



Brussels, 17.2.2016
C(2016) 868 final

ANNEX 1

ANNEX

to the

COMMISSION DECISION

**concerning the adoption of the annual work programme and the financing of the
Hercule III Programme in 2016**

Annual work programme for the implementation of the Hercule III Programme in 2016

Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Objectives of the Programme	2
3.	Eligible actions for funding under the Programme	2
3.1.	Technical Assistance	3
3.2.	Training	3
3.3.	Other actions	4
4.	Beneficiaries of the Programme	4
5.	Methods for the implementation of the Programme	4
5.1.	Grants: co-financing rate, minimum thresholds, conditions for the submission of applications and evaluation procedure	5
5.2.	Procurement: conditions applying and evaluation procedure	6
5.3.	Administrative arrangements	6
6.	Technical Assistance	6
6.1.	Specific actions	6
6.2.	Expected results from the specific Technical Assistance actions	8
6.3.	Criteria for co-financing grants up to 90%: Technical assistance.....	9
6.4.	Indicative available budget and planning for technical assistance.....	9
7.	Training	10
7.1.	Conferences, seminars and digital forensic training	10
7.1.1	Specific actions for ‘Conferences, seminars and digital forensic training’	10
7.1.2	Expected results from ‘Conferences, seminars and digital forensic training’	11
7.2.	Legal training and studies	12
7.2.1	Specific actions for ‘Legal training and studies’	12
7.2.2.	Expected results from ‘Legal training and studies’	12
7.2.3.	Criteria for co-financing grants up to 90%: Legal training and studies.....	13
7.2.4	Indicative available budget and planning ‘Legal training and studies’	13
8.	Summary table	14

1. INTRODUCTION¹

This is the third annual work programme (AWP) for the implementation of the 2014-2020 Hercule III Programme established by Regulation (EU) No 250/2014². The Programme aims to promote activities to protect the financial interests of the European Union by providing financial support for actions carried out by the beneficiaries referred to in Article 6 of the Regulation. The AWP is required under Article 11 of the Regulation.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The general objective of the Hercule III Programme is ‘to protect the financial interests of the Union, thus enhancing the competitiveness of the Union’s economy and ensuring the protection of taxpayers’ money’³. More specifically, the objective is ‘to prevent and combat fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities affecting the financial interests of the Union’⁴. The operational objectives⁵ are to:

- (a) to improve the prevention and investigation of fraud and other illegal activities by enhancing transnational and multi-disciplinary cooperation;*
- (b) to increase the protection of the financial interests of the Union against fraud, facilitating the exchange of information, experiences and best practices, including staff exchanges;*
- (c) to strengthen the fight against fraud and other illegal activities by providing technical and operational support to national investigation, and in particular customs and law enforcement, authorities;*
- (d) to limit the currently known exposure of the financial interests of the Union to fraud, corruption and other illegal activities with a view to reducing the development of an illegal economy in key risk areas such as organised fraud, including cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting;*
- (e) to enhance the degree of development of the specific legal and judicial protection of the financial interests of the Union against fraud by promoting comparative law analysis.*

3. ELIGIBLE ACTIONS FOR FUNDING UNDER THE PROGRAMME

The Programme will provide appropriate financial support for three types of action⁶:

- 1. technical assistance (section 3.1);
- 2. training (section 3.2); and
- 3. other action (section 3.3).

3.1. Technical assistance

The Programme will support technical assistance⁷ to Member States’ competent authorities⁸ by means of one or more of the following:

¹ The budget allocations for the actions set out in this work programme are provisional and subject to adoption of the 2016 general budget.

² Regulation (EU) No 250/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 84, 20.3.2014, p. 6).

³ Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014 (general objective).

⁴ Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014 (specific objective).

⁵ Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014 (operational objectives).

⁶ Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014 (eligible actions).

⁷ Article 8(a)(i)–(vii) of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014.

