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**COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION**

**of 17.8.2015**

**on the Annual Action Programme 2015 part 2 in favour of Central Asia to be financed  
from the general budget of the European Union**

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### on the Annual Action Programme 2015 part 2 in favour of Central Asia to be financed from the general budget of the European Union

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 2(1) thereof,

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012<sup>2</sup> of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002, and in particular Article 84(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The Commission has adopted the Multiannual Indicative Programme for the period 2014-2020<sup>3</sup>, point 3.1 of which provides for the following focal sector: "Sustainable regional development". Under this focal sector one finds the following priority areas for Regional cooperation: energy, environment/water and socio-economic development.
- (2) The objectives pursued by the Annual Action Programme to be financed under the Development Cooperation Instrument<sup>4</sup> are to contribute to sustainable regional development and economic growth in Central Asia in the areas of energy, environment/water and socio-economic development while: i) facilitating closer regional cooperation and assuring better effectiveness of implementation between EU funded regional and bilateral activities in the water-environment and climate change nexus; ii) promoting the development of the private sector development; and iii) providing funding for key infrastructures in Central Asia and addressing investment needs in critical areas for social economic development and increasing population living standards.
- (3) The Commission has adopted the Annual Action Programmes 2014 and 2015 part I in favour of Central Asia, to be funded from the general budget of the European Union<sup>5</sup>.
- (4) Action entitled "Regional coordination and support for the EU – CA enhanced regional cooperation on Environment, Water and Climate Change". The objective of this action is to further develop and ensure effectiveness and visibility of the EU-

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1

<sup>3</sup> C(2014) 5653

<sup>4</sup> Regulation (EU) No 233/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation for the period 2014-2020 (OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 44).

<sup>5</sup> C(2014)9534

Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change dialogue and cooperation, in particular through the EU-CA Water, Environment and Climate Cooperation platform, aimed at improved policies, increased capacities and enhanced regional cooperation, both between the EU and Central Asia and within Central Asian region. The implementation will be done through a Technical Assistance Service Contract.

- (5) Action entitled "Central Asia Invest IV". The objective of this intervention is to promote the development of the private sector, with special emphasis on encouraging the growth and expansion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Through the increase of investments and the creation of jobs, this programme will enable to foster economic growth and help to reduce poverty in Central Asia. The action will be implemented through a Call for Proposals and Indirect Management with the OECD.
- (6) Action entitled "Investment Facility for Central Asia 2015 bis (IFCA)". This action promotes investments in the sectors energy, environment, support to SMEs and social infrastructure. The facility thus contributes to the realization of projects aiming to reduce unemployment and poverty and to advance the economy in a sustainable way. The action will be implemented through Indirect Management with Leading Financial Institutions.
- (7) 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<sup>6</sup>.
- (8) 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. The work programme is constituted by the Annex 2 "Action document for Central Asia Invest IV".
- (9) The Commission should entrust budget-implementation tasks under indirect management to the entities specified in this Decision, subject to the conclusion of a delegation agreement. In accordance with Article 60(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, the authorising officer responsible needs to ensure that these entities guarantee a level of protection of the financial interests of the Union equivalent to that required when the Commission manages Union funds. These entities comply with the conditions of points (a) to (d) of the first subparagraph of Article 60(2) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and the supervisory and support measures are in place as necessary. Certain entrusted entities are currently undergoing the assessment under Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012<sup>7</sup>. In anticipation of the results of this review, the authorising officer responsible deems that, based on the entities' positive assessment under Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 and on the long-standing and problem-free cooperation with them, budget-implementation tasks can be entrusted to these entities.
- (10) The authorising officer responsible should be able to award grants without a call for proposals provided that the conditions for an exception to a call for proposals in accordance with Article 190 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012. the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because: a) The OECD has built a solid relationship with Central Asian governments: It participates in

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<sup>6</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 362, 31.12.2012, p. 1).

<sup>7</sup> Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1).

the Public Private Working groups and in the Eurasia Competitiveness roundtable each year at the level of Minister of Economy and/ or Deputy Prime Minister. b) The OECD is an international organisation with a widely respected peer-review system that enables to gather around the table the Central Asian governments and some OECD countries that can exchange on good practices in a neutral framework. This type of activity also fosters regional integration. c) The commission is contributing to an existing programme that has worked successfully with Central Asian countries on related topics: "The OECD Central Asia Initiative", which is part of a larger programme launched by the OECD called the Eurasia Competitiveness Programme.

- (11) 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.
- (12) Pursuant to Article 94(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, the Commission should define changes to this Decision which are not substantial in order to ensure that any such changes can be adopted by the authorising officer responsible.
- (13) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Development Cooperation Instrument Committee set up by Article 19 of the financing instrument referred to in Recital (2),

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

#### *Article 1*

##### **Adoption of the measure**

The Annual Action Programme 2015 part 2 in favour of Central Asia, as set out in the Annexes, is approved.

The programme shall include the following actions:

- Annex 1: Regional coordination and support for the EU – CA enhanced regional cooperation on Environment, Water and Climate Change;
- Annex 2: Central Asia Invest IV;
- Annex 3: Investment Facility for Central Asia 2015 bis (IFCA).

#### *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 52 million and shall be financed from budget line 21.020300 of the general budget of the European Union for 2015.

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 described in annex 3 subject to the conclusions of the relevant agreement(s).

The section “Implementation” of the Annexes to this Decision sets out the elements required by Article 94(2) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012.

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

*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, 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, 17.8.2015

*For the Commission*  
*Miguel ARIAS CAÑETE*  
*Member of the Commission*