1. **IDENTIFICATION**

| Title/Number | Support to ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking, related organised crime and drug abuse in West Africa  
| CRIS No. FED/2013/022-263 |
| Total cost | Total estimated cost: EUR 17 345 000  
| | Total amount of EDF contribution : EUR 16 500 000  
| | ECOWAS contribution EUR 845 000 (parallel co-financing) |
| Aid method/Method of implementation | Project approach  
| | 1) Direct centralised management: grant contract (direct award) to an international organisation (Economic Community of West African States - ECOWAS) and service contracts.  
| | 2) Joint management: contribution agreement with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). |
| DAC-code | 16063  
| Sector |  
| Narcotics control |
The overall problem addressed by this project is the increase of drug abuse, drug trafficking and related organised crime in West Africa. The specific problems that this project is addressing are the limited regional capacity to coordinate, advocate and harmonise national approaches on drug demand and supply, and the need to support ECOWAS Commission and Member States in implementing selected elements of the Regional Action Plan.

2.2. Lessons learnt

Many countries and organisations are providing assistance on drug control in West Africa but the current lack of donor coordination may lead to overlapping. In some cases this lack of coordination can affect the credibility of the assistance which in turn may delay necessary reforms. Building on the positive political steps and operational actions already taking place at the national and regional levels, the implementation of the Regional Action Plan now needs to be strengthened. There is a need to strengthen the profile/capacity of the ECOWAS Drug Unit in terms of coordination with all relevant units and departments, and advocacy on drug issues. Another lesson learnt from the past is that the lack of reliable and comparable data on drugs in West Africa is hindering the development of evidence-based drug policies and programmes in the region.

The challenges posed by drug trafficking and drug abuse require the strengthening of national capabilities (law enforcement, border control and health) together with measures at the regional level (coordination, harmonisation of strategies and operational cooperation). Experience in other regions shows that often national states are reluctant to participate in regional programmes in sensitive issues such as illicit traffic. Successful regional cooperation needs to develop gradually around consensual issues and needs to be able to rapidly show concrete results in order to keep momentum.

There is a lack of regional capacity to identify/disseminate best practices on drug demand reduction at regional level. The legal framework is mainly repressive and not conducive to adopting drug use as a health, economic and security issue. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including national/regional networks, are often not coordinated, nor supported. The coverage, relevance and impact of their activities are not properly measured.

The transposition of international conventions into national legislation is delayed and the sub-regional and regional cooperation and coordination between justice, law enforcement and financial investigation and analysis bodies against transnational organised crime is still weak. Finally, there is also need to reinforce forensic science capabilities to provide objective evidence in support to the investigation of transnational organised crime cases.

2.3. Complementary actions

Under the Instrument for Stability, the EU is funding a project “Supporting the fight against organised crime on the cocaine route” which aims to strengthen the anti-drugs capacities at selected airports in West Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, and at selected seaports in West Africa. This trans-regional programme is directly complementary to this project. In addition, the EU is funding under the 10th EDF a project entitled "Response to Drugs and Related Organized Crime in Nigeria". There are also a number of projects and activities in West Africa that are being implemented by EU Members States. The present project could support the above mentioned initiatives by providing coordination and fostering complementarities.

INTERPOL is implementing “OASIS” (Operational Assistance, Services and Infrastructure Support) and “White Flow”. The project could complement these initiatives by providing support to national anti-drug and crime authorities and by facilitating coordination. Under the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Programme for West Africa, “National Integrated Programmes (NIPs)” are being developed or implemented in several countries in West Africa. UNODC is also promoting the “West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI)”. With regard to drug demand reduction and HIV/AIDS prevention, UNODC is implementing several regional initiatives in West Africa.

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3 Especially France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and the UK.

