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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 16 December 2009
C(2009)10015

COMMISSION DECISION

of 16 December 2009

on the adoption of a supplementary work programme for 2009 and a work programme for 2010 for the pilot project covered by budget line 07 03 16, serving as financing decision

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002¹ on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (hereinafter referred to as the 'Financial Regulation'), and in particular Article 49(6)(a) and Art. 75(2) thereof,

Having regard to Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002² laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, and in particular Article 90 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Under point (a) of Article 49(6) of the Financial Regulation, appropriations for pilot schemes of an experimental nature designed to test the feasibility of an action and its usefulness may be implemented without a basic act provided the actions which they are intended to finance fall within the powers of the Communities or the European Union.
- (2) Under Article 75(2) of the Financial Regulation, the commitment of the expenditure shall be preceded by a financing decision adopted by the institution or the authorities to which powers have been delegated by the institution.
- (3) Under Article 90(2) of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002, where the implementation of appropriations is provided for by an annual work programme constituting a sufficiently detailed framework, the work programme shall be considered to be the financing decision for the grants involved.

¹ OJ L 248, 16.09.2002, p. 48.

² OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p. 1.

- (4) The budgetary authority has earmarked specific funding for an amount of EUR 1 000 000 in the budget of the EU for 2009 on budget line 07 03 16 for a pilot project on the development of prevention activities to halt desertification in Europe.
- (5) Commission Decision C(2009)3555/3 adopted on 8 June³ foresaw the financing, under the 2009 budget on budget line 07 03 16 and for a maximum amount of EUR 100 000, of a procurement contract aimed at identifying the possible priorities for halting desertification. It also envisaged the launching of a call for proposal to target these priorities. The present decision provides for the financing of this call for proposals.
- (6) In its first reading of the 2010 budget the European Parliament has foreseen the financing of this pilot project for a second year, with an amount of EUR 1 500 000 on budget line 07 03 16. Upon condition of the actual availability of this amount in the final budget 2010 as adopted by the Budgetary Authority, it is appropriate to allocate these funds to the call for proposals, increasing the projects to be financed and avoiding scattered interventions.
- (7) This decision constitutes a financing decision within the meaning of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation and Article 90 of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002.
- (8) As this Decision intervenes before the final adoption of the budget for the year 2010 by the Budgetary Authority, the use of funds related to the financial year 2010 is conditional upon the actual availability of appropriations on the budget line concerned,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The work programme set out in the Annex to this decision is hereby adopted as financing decision for grants in the Environment policy area, on budget article 07 03 16 for the following amounts:

- EUR 900 000 for the financial year 2009;
- EUR 1 500 000 for the financial year 2010.

The implementation of this Decision for the financial year 2010 is subject to the availability of appropriations after adoption of the 2010 budget by the Budgetary Authority.

Article 2

The Director-General for Environment is responsible for ensuring the publication and implementation of the work programme on grants and contracts set out in the Annex.

³ Commission Decision C(2009)3555/3 of 8 June 2009 on "the adoption of a work programme in the Environment policy area for 2009 for the pilot projects covered by budget lines 07 03 15 and 07 03 16, serving as financing decision"

Article 3

The appropriations covered by the work programme may be used to pay default interest in accordance with Article 83 of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002.

Article 4

This Decision is addressed to the authorising officer by delegation.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

[...]

Member of the Commission

ANNEX

Pilot project: Development of prevention activities to halt desertification in Europe (Budget article 07 03 16)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Budget line: 07 03 16

1.2. Basic Act :

Pilot project within the meaning of Article 49(6) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1), as last amended by Council Regulation (EC) No 1525/2007 of 17 December 2007 (OJ L 343, 27.12.2007, p.9).

1.3. General objectives of the Pilot Project

As per the budgetary remark voted by the budgetary authority, this appropriation is intended to identify and develop prevention activities to halt desertification in Europe. The involvement of candidate, western Balkan and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries is envisaged.

Given the extremely wide scope of initiatives to be covered by the budget remark, several meetings with the Parliament were organised in order to define a possible focus not already covered by other policy areas (i.e. research and agriculture).

