

Wide objectives of the Work Packages

The Finnish model for Resource Centres will be further developed. The idea of Resource Centres is to notify women's entrepreneurship, employment and expertise as well as to support women's role in regional development keeping in mind the regional special features.

Along with the project, women's partnership in enhancing entrepreneurship has improved. A wider cooperation has become more appreciated. There is a nation wide network of advisers for women entrepreneurs. A new model for regional cooperation has been created between the advisers and it has been spread forward.

Group mentoring has become an appreciated and regularly used method by advisers as well as entrepreneurs. Mentoring develops skills and readiness for cooperation and the aim is to increase the competitiveness and viability of businesses.

With the cooperation of this project we are committed in the next Government Programme to start the micro credit system in Finland. We try to get the necessary loan capital and support for training and coaching to the State budget. A micro credit system based on the so called established group activity will be used as a tool for the launching aid, Finnvera's loans for women, counselling of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Resource Centres which will be created, the New Opportunities for Rural Areas - projects of the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and the entrepreneur counselling of the Rural Women's Advisory Organisation.

In Finland we have created and developed practical operating models in order to support the growth of women entrepreneurs' business activities and opportunities to become international. In these systems both the mentoring and micro credit are put into practise. The Resource Centres encourage entrepreneurs to become international. The organisations that promote export activities also disseminate the practises of internationalisation.

More precise measures of the Work Packages

In the Resource Centre Work Package the Finns follow up and develop the Finnish Resource Centre model. We follow what happens in Sweden, the Baltic countries and Poland concerning the Resource Centre network as well as the Resource Centre strategy for the whole Baltic Sea Region. We also give information to the other countries about the Finnish model. The Resource Centre model for the Baltic Sea Region includes also Finnish view points.

A national *network of advisers* will be created including 20-30 advisers. There will also be a register of the advisers of women entrepreneurs. Those who work as advisers for women entrepreneurs have started to exchange information, experiences and best practises as well as to cooperate on the regional, national and international levels. The advisers' abilities to function internationally will be improved. New methods will be created. The Rural Women's advisory Organisation has the responsibility to carry out this entity.

In the region of Päijät-Häme in Finland, a network will be built between those enhancing women's entrepreneurship so that the existing training and counselling elements will be used and carried out in cooperation with the authorities. In Päijät-Häme the quality of information will be improved by helping the advisers to become more competent and authoritative. The tool will be apprenticeship training. In Päijät-Häme they will find out the possibilities to enlarge their activities e.g. to Kanta-

Häme and cooperation with South Ostrobothnia. The Päijät-Häme method will also be spread by the web pages.

Mentoring will have two mentoring groups both in South Ostrobothnia and Kainuu during the project. The entrepreneurs participating in the groups internationalize and develop their activities. International meetings will be held for the entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs of South Ostrobothnia will go on a study tour and seminar to Lithuania and Latvia. They will also meet their colleagues from Kainuu and together they will be visiting Kostamus in Russia in the autumn 2005. The stories of those who participate in the mentoring package as well as other entrepreneur stories will be put into the web pages of the project.

Information about the micro credit model will be given by writing articles and offering training to the employment offices, Finnvera, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Central Union of Agricultural Producers, Rural Women's Advisory Organisation. Consultation for development projects will be offered to other interested organisations as well. The Association of Rural Women Entrepreneurs utilizes all the possibilities that the FEM-project offers within the existing resources.

In the part of *Women entrepreneur's internationalisation* 50 women entrepreneurs is using the web pages to make contacts; 20-40 women entrepreneurs introduces themselves in the FEM pages; 20 women have been trained for web trade during the project.

In the North Karelia model every participating entrepreneur starts from her own needs realizing what these are. Each one makes a business plan for her own internationalisation, defines her needs and when this is done, the adviser steps in to help and give information. Both the advisers and entrepreneurs learn from each other creating a new action model through this interactive process. They will document e.g. what needs the entrepreneurs have and who is able to meet these needs. The consultants will be able to evaluate the entrepreneurs' possibilities to become international.

In Päijät-Häme they will create a model for women entrepreneurs on different levels to remove the obstacles of internationalisation. In this work the already existing tools for internationalisation and how they can be put to practise will be sorted out. This work will be done in cooperation with the participating regions. Planning of the development projects for women entrepreneurs will be carried out together with the information- and training organisations.