- (i) *providing specific knowledge, specialised and technically advanced equipment and effective information technology (IT) tools facilitating transnational cooperation and cooperation with the Commission;*
- (ii) *ensuring the necessary support and facilitating investigations, in particular the setting up of joint investigation teams and cross-border operations;*
- (iii) *supporting Member States' capacity to store and destroy seized cigarettes, as well as independent analytical services for the analysis of seized cigarettes;*
- (iv) *enhancing staff exchanges for specific projects, in particular in the field of the fight against cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting;*
- (v) *providing technical and operational support for the law enforcement authorities of the Member States in their fight against illegal cross-border activities and fraud affecting the financial interests of the Union, including in particular support for customs authorities;*
- (vi) *building information technology capacity throughout participating countries by developing and providing specific databases and IT tools facilitating data access and analysis;*
- (vii) *increasing data exchange, developing and providing IT tools for investigations, and monitoring intelligence work.*

The conditions for the funding of technical assistance in 2016 are specified in section 6.

3.2. Training

This area of action will involve organising targeted specialised training⁹, risk analysis workshops and, where appropriate, conferences, to:

- (i) *further fostering better understanding of Union and national mechanisms;*
- (ii) *exchanging experience and best practices between the relevant authorities in the participating countries, including specialised law enforcement services, as well as representatives of international organisations;*
- (iii) *coordinating the activities of participating countries, and representatives of international organisations;*
- (iv) *disseminating knowledge, particularly on better identification of risk for investigative purposes;*
- (v) *developing high-profile research activities, including studies;*
- (vi) *improving cooperation between practitioners and academics;*
- (vii) *further raising the awareness of the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession for the protection of the financial interests of the Union.*

The conditions for the funding of training in 2016 are specified in section 7.

3.3. Other actions¹⁰

The Regulation allows for support to be given to any other action (not covered in sections 3.1 and 3.2) that is necessary for attaining the general, specific and operational objectives set out

⁸ The competent authorities are defined in Article 6 of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014.

⁹ Article 8(b)(i)–(vii) of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014.

¹⁰ Article 8(c) of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014.

in section 2. The 2016 AWP does not specifically envisage any such action, but a modest budget is set aside in case the need arises. If not used, these appropriations will be reallocated to cover technical assistance and/or training needs.

4. BENEFICIARIES

The bodies eligible to receive grants under the Programme are¹¹:

- A. national or regional administrations in a participating country¹² which promote the strengthening of action at Union level to protect the Union's financial interests (eligible for technical assistance, training and other actions); and
- B. research and educational institutes and non-profit-making entities that have been established and operating in a participating country for at least a year and promote the strengthening of action at Union level to protect the Union's financial interests (eligible for training and other actions).

5. IMPLEMENTATION

The Programme will be implemented by means of:

- 1. grants, following calls for proposals¹³ (section 5.1);
- 2. public procurement contracts following calls for tender¹⁴ (section 5.2); and
- 3. administrative arrangements to be concluded with the Joint Research Centre (JRC; section 6.1) and other eligible and competent partners (section 7.1.1).

The Commission will award grants directly to the beneficiaries listed in section 4 (A and B). For training actions and access to databases, it will procure services and/or products from market suppliers for the beneficiaries listed in section 4 (A).

The Programme also provides for the reimbursement of costs incurred by representatives from certain non-EU countries participating in training actions such as conferences or seminars¹⁵.

5.1. Grants

In 2016, the Commission (OLAF) will organise calls for proposals for technical assistance and training actions to enable the eligible bodies listed in section 4 to submit applications for actions that contribute to the achievement of the Programme's objectives. The eligible actions are described in sections 6.1 (technical assistance), 7.1.1 (conferences, seminars and digital forensic training) and 7.2.1 (legal training). Technical assistance will not be granted for the purchase of equipment only¹⁶.

¹¹ Article 6 of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014 (bodies eligible for funding).

¹² Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014.

¹³ According to the procedures laid down in Title VI (Grants) of the Financial Regulation and the Rules of Application.

¹⁴ According to the procedures laid down in Title V (Procurement) of the Financial Regulation.