4 Funded by several EU Member States, other EU funding instruments, the USA and Canada.
Where institutional capacity is concerned, the EU is providing support to ECOWAS to improve the management of the regional integration process by reinforcing its capacity. In addition, a pool fund was set up by some ECOWAS Development Partners with the aim of harmonizing donor’s assistance in the support to ECOWAS Institutional Capacity-building Action Plan. Finally, German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)) has been cooperating with the ECOWAS Commission since 2006 with a project on strengthening the ECOWAS institutional capacity.

This project does not target the issue of anti-money laundering, as this aspect is addressed through the project "Strengthening anti-money laundering capacities in West Africa" supporting implementation by GIABA and its Member States of Anti-Money laundering regimes (under 10th EDF RIP) and the project "Anti-money laundering activities in West Africa" starting in January 2013 under the Instrument for Stability.

Under the 10th EDF RIP, the ECOWAS Commission receives other contributions (through grant agreements or indirectly through contribution agreements with IOs and delegation agreements with bodies from EU Member States) which aim at reinforcing its institutional capacities in various sectors for a total amount of EUR 29 267 904.

2.4. Donor coordination

On the specific support to ECOWAS Commission’s anti-drugs activities, the support provided by the project will be coordinated with other donors both within the framework of the ECOWAS Institutional Capacity-building Plan and the ECOWAS Development Partners Thematic Capacity-Building Group, the existing ECOWAS–Partners Group in the areas of peace and security, the EU-ECOWAS Working Group, the EU Head of Delegation in Nigeria for specific EU coordination, and the Mini Dublin Groups or Dublin Group.

On the issue of wider support to national and regional activities, the coordination of anti-drug and crime initiatives in West Africa is important as there are risks of overlapping at various levels. Many ongoing projects (often funded by EU Member States) would gain from enhanced coordination. The issue of improved regional coordination (and related support) is central to this project, and will be improved through the setting up of a Project Steering and Coordination Committee (PSCC) and specific measures on law enforcement coordination and cooperation.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The overall objective is to contribute to a reduction of drug abuse, illicit drug trafficking and related organised crime in West Africa.

The specific objectives are as follows:

i) Gradually establish a sustained regional capacity within ECOWAS Commission responsible for overall coordination and monitoring of regional initiatives undertaken in the area of illicit drug trafficking, drug abuse and related organized crime problems in line with the ECOWAS Regional Operational Plan;

ii) Empower ECOWAS Member States to implement selected national components of ECOWAS Regional Action Plan to contribute to an effective coordinated regional response to drugs abuse and trafficking and related organised crime problems.

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5 Canada, France and the UK.
6 Intergovernmental Action Group Against Money-Laundering in West Africa
7 For example: “Law enforcement and intelligence cooperation against cocaine trafficking from Latin America to West Africa”, “Maritime Analysis and operation centre – Narcotics”; “Fight against trafficking along the cocaine route”; “Law enforcement Support to the Mano River Union”; “Strengthening capacity of police structures in Africa”; “West Africa Coast Initiative”; “Regional Security Training Centre”. At national level there are many law enforcement projects implemented in all countries of West Africa.
3.2. Expected results and main activities

Result 1: Improved ECOWAS Drug Unit advocacy, monitoring and coordination capacity

Main activities to achieve result 1:

1.1 Capacity support/building for ECOWAS Drug Unit

1.1.1. By supporting the recruitment of relevant ECOWAS professional staff to be assigned to the Drug Unit with a view to enhancing its capacity, expertise and networks.

1.1.2. By supporting the ECOWAS Drug Unit and strengthen its management capacity and substantive drugs and crime knowledge, through training/coaching, operational support and technical/policy advice.

1.1.3. By providing limited but critical office equipment to the ECOWAS Drug Unit.

1.2 Setting up an effective policy advocacy scheme on the Political Declaration and the Regional Action Plan

1.2.1. Policy/technical advice to the inter-ministerial drug control committees (IMDCC) or equivalent, and advocacy to ratify/transpose UN/ECOWAS conventions.

