COMMISSION DECISION
of 15.9.2017

2017 Annual Action Programme in favour of Antigua and Barbuda to be financed from the 11\textsuperscript{th} European Development Fund
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2017 Annual Action Programme in favour of Antigua and Barbuda to be financed from the 11th European Development Fund

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) No 2015/322 of 2 March 2015 on the implementation of the 11th European Development Fund1, and in particular Article 9(1) thereof,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) No 2015/323 of 2 March 2015 on the financial regulation applicable to the 11th European Development Fund2, and in particular Article 26 thereof,

Whereas:

(1) The Commission has adopted National Indicative Programme for Antigua & Barbuda for the period 2014-20203, points 3.1, 4, 6.1 and 6.2 of which provides for the following priorities: Public Financial Management and Revenue Reform; Measures in favour of civil society; Measures to support or accompany the programming, preparation or implementation of actions; and Support to the National Authorizing Officer.

(2) The objectives pursued by the Annual Action Programme to be financed under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Internal Agreement (‘Internal Agreement’)4 are to assist the Government of Antigua and Barbuda in its efforts to improve fiscal discipline and strategic allocation of resources by strengthening policy-based budgeting and expenditure management, and enhancing the transparency and efficiency of tax administration; and to ensure the efficient and effective utilisation of EU development assistance in support of the implementation of the Government's development strategies and policies.

(3) Action entitled "Public Financial Management and Revenue Reform Programme" has the following objectives: (i) Introduce and institutionalise a multi-year perspective in fiscal planning, expenditure policy and budgeting; (ii) Improve the predictability and controls in budget execution, for both revenue and expenditure. It will be implemented via direct management and through the procurement by international restricted tender.

(4) Action entitled “Technical Cooperation Facility and Support Services to National Authorising Officer (NAO) and Non-State Actors (NSA) Advisory Committee –

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1 OJ L 58, 3.03.2015, p.1
2 OJ L 58, 3.03.2015, p.1
3 C(2014) 3684, 02.09.2014
4 Internal Agreement between the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of the European Union, meeting within the Council, on the financing of European Union aid under the multiannual financial framework for the period 2014 to 2020, in accordance with the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, and on the allocation of financial assistance for the OCTs to which Part Four of the EC Treaty applies, OJ L 210, 6.8.2013;
Antigua and Barbuda” aims to improve the design and implementation of development programmes and projects by line ministries; to improve the formulation, implementation, monitoring and administration of EU programmes by the Office of the National Authorising Officer; and to foster structured civil society participation in the national development agenda and the partnership with the EU. It will be implemented through programme estimates, a directly awarded grant, and procurement.

(5) It is necessary to adopt a financing decision the detailed rules of which are set out in Article 94 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012\(^5\) applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323.

(6) It is necessary to adopt a work programme for grants the detailed rules on which are set out in Article 128(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and in Article 188(1) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 37(1) of Regulation (EU) 2015/323. The work programme is constituted by the Annex 2 (section 4.1.2).

(7) The Commission should entrust budget-implementation tasks under indirect management to the partner country specified in this Decision, subject to the conclusion of a financing agreement. In accordance with Article 60(1)(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 applicable by virtue of Articles 17 and 2(1) of Regulation (EU) No 323/2015, the authorising officer responsible needs to ensure that measures are taken to supervise and support the implementation of the entrusted tasks. A description of these measures and the entrusted tasks are laid down in the Annex 2.

(8) The authorising officer responsible should be able to award grants without a call for proposals only in the exceptional cases set out in Article 190 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 37(1) of Regulation (EU) 2015/323.

(9) It is necessary to allow the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 92 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and Article 111(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 29(1) of Regulation (EU) 2015/323.

(10) Pursuant to Article 94(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323, any substantial change to a financing decision that has already been adopted should follow the same procedure as the initial decision. It is therefore appropriate that the Commission defines the changes to this Decision that are considered non substantial in order to ensure that any such changes can be adopted by the authorising officer responsible.

(11) The measures provided for in this Decision do not fall in the categories of measures for which the prior opinion of the European Development Fund (EDF) Committee set up by Article 8 of the Internal Agreement is required. The EDF Committee shall be informed of this Decision within one month of its adoption.

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HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1
Adoption of the programme

The 2017 Annual Action Programme in favour of Antigua and Barbuda to be financed from the 11th European Development Fund, as set out in the Annexes, is adopted. The programme shall include the following actions:

- Annex 1: Public Financial Management and Revenue Reform Programme;
- Annex 2: Technical Cooperation Facility and Support Services to the National Authorising Officer & Non-State Actors Advisory Committee – Antigua and Barbuda.

Article 2
Financial contribution

The maximum contribution of the European Union for the implementation of the programme referred to in Article 1 is set at EUR 3 000 000 and shall be financed from the 11th European Development Fund.

The financial contribution provided for in the first paragraph may also cover interest due for late payment.

Article 3
Implementation modalities

Budget-implementation tasks under indirect management may be entrusted to the entities identified in the attached Annexes 1 and 2, subject to the conclusion of the relevant agreements.

The elements required by Article 94(2) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 are set out in the Annexes to this Decision.

Grants may be awarded without a call for proposals by the authorising officer responsible in accordance with Article 190 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 37(1) of Regulation (EU) 2015/323.

Article 4
Non-substantial changes

Increases or decreases of up to EUR 10 million not exceeding 20% of the contribution set by the first paragraph of Article 2, or cumulated changes to the allocations of specific actions not exceeding 20% of that contribution, as well as extensions of the implementation period shall not be considered substantial within the meaning of Article 94(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323, provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objectives of the actions.

The authorising officer responsible may adopt such non-substantial changes in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and proportionality.
Done at Brussels, 15.9.2017

For the Commission
Stefano Manservisi

Director-General