

- submits its proposals for activities to be included in the activity plans of the relevant EURES members, accompanied by an estimation of the budgetary means required to undertake these activities;

- ensures an effective monitoring and evaluation of activities, including their financing, and carries out regular assessments of the results.

The President of the Steering Committee must be a representative of one of the organisations that has signed the Framework agreement and should be chosen by consensus or otherwise by simple majority. The President chairs the meetings of the Steering Committee and acts as the representative of the partnership.

The Steering Committee and the EURES member concerned shall jointly appoint a Co-ordinator who ensures the proper functioning of the partnership, in particular by:

- developing proposals for activities in line with the EURES Guidelines;

- preparing the meetings of the Steering Committee and contributing to the implementation of the decisions taken by the Steering Committee;

- ensuring good communication with other cross-border partnerships, EURES members and the Commission;

- ensuring that the development of the partnership and its activities are monitored and regularly evaluated".