1.2.2. Technical advice, coaching and support to networks to IMDCCs (or equivalents) to strengthen their cooperation with National AIDS Councils and other relevant institutions.

1.2.3. To support the organisation of annual meetings of Committees’ Focal Points and a bi-annual Ministerial Conference on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan.

1.2.4. Advice and coaching to organise public awareness events/campaigns on anti-drugs and related crime issues with a regional added value. An impact assessment should be conducted after each of these visibility events.

1.2.5. Advice and expert delivery to disseminate good practices on drug and crime policies identified by other components of the project. Dissemination should be cost-efficient.

1.2.6. Advice/training/coaching and support the IMDCC (or equivalents) staff and provision of basic communication equipment/promotional material to support awareness-raising activities.

1.2.7. Advice and analytical work to collect good practices on drug and crime policies worldwide.

1.3 Setting up a Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism of the Regional Action Plan.

1.3.1. Technical advice and assistance in the design and establishment of the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) in line with the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan.

1.3.2. Support the set up, implementation and deployment of a Monitoring Mission Team (MMT) to monitor the process, if need be. This should be cost efficient (e.g. combined with other meetings).

1.3.3. To support the organisation and participation in relevant coordination meetings of ECOWAS Member States’ bodies, where instructionally relevant or as part of capacity-building and sustainability actions.

Result 2: Harmonised information on drug abuse epidemiology and data collection are available

Main activities to achieve result 2:

2.1 Advice/expert delivery to identify drug data collection focal points, to ensure their coordination and contribution to ECOWAS quarterly/annual reports on drugs and their participation in major events/meetings related to drug abuse research, policy and strategic planning.

2.2 Policy advice and analytical work to determine availability of studies in drug abuse research, and conduct drug abuse and epidemiologic surveys in selected ECOWAS countries.

2.3 Expert delivery to conduct national and regional training on data collection, size estimations and drug use patterns based on previous assessments.
2.4 Policy/expert advice and coaching to set up epidemiological research network at national and regional levels that will network/twin national/regional epidemiology and drug data collection experts and foster cooperation and exchange of expertise/good practices.
2.5 Advice and coaching in order to set up and manage a research fund on epidemiologic and drug abuse data (including HIV/AIDS within drug users groups).
2.6 Expert delivery to develop standardized forms/on-line data entry systems on drug abuse indicators, and to collect/centralise/analyse data on drugs, and elaborate annual regional drug reports.
2.7 Technical advice and expert delivery to support the collaboration and the exchange of information between relevant services (notably: health forensics, police) with a view to setting up of integrated drug information systems at national level that will support the regional level.

Result 3: Good practices on drug prevention and treatment are identified and disseminated

Main activities to achieve result 3:

3.1 The project will select pilot initiatives having a potential for replication within the region.
3.2 Technical advice to assess the prevention and treatment situation in the region. An assessment of the national drug prevention/treatment strategies, policies and capacity in West Africa will be conducted in close coordination with the West African Health Organisation (WAHO).
3.3 Expert advice, technical implementation and direct support to innovative/promising projects: identify and finance prevention and treatment initiatives in West African countries.
3.4 Technical advice, mentoring and support to networks between West African, African and European treatment and prevention authorities: regional training to reinforce links among drug prevention and drug treatment experts of the regions concerned will be organised. Direct support to visits from African and EU experts to selected treatment/prevention centres in West Africa to reinforce a network of prevention and/or treatment centres.
3.5 Expert/policy advice to support ECOWAS advocacy efforts for the creation of drug dependence treatment protocols and their integration into University curricula.
3.6 Direct support to national/regional networks through capacity building/training workshops, CSO grants/funding, the inventory of competent regional NGOs, advocacy, and dissemination of best practices/monitoring and evaluation tools.
3.7 Capacity development through training and coaching to build the capacity of health professionals, peer educators and civil society organisations on harm reduction approaches, in close collaboration with ECOWAS Department(s) in charge of HIV/AIDS;
3.8 Expert advice and direct support to disseminate best practices at regional level on prevention and treatment, including HIV/AIDS prevention for vulnerable groups in selected West African countries.