1.4. Specific priorities

Following discussions with the Parliament, the pilot project will focus on supporting the development of concrete pilot initiatives on innovative technologies, techniques or practices in order to contribute to the exchanges of good practice and innovation at the local level for halting the desertification in Europe.

The project will focus on demonstrating the potential of water saving techniques for improving human and environmental conditions in different regions of Europe, using low-cost (technological) approaches.

1.5. Background:

The action foresees two phases:

- During the first phase a service contract was concluded for a maximum amount of EUR 100 000. The contract focused on the identification of possible priorities - sectoral and/or regional – for halting desertification.
- The second phase envisages the launching of a call for proposals, for an indicative amount of EUR 2 400 000: 900 000 EUR of which available from 2009 budget and 1 500 000 EUR from 2010 budget.

2. TYPE OF FINANCIAL INTERVENTION: CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2.1. Breakdown of resources between strands / actions to be implemented (see sections hereunder)

Total available amount: €2 400 000, to be implemented through a call for proposals.

2.2. Expected results of actions to be supported

The call for proposals intends to identify multi disciplinary pilot initiatives aimed at addressing "drought", defined as long term hydrological imbalance linked to precipitation levels that adversely affect the production systems.

Four priority issues have been identified: conservation of rainwater and surface water, alternative forms of irrigation, water saving/water efficiency measures and crops consuming less water. They encompass the agricultural sector and might also cover the specific problems related to sustainable water management for industry, in large urban areas and/or in coastal zones.

Following the results of the study, the following priority regions have been identified as having the potential to pilot integrated projects:

- Pinios River Basin (Greece)
- Cyprus (for the part of the territory where the Community acquis applies, in accordance with Article 10 of the Accession Treaty)
- Guadiana River Basin (Spain and Portugal)
- Mures river basin (Romania).

The Commission intends to focus the financing on around 3-5 pilot initiatives with a significant impact.

The pilot initiatives will take into account and, if possible, will develop synergy with on-going and current work and results from other relevant projects currently funded under the Research Framework Programmes, such as "Sustainable use of irrigation water in the Mediterranean Region" (SIRRIMEDS), "Sustainable water use securing food production in dry areas of Mediterranean Region" (WUP-MED), "An exercise to assess research needs and policy choices in the areas of drought" (XEROCHORE), "Prevention and restoration actions to combat desertification. An integrated assessment" (PRACTICE), "Land ecosystem degradation and desertification: Assessing the fit of responses" (LEDDRA) and "Understanding and combating desertification to mitigate its impact on ecosystem services" (UNDESERT).

2.3. Main eligibility, selection and award criteria:

Eligibility criteria for the applicants and their proposals	Applicants and their partners could be public and private bodies, NGOs, universities, research institutes. Applicants must be registered in an EU Member State. Projects may associate authorities, private bodies or non-
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	<p>governmental organisations of candidate countries, western Balkan and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries, where this would serve the objectives of the actions concerned.</p> <p>Projects shall concern countries "affected by desertification" under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)⁴.</p>
Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Financial capacity: stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain his activity throughout the period during which the proposal is being carried out and to participate in its funding. – Operational capacity of the applicant and partners: professional competencies of the staff and previous experience in terms of projects undertaken.
Award criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identification and understanding of the specific needs the proposal is intended to solve – Relevance of the proposal for the sectoral/geographical priorities identified – Feasibility of the project in terms of coherence of the actions with the expected results, resources and timetable – Project organisation and involvement of the different stakeholders and/or target groups – Use of proven technology with high potential for water savings – Relevance of the expected results and potential impact in terms of stimulation of best-practice, innovation, demonstration – Budget: consistency of the expenditures with the foreseen activities and costs/effectiveness

2.4. Implementation:

Finance rate :	Max 75 % co-financing of the eligible costs
Timing of call for proposals :	
- global commitment - funds 2009	December 2009

⁴ Namely 6 Northern Mediterranean countries and 6 Central and Eastern European countries: Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

- global commitment - funds 2010	January 2010
- publication date	January/February 2010
- closing date	March/April 2010
- award decision	May/June 2010
- finalisation of the grant agreements	August/September 2010