

ANNEX 7

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the 2015 Annual Action programme for the Partnership Instrument

Action Fiche for Support to project cycle management

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title of the action	Support to project cycle management			
Country(ies)/ Region	Global			
Total cost	Total estimated cost: € 900.000 Total amount of the EU budget contribution: € 900.000			
Total duration ¹	36			
Method of implementation	<i>Direct management</i> <i>Procurement - Services</i>			
Markers (from CRIS Dac form)	Rio Convention Markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

2.1. Summary of the action and its objectives

This project will provide the European Commission with a flexible facility that will make available expert support for the identification, formulation, monitoring, evaluation and audit of actions under the Partnership Instrument.

2.2. Context

Article 3 of the "Common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action"² foresees the use of EU financing to cover "*administrative support associated with the preparation, follow-up, monitoring, audit and evaluation activities directly necessary [for the implementation of the instruments]*".

¹ Contract duration should generally not exceed 36 months

² Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014

In addition, Article 4 of the Partnership Instrument Regulation³ establishes that up to 5% of the total budget of the Multiannual Indicative Programme shall be committed, inter alia, for administrative support, as provided by the Common Implementing Rules⁴.

Furthermore, recital (22) of the Partnership Instrument Regulation stipulates that the results and efficiency of the instrument "*should be monitored and assessed on the basis of pre-defined, clear, transparent and, where applicable, country-specific and measurable indicators [...]*".

Despite these provisions, PI funding for activities in support of project cycle management (namely identification and formulation, monitoring, evaluation and audit of projects and programmes) under the administrative budget line is very limited compared to actual needs. At the same time, due to the "N+1" rule in the vast majority of cases it is not possible to contract evaluations and audits of projects before the final date for contracting of the financing decision.

The PI being an entirely new financial instrument it is important to ensure a correct gathering and application of lessons learnt, analysing the recommendations obtained through monitoring and evaluation and translating them into new projects. This is of particular relevance in view of the forthcoming Mid-Term Review, which will be conducted in 2017.

2.3. Lessons learnt

The PI is an innovative financial instrument: it has a worldwide scope, reinforcing dialogue and cooperation with countries with which the Union has strategic interests, tackles issues pertaining to global challenges, supports the implementation of the external dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy and promotes the image and values of the European Union in the world.

Given the limited amount of resources available under the PI and the wide scope in terms of geographical coverage and objectives it is essential to ensure an appropriate identification and formulation of projects to be funded under this instrument, in order to avoid duplication with existing initiatives, identify complementarities and demonstrate an added value by promoting the interest of the European Union.

The programming exercises for the Annual Action Programmes 2014 and 2015 have clearly exposed this need, Line DGs often lack experience on project management under the EU external action, which is key to turn policy needs and priorities into viable projects, often of a complex nature. Hence, ad hoc expertise is needed for specific thematic areas or particularly complex interventions (e.g. programmes covering several regions and/or subjects or projects that require a high degree of technical expertise, etc.).

³ Regulation (EU) No 234/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries

⁴ Ibid (footnote #2)

2.4. Complementary actions

This component will complement not only the budget allocations foreseen for administrative expenditure (BA budget line) but also the Policy Support Facility (PSF, Annex 5 to the current AAP 2015), which aims at supporting (existing) policy dialogues between the EU and partner countries through technical assistance in areas within the scope of “Europe 2020” and to facilitate economic and trade relations with partner countries, and in particular lot 2 (Technical assistance, training and evaluation). It will also complement the technical assistance provided through TAIEX.

3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The objective of this action is to maximise the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of the projects and programmes carried out under the Partnership Instrument. More specifically, this project shall provide ad hoc expertise for the identification, formulation, monitoring, evaluation and audit of projects and programmes.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

Result 1: Ad hoc expertise able to provide high-quality support for project cycle management is made available to the European Commission in a timely and flexible manner.

Activities envisaged under this facility will include, inter alia:

i. Identification and formulation of PI projects/programmes

The **identification** phase is to provide an analysis of the context including the problem areas, public policies, stakeholders and the institutional capacity. This analysis provides the basis for the definition of specific objectives and expected results of the project/programme, also proposing the implementation approach and modality.

The **formulation** stage is to make up the detailed design of the intervention, including the main activities, and how they contribute to outputs and outcomes, what indicators, benchmarks and systems will be used to measure progress, and how risks will be identified and mitigated. Formulation may include drafting of terms of reference, technical specifications and guidelines for applicants in view of the launching of calls for tender/calls for proposals.

ii. Monitoring and evaluation of ongoing/completed projects⁵ according to the Evaluation Plan of the PI⁶

Monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an on-going intervention

⁵ Guidelines for Project Cycle Management https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/dg/devco/quality-impact/Documents/New%20intranet/Project%20and%20Programme%20Cycle%20Management/europeaid_admin_pcm_guidelines_2004_en.pdf

⁶ In preparation, to be adopted tentatively in April 2015

with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. Evaluations are usually performed by independent, external experts who scrutinize an intervention against defined criteria such as relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability (OECD-DAC evaluation criteria).

iii. Financial verification and/or audit of projects, according to the Annual Audit Plan of the service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI)

Audits are carried out to provide assurance on the legality and regularity of operations funded by the EU. Assurance is essentially related to compliance with the applicable regulations and rules and takes as a basis the principles of sound financial management, economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

N/A

3.4. Stakeholders

N/A

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Method of implementation

4.1.1. Procurement (direct management)

It is expected that expertise required for the identification, formulation, monitoring, evaluation and audit of actions under the PI will be mostly contracted through several individual requests for services via existing framework contracts managed by DG DEVCO or other DGs, upon agreement of the responsible service. However, services may be tendered/negotiated outside existing framework contracts in duly justified cases or when no appropriate framework contract is available.

4.2. Indicative budget

Method of Implementation	Amount in EUR million
4.1.1. Procurement (direct management)	0,9
Total	0,9

4.3. Performance monitoring

Monitoring of the implementation will be carried out by the Commission (FPI in headquarters and, where applicable, the relevant Delegations) on the basis of quality and timeliness of deliverables and services provided by the contractor/s. The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews.

4.4. Evaluation and audit

For this action or its components the Commission may carry out interim and/or final/ex-post evaluation(s) via independent consultants contracted by the Commission based on specific terms of reference.

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments.

As the "N+1" applies for contracting under this decision, external evaluations and audits, as well as additional external monitoring referred to under section 4.3 above, will be funded from sources other than those allocated to this specific action.

4.5. Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU. However, given the nature of the services to be provided in the framework of this action, the Contracting Authority will assess the need and scope of the visibility and communication activities to be linked to each of the specific actions and will specify them in the related request for services.