Result 4: Improved law enforcement for an effective combat against transnational organised crime related to drugs and improved sub-regional, regional and international cooperation.

Main activities to achieve result 4:

4.1. Activities to strengthen law enforcement cooperation capacity to combat transnational organized crime:

4.1.1. To compile a regional directory of law enforcement agencies with a special focus on identifying and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis; by collecting and analysing existing assessments of national law enforcement structures and filling knowledge gaps where necessary.
4.1.2. Expert advice and direct support to prepare and provide country-specific assistance to law enforcement agencies (targeted training and specialised equipment) focusing on intelligence, investigation capacities and prosecution.
4.1.3. Capacity development to enhance the quality of training of law enforcement through the establishment of Computer-Based Training (CBT) centres in selected ECOWAS countries.
4.1.4. Expert advice and support to networks to foster the exchange of information at the regional and international level.

4.1.5. Coaching and support to networks in particular using expertise of WAPCCO and INTERPOL to promote and support joint investigations and the set up of a reserve fund to finance such ad-hoc activities where necessary.

4.1.6. Expert advice to develop a mechanism for planning, organising and conducting joint operations in specific areas of transnational organised crime.

4.2. Activities to harmonize national legal frameworks

4.2.1. Expert advice to assess national legal frameworks, identifying gaps and providing assistance to update them with a view to achieving a common minimum standard.

4.2.2. Support to ECOWAS to harmonize its legal instruments into a single and up to date regional protocol on drug control and prevention of organized crime.

4.2.3. Coaching, support to networks and direct support to organise regional workshops for practitioners, national and regional training for judges, prosecutors and prison services.

4.2.4. Conduct a feasibility study of establishing a regional mechanism for effective prosecution of high profile drug traffickers.

4.3. Activities to set-up a network of forensic services providers

4.3.1. Conduct an assessment of the forensic capacities/needs of priority countries in West Africa.

4.3.2. Expert advice to identify the core infrastructure needs for a regional network of forensic service providers and facilitate regional harmonised approaches building on existing ECOWAS and other regional mechanisms in place.

4.3.3. Direct support to organise national and/or regional training courses in priority forensic disciplines: forensic awareness, crime scene investigation, drug and precursor analysis, document examination and computer forensics.

4.3.4. Provision of basic forensic equipment on the basis of an independent assessment, commensurate with identified national and regional needs and related training courses.

4.3.5. Expert advice to assist in developing basic protocols for evidence handling, integrity of evidence, chain of custody, etc. and advice on practices and procedural issues to facilitate the full use of forensic science approaches in criminal investigations.

4.3.6. Support to networks to encourage laboratories to participate in proficiency tests or collaborative exercises schemes, and to provide drugs and precursors reference samples, analytical methods manuals, and technical guidelines.

4.3.7. Technical advice and direct support to foster collaboration of forensic service providers in the region and the ECOWAS Drug Unit with other forensic networks in Europe (e.g. ENFSI) and individual European forensic laboratories for twinning and technical assistance activities.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

Risks: The main risk relates to the complex heterogeneity of the West African countries with different sets of development challenges and levels of institutional capacity to implement some of the components of the project. To this should be added the present technical capacity of the ECOWAS Commission to ensure the sustainability, ownership and coordination of the entire project as well as the potential breakdown of the relation between ECOWAS and UNODC. A Project Steering and Coordination Committee will be put in place and specific capacity building activities (see activities under result 1) will be implemented to reduce those risks.

Assumptions: It is assumed that all ECOWAS Member States will fulfil their commitment to enhance regional coordination, cooperation and integration as foreseen in the Political Declaration in the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crimes in West Africa i.e. they provide/continue to commit the necessary capacity and resources to meet the expected results.

