

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA
STANDING COMMITTEE
OF THE EFTA STATES

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Brussels

WORKING GROUP ON ENERGY MATTERS

**Comments from the EEA EFTA States on the proposal for a
multi-annual programme for action in the field of energy
“Intelligent Energy for Europe” (2003-2006)**

COM(2002) 162 final

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EEA EFTA States welcome the energy programme "Intelligent Energy for Europe" and support the new direction of the programme into four specific fields of action.

The EEA EFTA States are of the opinion that the implementation of the programme depends on the possibility to develop a transparent and predictable structure of objectives and priorities and a method of evaluation of both proposals and results.

The EEA EFTA States are of the opinion that the overall priorities should be fixed for the whole programme period in order to create stability and predictable conditions for the parties involved.

The EEA EFTA States will welcome a more efficient management of the programme and the establishment of an agency to be responsible for the execution and follow-up of the programme.

As regards the role of the assisting committee, the EEA EFTA States would like to emphasise the importance of establishing the rules of procedure at an early stage of the implementation of the programme. The committee's mandate should be to focus more on overall objectives, priorities and rules of procedures, instead of on detailed questions regarding the evaluation and priority of single proposals and projects.

II. INTRODUCTION

1. The EEA EFTA States support the overall thrust of the Commission proposal of 9 April 2002 for a multi-annual programme for action in the field of energy: "Intelligent Energy for Europe" Programme (2003-2006). The aim is to bring about a genuine change in energy behaviour by raising awareness among the main players so that they move towards efficient and intelligent energy production and consumption. The programme will provide important elements that are needed, notably with regard to demand management, increased use of renewable energy sources, energy diversification and the monitoring of these measures.

2. The EEA EFTA States have taken note of the fact that the programme is designed as the main Community instrument for non-technological support in the field of energy. The programme provides continuity for the actions under SAVE and ALTENER, and introduces STEER (energy in transport) and COOPENER (promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy in third countries). At this point and after a preliminary assessment, the EEA EFTA States express willingness to participate in the programme.

3. Furthermore, the EEA EFTA States have taken note of the fact that the financial reference amount for implementing this programme is €215 million and that the annual appropriations shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the financial perspective. Financial reference amounts shall be laid down on an indicative basis for each specific area, SAVE, ALTENER, STEER and COOPENER.

4. On the matter of eligibility, the EEA EFTA States have noted that participation in the programme shall be open to any legal, public or private person established on the territory of the European Union. In addition, the programme shall be open to the participation of the Central and Eastern European candidate countries, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey and the EEA EFTA countries on the basis of additional funds and in accordance with procedures to be agreed on with these countries.

III PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

5. The EEA EFTA States have noted the evaluation of the existing energy framework programme as referred to in Section 5.2 of the proposal, and emphasise the importance of developing more efficient methods of managing the programme and executing the actions it comprises. First of all, it is important to develop a distinct link between the *general objectives* referred to in Article 1, the *key actions* referred to in Article 3.2 and the priorities to be made in the *work programme* referred to in Article 5. On the basis of such a structure of objectives and priorities, transparent criteria and methods for the evaluation of both proposals and results should be developed prior to the execution of the programme. A set of indicators to be used for the evaluation of both proposals and results should be identified and presented in the Work Programme under all key actions.

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6. With reference to the programme structure outlined in Article 3 and the procedures for the establishment of the work programme in Article 5, the EEA EFTA States stress the importance of focusing the efforts on the four specific fields of action. With references to the existing joint work programme for SAVE and ALTENER, the EEA EFTA States will welcome a new joint work programme and handling of the two fields of action, RUE and RES.
7. The EEA EFTA States welcome the idea of leaving the operational execution and the practical follow-up of the programme to an agency under the Commission. It will be important to develop a less bureaucratic and time-consuming procedure, from the call for proposals, until the contracts are signed, to the start of the projects. This strengthens the need for transparent criteria and methods for the evaluation of both proposals and results. We have taken note of the follow-up arrangements outlined in Chapter 8.1 in the Legislative Financial Statement and stress the importance of developing the necessary procedures and structures for the registration, handling and dissemination of results. These procedures should be made visible to all involved parties at an early stage. This also implies data which are to be collected in order to be able to evaluate the projects and publish the results ex-post.
8. With reference to Chapter 8.2 in the Legislative Financial Statement, it will be necessary to allow for some changes to be made in the work programme due to changes in the political priorities or market conditions. However, in the light of the four-year duration of the programme, the laying down and fixing of overall priorities and the structure for the whole programme period would be welcome. This would leave time for the key actions to work and the results to develop before new changes are made. If the programme changes substantially during the period of execution, it will be difficult both to evaluate the impact of the various actions and to learn lessons from the experience. The results should always be judged against the objectives and the framework conditions present at the time the actions are initiated. On the other hand, the need for continuity should always be levelled off against the need for flexibility.
9. With reference to Article 8, the Commission shall be assisted by a committee, which, in accordance with Article 8.3, shall adopt its rules of procedure. On the basis of the experiences from the Energy Framework Programme 1998-2002, it is important to determine the role of the committee and its rules of procedure at an early stage. It will be important both to secure sufficient focus on each of the four different fields of action and necessary coordination between them. The link between the role of the committee and the various fields of action and the question of coordination should be reflected in the rules of procedure of the committee. In order to be an effective body, the committee should focus on overall objectives, priorities and rules of procedure for the execution of the programme, instead of on detailed questions regarding the evaluation and priority of single proposals and projects.

10. In anticipation of the decisions necessary for the new Intelligent Energy for Europe Programme to enter into force, the EEA EFTA States welcome the possibility to continue the cooperation and participation.

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