¹⁵ The non-EU countries are countries of south-eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, certain countries with which the Union has concluded an agreement for mutual assistance in fraud-related matters (see http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/about-us/legal-framework/customs_matters/index_en.htm). Costs incurred by representatives of international and other relevant organisations may also be reimbursed where their attendance is considered useful for achieving the objectives of the Programme.

¹⁶ See Article 10(3) of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014: '[t]he purchase of equipment shall not be the sole component of the grant agreement'.

The co-financing rate for grants will not exceed 80 % of eligible costs. It may be increased to up to 90 % in exceptional and duly justified cases, as defined in sections 6.3 and 7.2.3¹⁷.

The budget for an action for which a grant is requested must not be lower than a threshold indicated in the specifications accompanying the call for proposals. The indicative thresholds are EUR 100 000 for technical assistance actions (section 6.1), EUR 50 000 for conferences, seminars and digital forensic training actions (section 7.1.1) and EUR 40 000 for legal training actions (section 7.2.1).

The Commission will examine each application on the basis of:

- (a) *eligibility criteria*: verification of the applicant's eligibility:
 - for technical assistance (section 6.1), applications must be submitted by national or regional administrations, as defined in section 4 (A); and
 - for training (sections 7.1.1 and 7.2.1), applications must be submitted by national or regional administrations, research and educational institutes and other non-profit making entities, as defined in section 4 (A and B);
- (b) *exclusion criteria*: verification of applicants' compliance with Articles 106(1), 107 and 109 of the Financial Regulation;
- (c) *selection criteria*: in accordance with Article 132 of the Financial Regulation and Article 202 of the Rules of Application¹⁸, evaluation of:
 - applicants' *operational* (technical, management) *resources* and the *professional skills and qualifications* needed to implement the proposed action successfully; a strong track record of competence and experience in the field, in particular in the type of action proposed; and
 - applicants' *financial capacity* to perform the tasks involved (stable and sufficient funding to maintain activity for the duration of the project), as shown by annual (balance and profit-and-loss) accounts for the last financial year for which accounts have been closed and other financial information provided in the application form. (This requirement does not apply to national and regional administrations);
- (d) *award criteria*: once applications have been examined on the basis of the above criteria, the proposed action will be assessed on the basis of:
 - its added value for the protection of the Union's financial interests;
 - conformity with the Programme's operational objectives (the relevance of the issues addressed and complementarity with other Union activities);
 - quality: originality, the accuracy and coherence of the proposed methodology, the organisation of the work, the allocation of resources, the consistency and feasibility of planning and monitoring arrangements, and the appropriateness of the activities; and
 - value for money.

To ensure that low-quality applications are rejected, the technical specifications accompanying each call for proposals will indicate weightings for the award criteria and minimum scores required for each criterion and overall.

¹⁷ There will be no 90 % funding for training and conference actions.

¹⁸ See footnote 13.

5.2. Procurement

The Commission will conclude specific contracts under existing framework contracts for technical assistance and training actions.

5.3. Administrative arrangements

Administrative arrangements will be made with the JRC and other eligible and competent partners for the further development and implementation of the specialised statistics and IT tools needed for risk analyses applicable to customs fraud (analysis of trade flows and container traffic) and analysis of samples from tobacco and cigarettes seizures (section 6.1, action 6), and for the organisation of digital forensic training sessions (section 7.1.1).

6. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE¹⁹

6.1. Specific actions

The Programme will support the following specific technical assistance actions in 2016:

1. the purchase and maintenance of investigation tools and methods used by beneficiaries in the fight against irregularities, fraud and corruption detrimental to the Union's financial interests. The purchase of adapted transport equipment is included as well, provided its need for the achievement of the Programme's objectives is clearly demonstrated. This covers Union revenues (traditional own resources) and expenditure, in particular under shared management (structural funds, agriculture) and RTD. Specialised training to enable staff to operate these tools is included and will be encouraged;
2. the purchase and maintenance of devices for inspecting containers, trucks, railway carriages and vehicles at the Union's external borders and within the Union to strengthen beneficiaries' operational and technical capacity to detect smuggled and counterfeited goods imported into the Union with the intention of evading VAT, customs duties and/or excise taxes. This includes the purchase, transport, training, housing and feeding of animals used to detect smuggled and illicit goods on the basis of their scent characteristics;
3. the purchase, maintenance and (cross-border) interconnection of automated systems for the recognition of number-plates (ANPRSs) or container codes for purposes relating to the protection of the Union's financial interests. Requisite specialised training in the operation of such systems is included;
4. beneficiaries' purchases of services²⁰ to store and destroy seized genuine or counterfeited cigarettes and other counterfeited goods detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
5. the purchase by the Commission of technical equipment needed only occasionally by eligible bodies in the Member States to strengthen their operational capacity in their activities to protect Union revenues and expenditures;
6. the acquisition by the Commission of (access to) databases with information on trade flows, cargo manifests, container traffic and company information, as required by beneficiaries for investigations and risk analyses purposes; and

¹⁹ The use of the term 'technical assistance' in the context of this work programme must be clearly distinguished from its use in Article 186 RAP.

²⁰ Applications can be made for financial support to have seizures destroyed by an external service provider. This is not meant for purchasing equipment for setting up, for example, an incinerator.

7. further development and implementation of specific statistics and IT tools for data analyses and data-mining, as required to support beneficiaries' fraud risk analyses (AMT5), and services to carry out chemical analyses of samples from tobacco and cigarettes seizures in the Member States (TOBLAB).

The risk profiles produced on the basis of these analyses are particularly important for beneficiaries in their fight against customs fraud, cigarette smuggling and the import of illicit, in particular counterfeited, goods.

In 2016, a new project will be launched to help Member States and the Commission to implement and exploit new data directories²¹, involving support for:

- verifying carriers' compliance with the obligation to report container status messages (CSMs) to national customs authorities (Article 18(a)(4) of Regulation (EC) No 515/97, as amended);
- the automatic detection of customs fraud (false declarations of origin) by developing analytical methods for exploiting the CSM database; and
- advanced visual exploration and analysis to take full advantage of the new directories.

Actions 1 to 4 will be supported with grants awarded following a call for proposals to be launched in the first quarter of 2016 with an indicative available budget of EUR 8 800 000. The call for proposals will cover all four specific actions: there will be no separate ranking per specific action.

The technical equipment under action 5 will be procured by the Commission with an indicative available budget of EUR 50 000.

The databases under action 6 will be purchased by means of specific contracts within framework contracts concluded in 2012 and 2013 or possible new framework contracts concluded by Eurostat for trade and company data. The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in Lisbon will make information on vessel movements available, possibly on the basis of a new administrative arrangement. The overall indicative available budget for this action is EUR 1 250 000.

Action 7 will be implemented on the basis of existing administrative arrangements between the JRC and OLAF for the further development and implementation of the (two-year) AMT and the (one-year) TOBLAB projects. It will include training activities for the use of these tools. A new project will be launched to support Member States' efforts to fulfil their obligations as regards the collection of CSMs. The Commission will coordinate internally to avoid overlap with financial support under other EU programmes²². As regards Container Status messages, DG TAXUD (with responsibility for the area of customs risk analysis and risk-based controls under the Customs Code) and OLAF will work together to ensure an efficient approach is taken to developing the exploitation of CSM under the different applicable processes.

The indicative available budget for these administrative arrangements is EUR 750 000.

²¹ As adopted under Regulation (EC) No 515/97, as amended.

²² e.g. national customs modernisation investment projects co-funded by European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs) and the Neighbourhood Policy Instrument, the EUCARIS network or the ERRU and RESPER systems for ANPRSs.