3.4. Cross-cutting Issues

The proposed project embodies aspects of good governance. This project reflects the EU balanced approach on drugs described in the “EU Drugs Action Plan for 2013-2016”. This aspect is important
as it allows the structure of the project proposed. The expected results on good practices on drug prevention/treatment will include HIV/AIDS prevention issues. The project will also address the issue of drug trafficking from the perspective of conflict prevention in a number of fragile West African countries. Human rights aspects will also be promoted by the project, taking duly into account the rights and principles enshrined in the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The project also endeavours to respect the principle of subsidiarity of regional actions by avoiding any actions that are better addressed by ECOWAS Member States alone.

3.5. Stakeholders

The main beneficiary of the project is the ECOWAS Commission and ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania. The ECOWAS Commission and all relevant stakeholders have shown support and commitment to the project. The Member States of ECOWAS will benefit from this project as most of the interventions proposed will be of direct benefit to their drug and crime authorities. ECOWAS Member States will also benefit indirectly from the project since the strengthening of the coordination; monitoring and advocacy capacity of ECOWAS Drug Unit will allow ECOWAS Member States to design more effective drug and crime policies.

The West African Health Organisation (WAHO) is a specialised agency of ECOWAS. It has a number of mandates/initiatives relevant to this project: a) Coordination and harmonization of policies, standards and legislations; b) Health information and development of Health Management Information Systems for disease prevention/control in the ECOWAS sub-region; c) Development of research; and d) Promotion and dissemination of best practices.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) can play an important role in drug prevention, treatment and care, and research activities in the region. The project aims to involve individual or national/regional platforms and networks of NGOs to implement project activities.

Other stakeholders such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), World Customs Organization (WCO) may be called to take an active role in activities under the project based on their expertise and resources.

The final beneficiaries of the project include the population in the West Africa region, who will benefit directly and indirectly from the project.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Method of implementation

A Financing Agreement will be signed with ECOWAS referred to in Article 17 of Annex IV to the Cotonou Agreement.

The method of implementation is as follows:

**Direct centralised management** will be used for the implementation of all the activities under Result 1 through the direct award of a grant contract to the Economic Community of West African States as well as for the overall project visibility activities and evaluation/audit through services contracts. The reasons for this arrangement are: i) to better control and increase the visibility of EU funding and ii) to strengthen the measurement of overall project performance.

**Joint management** through the signature of a contribution agreement based on the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement - FAFA with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in accordance with Article 29 of the Regulation (EC) No. 215/2008 on the financial regulation applicable to the 10th European Development Fund. UNODC complies with the criteria provided for in the applicable Financial Regulation. UNODC has been selected based on its
international mandate, technical expertise and specific experience in West Africa. UNODC complies with the criteria provided for in the applicable Financial Regulation.

This approach will facilitate implementation in a critical area for the region's governance. UNODC will support ECOWAS with technical expertise. UNODC and the ECOWAS Drug Unit will work together, as well as with other ECOWAS Departments, such as Legal Affairs Department of the Office of the President, the Office of the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Education, Culture, Science & Technology Department; Research and Statistics Directorate to ensure the strengthening of ECOWAS capacity.

This contribution agreement will cover the implementation of activities under Results 2, 3 and 4.

4.2. **Procurement and grant award procedures**

Activities implemented through direct centralised management:

1) Contracts

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the implementation of external operations, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

Participation in the award of contracts for the present action shall be open to all natural and legal persons covered by the Financial Regulation applicable to the 10th European Development Fund. Further extensions of this participation to other natural or legal persons by the concerned authorising officer shall be subject to the conditions provided for in article 20 of Annex IV of the Cotonou Agreement.

2) Specific rules for grants

The essential selection criteria are financial and operational capacity of the applicant. The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call, design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action. They are established in accordance with the principles set out in Title VII “Grants of the Financial Regulation applicable to the 10th EDF.

