



■ EMPOWERING **PEOPLE AND INDUSTRIES**

VAPRO

Best practices in EU funds: the Dutch model

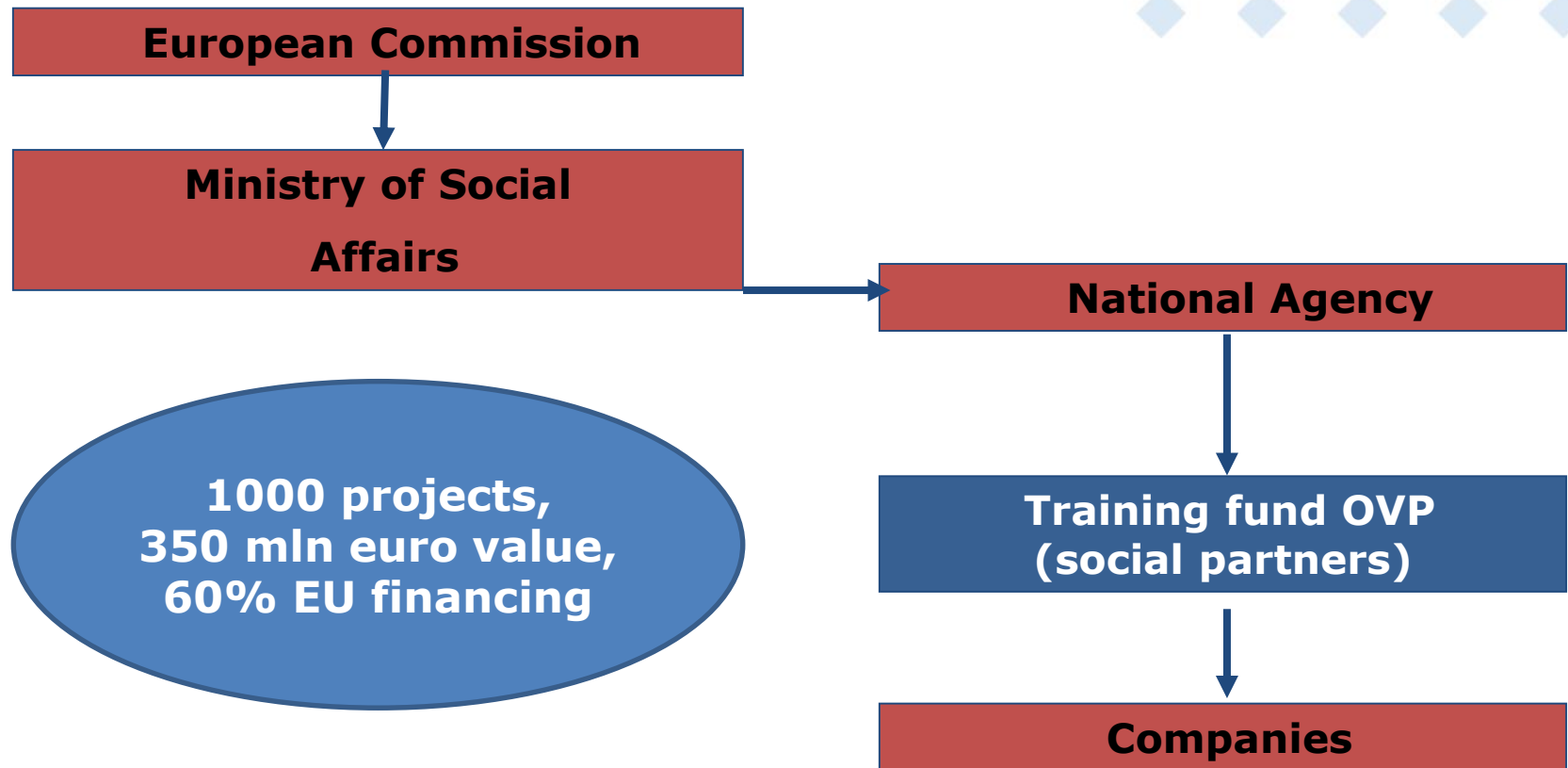
Theo SEIP, Partner/Director VAPRO



■ VAPRO group

- **Founded in 1956, by social partners in the Dutch industry**
- **Recognized by the government**
- **The group is a public-private partnership**
- **Part of the group is a Dutch Training Fund (OVP)**
- **The goal of OVP is to provide sufficient and well trained technical workforce for the industry**
- **Fund has an independent board of social partners**
- **Government uses the fund to get access to industrial companies for EU projects**
- **Active in ESF since 1994**

■ Dutch Training Fund (OVP)



■ **Tasks and role of the Training Fund in ESF**

- **Main applicant ESF for Dutch industry**
- **Implements national and EU-regulations**
- **Guarantees grants and diminishes risk for the government**
- **Provides co-financing**
- **Applies for ESF grants on behalf of industry**
- **Advises companies and evaluates applications and administrative requirements**
- **Monitors the projects**
- **Contracts auditors**
- **Prevents unlawful use of money and fraud**

■ Experiences over the years

- **3 periods of implementation 1993-1999, 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 with different “challenges”**
- **In the first 2 periods manly large enterprises profit from the grants (Heineken, Shell, Philips, AkzoNobel)**
- **Later smaller companies applied**
- **Projects with smaller companies are usually more complicated, risk full and time consuming**
- **It takes years to develop and implement a fair system of checks and balances (and then a new period starts)**
- **Many enterprises are scared off by the bureaucracy, administrative burden, unforeseen changes in regulations during the programming period**

■ Dilemma's and issues

- **Private or governmental certified auditor?**
- **How to keep the rules simple versus sufficient control and checks?**
- **Complex rules => increased risk of non compliance**
- **How to involve SME's? (fixed prices, simple regulations?)**
- **How to prevent long waiting time for evaluations of applications, declarations and payments ?**
- **Pre-financing issues**

■ Success factors

- **Transparent role definitions and trust between politicians, civil servants, intermediate bodies, applicants, auditors**
- **Clear and transparent regulations from the start on (no moving targets!)**
- **Effective monitoring and auditing system without exaggerating it**
- **Involve an auditor in an early stage**
- **Fraud prevention in the total chain**
- **Simple application criteria**



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Thank you!

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