6.2. Expected results

The expected results from the actions described in section 6.1 are set out below, together with the indicators enabling them and the added value and effective use of the co-financed technical equipment to be measured²³:

➤ actions 1 and 5:

Strengthening and improvement of beneficiaries' operational capacity, as measured, for example, by the number of successful operations carried out with the purchased equipment in support of investigations into activities detrimental to the Union's financial interests, arrests made, convictions, seizures, confiscations, recoveries, prevented losses to the national and Union budgets, and fraud schemes uncovered;

➤ action 2:

Strengthening and improvement of beneficiaries' (in particular, customs authorities') technical capacity to carry out verifications of trucks, containers and vehicles, as measured by the number of verifications and 'hits' following the use of x-ray scanners, and searches carried out with the help of specially trained animals, such as sniffer dogs;

➤ action 3:

Strengthening and improvement of beneficiaries' (e.g. customs, police or tax authorities') investigative capacities to identify trucks and vehicles suspected of involvement in activities detrimental, *inter alia*, to the Union's financial interests, as measured by the number of verifications made with (interconnected) ANPRSs, operating hours and positive identifications ('hits', including arrests and seizures), and results from the exchange of ANPRS information with competent authorities in neighbouring and cross-border regions, other Member States and non-EU countries;

➤ action 4:

Information on the number and value of seizures, and estimates of the losses to national and Union budgets prevented as a result of the use of the equipment purchased or made available;

➤ action 6:

Beneficiaries' use of the databases, expressed, for example, as the number of consultations and/or downloads, and the results of user surveys to assess the databases' user-friendliness and relevance; and

➤ action 7:

Use and improvement of specific statistics and IT tools for analysing databases, as measured by the number of risk analyses made for customs purposes, the number and results of tobacco analyses and user feedback on the tools' user-friendliness and relevance. The results will be broken down by statistics source and IT-tool, inasmuch as possible.

6.3. Criteria for 90 % co-financing: technical assistance

The Hercule III Regulation allows for the maximum co-financing rate to be raised from 80 % to up to 90 % in exceptional and duly justified cases, e.g. where Member States are exposed

²³ Article 4(b) of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014.

to a high risk in relation to the Union's financial interests²⁴. As regards grants for technical assistance, such actions will have to satisfy at least two of the following criteria:

- take place at an external EU border, especially the EU's eastern border;
- take place at the most vulnerable locations (as regards seizures of cigarettes and tobacco reported by Member States to the Commission)²⁵;
- reflect the results of the Eurobarometer survey²⁶ of citizens' attitudes to counterfeited, smuggled cigarettes and 'cheap whites'; and
- reflect the findings of the 2014 annual report on implementation of Article 325 TFEU on combating fraud (e.g. as regards the number of cases of smuggled cigarettes reported and the estimated traditional own resources involved)²⁷, in particular the identification of the Member States that are vulnerable and most exposed to threats in relation to the Union's financial interests.

6.4. Indicative available budget and planning: technical assistance

Publication of the call for proposals for actions 1 to 4 on the Commission's (OLAF) website		March 2016
Deadline for submission of applications		June 2016
Indicative date for informing applicants of the outcome of the examination of applications		October 2016
Indicative budget for all technical assistance actions (1-7)		EUR 10 850 000
Indicative budget per type of action	Call for proposals: grants (actions 1–4)	EUR 8 800 000
	Purchase of equipment (action 5)	EUR 50 000
	Databases under procurement (action 6)	EUR 1 250 000
	IT tools and tobacco analyses (action 7)	EUR 750 000
Maximum rate of co-financing of total eligible costs for grants under actions 1 to 4.		80 % (90 % in exceptional and duly justified cases)
A second call for proposals may be launched if sufficient budget is available.		

²⁴ Article 10(4) of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014.

²⁵ COM(2013) 324 final, 6.6.2013.

²⁶ This survey was carried out in November 2015 with funding from the Programme.

²⁷ *Statistical evaluation of irregularities reported for 2014 own resources, Cohesion Policy, pre-accession and direct expenditure* (SWD(2015)156 final, 31.7.2015), accompanying the Commission's 2014 report to the European Parliament and the Council on the *Protection of the European Union's financial interests — the fight against fraud* (table TOR1), (COM(2015) 386 final, 31.7.2015).