When derogations to these principles are applied, they shall be justified.

Financing in full (derogation to the principle of co-financing): the maximum possible rate of co-financing for grants should not exceed 80%. Up to full financing may only be applied in the cases provided for in Article 109 of the Council Regulation on the Financial Regulation applicable to the 10th European Development Fund.

In this case, a grant without a call for proposals is justified because ECOWAS Commission is in a legal and factual monopoly situation as the only organisation mandated to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the *Regional Action Plan to address the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, organised crime and drug abuse in West Africa*.

A financing in full is necessary for carrying out the programme. The grant will support the organisation to implement its mandate, in particular the ECOWAS Drug Unit. The regional organisation has limited resources. Nevertheless it took the commitment to pay the staff costs of the Drug Unit for the last two years of implementation of the project.
Activities implemented through joint management:

All contracts implementing the action are awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the relevant International Organisation (UNODC).

Implementation of specific activities by stakeholders (WAHO, INTERPOL, WCO, ECOWAS MS and CSOs and/or others) will be sub-contracted under the contribution agreement with UNODC.

4.3. Budget and calendar

The total project cost is estimated at EUR 17 345 000 of which EUR 16 500 000 shall be financed from the Regional Indicative Programme 10th EDF in the framework of a revised ACP-EU Partnership Agreement and EUR 845 000 by ECOWAS Commission. The budget available to implement the action is detailed in the Appendix.

ECOWAS financial contribution will be done through a parallel co-financing. ECOWAS financial contribution mentioned in the above budget will consist in paying the staff costs of the ECOWAS Drugs Unit for the last two years implementation of the project.

The execution period of the Financing Agreement will be 84 months. This comprises 2 phases under the conditions provided for in article 4.1 of the General Conditions: Operational implementation phase (60 months) and a closure phase (24 months) that starts from the expiry date of the operational implementation phase. The project foresees an inception phase (6 months) to do preparatory work (baseline studies/assessments, work plans, recruitment and refinement of logical framework) before the implementation of the project activities.

4.4. Performance monitoring

Technical and financial monitoring will be a continuous process as part of both UNODC and ECOWAS responsibilities. To this aim, UNODC and ECOWAS shall establish a permanent monitoring system to the project which will be used to elaborate the progress reports including progress towards target values for key indicators.

A logical framework will serve as the basis for measuring progress and final assessments. The performance indicators measuring the implementation of the activities of the project and the performance of the main stakeholders to fulfil their mandates will be detailed at the contract level. These indicators will be based on available statistics, supplemented by data generated through the efforts of the project. Both UNODC and ECOWAS will conduct baseline studies during project inception phase (6 months) to refine and adjust the indicative logical framework. Indicators will also be adjusted throughout project duration.

The European Commission may carry out Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) via independent consultants, starting from the sixth month of project activities, which will be finalised at the latest 6 months before the end of the operational implementation phase.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

A mid-term evaluation (MTE) and a final evaluation will be carried out by the Commission. For the part of the project implemented through joint management, audit and internal control of management operations will be conducted by UNODC in line with its internal and external auditing procedures laid down in their Financial Regulations, Rules and directives. Indicators referred to above for the measurement of the progress will also be used for the final evaluation.
Audit and expenditures verification will be carried out when relevant.

4.6. Communication and visibility

The ECOWAS Commission and the UNODC will ensure the visibility of the EU in all actions undertaken within the framework of the project. In general, all communication and information must follow the rules laid down and published by the Commission for the visibility of external operations\(^8\) as well as the visibility provisions in the FAFA\(^9\).

Appendix: Indicative budget

\(^8\) \url{http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/documents/communication_and_visibility_manual_en.pdf}

Appendix: Indicative Budget

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* The European Union's contribution to the "Contingencies" heading may be used only with prior agreement of the Commission.