7. TRAINING

The Commission (OLAF) will support actions for the organisation of targeted specialised training and risk-analysis workshops and, where appropriate, conferences aimed at protecting the Union's financial interests.

The training actions are intended to create networks between Member States, candidate countries, non-EU states and international public organisations in order to facilitate the exchange of information, experience and best practices among staff employed by the beneficiaries. This will help to ensure an equivalent level of protection of the Union's financial interests across the Union.

Grants for this type of action cannot exceed 80 % of total eligible costs (90 % in exceptional and duly justified cases²⁸).

The training actions break down into two categories:

1. conferences, seminars and digital forensic training (section 7.1); and
2. legal training and studies (section 7.2).

7.1. Conferences, seminars and digital forensic training

7.1.1 Specific actions

In 2016, the Commission (OLAF) will award grants and contracts for the organisation of training activities aimed at protecting the Union's financial interests.

Grants: one call for proposals will be launched for actions aimed at:

- exchanging experience and best practices among the relevant authorities in the participating countries, including specialised law enforcement services, national audit institutions and representatives of international organisations; and
- disseminating knowledge, particularly on better identification of risk for investigative and auditing purposes.

These aims can be achieved through the organisation of conferences, seminars, colloquia, courses, e-learning and symposia, workshops, hands-on training and staff exchanges, exchanges of best practices (including on fraud risk assessment), etc.

Staff exchanges between national and regional administrations (in particular, in neighbouring Member States) will be encouraged. These will contribute to developing, improving and updating staff competence in the protection of the Union's financial interests.

Indicative available budget and planning: training grants

Publication of the call on the Commission's (OLAF) website	March 2016
Deadline for submission of applications	June 2016
Indicative date for informing the applicants	November 2016

²⁸ See section 7.2.3.

Indicative available budget for conferences under grants	EUR 900 000
Maximum rate of co-financing of total eligible costs	80 %

Procurement: conferences

In 2016, the Commission (OLAF) will organise high-level conferences and *ad hoc* training focused on the protection of the Union's financial interests. For this purpose, it will use the services of a firm specialised in organising events, in particular for approximately 10 events outside Brussels, by concluding specific agreements under an existing framework contract²⁹.

The total indicative available budget for procured conferences is EUR 1 000 000.

Procurement: digital forensic training

Actions in this area are aimed at:

- providing and supporting the organisation of training courses for staff in national and regional administrations, with a view to protecting the Union's financial interests by developing, improving and updating their competence in the area of digital forensics;
- supporting the initiation of a quality assurance process and a certification procedure to enable computer forensic experts to develop, improve and update their competence; and
- supporting the creation and maintenance of a network of digital forensic experts across the Union to promote the exchange of best practices.

For the organisation of digital forensic training, the Commission (OLAF) may:

- conclude an administrative arrangement with an eligible and competent partner; or
- use the services of a company specialised in digital forensic training under an existing framework contract³⁰; or
- use the services of a firm specialised in organising training events under an existing framework contract³¹; or
- where justified, in terms of cost-effectiveness, launch a specific call for tenders for the organisation of digital forensic training sessions. The indicative planning for launching this call in June 2016.

Total indicative available budget: EUR 950 000.

7.1.2 Expected results

The results expected from the actions described in section 7.1.1 are set out below, together with the indicators enabling them to be measured:

- improved investigation abilities of law enforcement officials and auditors involved in the protection of the Union's financial interests through the acquisition of new skills, knowledge and competence;

²⁹ OLAF/2015/D1/057.

³⁰ OLAF/D5/059/2013.

³¹ OLAF/2015/D1/057.

- increased awareness of fraud risk indicators and the Union's anti-fraud policy priorities, as expressed by the number of participants at the events, the origin and background of participants and target audiences, the number of anti-fraud publications distributed to target audiences and the results of surveys to assess participants' overall satisfaction with the events; and
- more widespread knowledge of specialised methodologies, tools and techniques available to protect the Union's financial interests, as expressed by the number and type of training courses (including specialised training sessions), attendance levels, the number of international certifications issued, the exchange of information and best practices and the results of surveys to assess participants' overall satisfaction with the events.

7.2. Legal training and studies

The Commission (OLAF) will award grants and contracts to enhance legal and judicial protection of the Union's financial interests against fraud by promoting comparative law analysis.

7.2.1 Specific actions

Grants: one call for proposals will be organised for actions with the following objectives:

- developing high-profile research, including studies in comparative law, e.g. procedural criminal and administrative law requirements in the Member States and non-EU countries as regards securing digital forensic evidence in administrative and criminal investigations;
- improving cooperation between practitioners and academics (e.g. through conferences, seminars and workshops), including organisation of the annual meeting of the presidents of the Associations for European Criminal Law and for the Protection of EU Financial Interests; and
- raising awareness among the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession as regards protecting the Union's financial interests, including the publication of scientific knowledge.

Total indicative available budget: EUR 500 000.

Procurement: studies

The Commission's Communication on cigarette smuggling³² underlined the importance of reliable data (to the extent that this is possible when dealing with clandestine activities). The Commission intends to procure a specific study in 2016, either under the procurement procedure or under an existing framework contract, on a methodology to measure illicit imports of tobacco from non-EU countries into the EU. Various statistical sources are available, but either (for various reasons) they give an incomplete picture or are not independent. Better data will help Member States and the Commission to refine their policy and investigative agenda. The procedure will be launched in the second quarter of 2016 and it is expected that a contract will be signed towards the end of 2016.

Total indicative available budget: EUR 300 000.

³² COM(2013) 324 final, 6.6.2013.

7.2.2. Expected results

The results expected from the specific actions described in section 7.2.1 are set out below, together with indicators enabling them to be measured:

- development of high-profile research, including comparative law studies, as measured by the number of research activities and comparative law studies co-financed and their quality and originality;
- improved cooperation between practitioners and academics, as demonstrated by the number of co-financed events (conferences, seminars, workshops), the number of participants and the level of participants' satisfaction; and
- greater awareness among the judiciary and other branches of the legal profession as regards the protection of the Union's financial interests, as measured by the number of scientific publications distributed to stakeholders and the type and number of methods of dissemination of relevant scientific knowledge.

7.2.3. Criteria for 80-90 % co-financing: legal training and studies

The Hercule III Regulation allows for the maximum co-financing rate to be raised from 80 % to up to 90 % in exceptional and duly justified cases³³. In the area of legal training and studies, these will be actions undertaken by scientific and/or research organisations specifically to promote studies in European criminal law, to support the creation of networks in this area and geared to protecting the Union's financial interests.

7.2.4 Indicative available budget and planning: legal training grants

Publication of the call for proposals on the Commission's (OLAF) website	March 2016
Deadline for submission of applications	June 2016
Indicative date for informing applicants	October 2016
Indicative available budget	EUR 500 000
Maximum rate of grant co-financing of total eligible costs	80 % (90 % in exceptional and duly justified cases)

³³ Article 10(4) of Regulation (EU) No 250/2014.

8. SUMMARY TABLE

Actions	EU funding	Indicative available budget (EUR)
Technical assistance	Grants: cigarettes and investigation support	8 850 000
	Procurement: databases	1 250 000
	IT tools and tobacco analyses under procurement	750 000
Total (min 70 %)³⁴		10 850 000
Training	Grants: training	900 000
	Procurement: conferences	1 000 000
	Procurement: forensic computing	950 000
	Grants: legal training and studies	500 000
	Procurement study: illicit tobacco trade	300 000
Total (max 25 %)		3 650 000
Other (max 5 %)	P.M.	42 300
Indicative grand total	Grants and procurement	14 542 300

³⁴ The percentages correspond to the indicative allocation of funds annexed to Regulation (EU) No 250/2014 and apply to the entire 2014-2020 period.