COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 22.5.2017

on the 2017 Partnership Instrument Annual Action Programme for cooperation with third countries to be financed from the general budget of the European Union
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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 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 1605/2002¹, and in particular Article 84 (2) thereof,

Having regard to the 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 action², and in particular Article 2(1) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) The objectives pursued by the annual action programme to be financed under the Partnership Instrument³ are to advance and promote Union and mutual interests through cooperation with third countries. The Commission has adopted an Implementing Decision on the first Multiannual Indicative Programme for the Partnership Instrument for the period 2014-2017⁴. In line with the Multiannual Indicative Programme, this annual action programme includes measures in the following areas: support for the Union's cooperation partnership strategies, cooperation on global challenges, implementation of the international dimension of the "Europe 2020" strategy and promotion of the Union's internal policies abroad, support for economic and trade relations as well as promotion of the Union's values and interests;

(2) The action entitled "EU-China Energy Cooperation Platform (ECECP)" aims to promote and enhance the cooperation between EU and China on clean energy by supporting the implementation of the EU China Roadmap on Energy Cooperation signed in 2016. The action will be implemented in direct management via the procurement of services;

(3) The action entitled "Energy Efficiency in Argentina" aims to support Argentina in its effort to shape a more sustainable, environment-friendly and efficient energy sector. The action will be implemented in direct management via the procurement of services;

(4) The action entitled "Support to the India – EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership (CECP)" aims to reinforce cooperation between EU and India on climate change and

¹ OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1
² OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 95
⁴ C(2014) 4453 final of 3 July 2014
energy with a view to ensure a secure, clean, affordable and reliable energy supply for all and to progress in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The action will be implemented in direct management via the procurement of services;

(5) The action entitled "Support to Urban Action Planning – EU International Urban Cooperation Programme" aims to strengthen the impact of international city-to-city cooperation on sustainable urban development. The action will be implemented in direct management via the direct award of a grant to the Agence Nationale pour la Rénovation Urbaine;

(6) The action entitled "Support to Covenant of Mayors initiatives – cooperation with the European Commission Joint Research centre (JRC)" aims to contribute to the achievement of the EU's external climate and energy policies through the provision of scientific, technical and methodological support for the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy initiative and the Covenants of Mayors supported through the EU's International Urban Cooperation (IUC) Programme. The action will be implemented in direct management via an administrative arrangement with the JRC;

(7) The action entitled "Promoting biodiversity and sustainability in the agriculture and food sector through economic valuation" aims to protect biodiversity and contribute to a more sustainable agriculture and food sector in selected EU partner countries. The action will be implemented in indirect management with an international organisation, notably UNEP;

(8) The action entitled "Environmental Diplomacy in G7/G20" aims to enhance the engagement of the EU in the G7/G20 on key EU priorities in the field of environment, in particular on resource efficiency and circular economy, marine litter, and green finance. The action will be implemented in direct management via the procurement of services;

(9) The action entitled "Responsible business conduct in Latin America and Caribbean" aims to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth by supporting CSR/RBC practices in line with internationally agreed upon principles in this area. This will help move towards a level playing field by limiting unfair competition driven by low CSR/RBC standards. The action will be implemented in indirect management with international organisations, notably OECD and ILO;

(10) The action entitled "Promoting economic empowerment of women at work through Responsible Business Conduct – Latin America and Caribbean (LAC)" aims to support sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth by promoting economic empowerment of women in LAC countries. This project will ultimately contribute to promote EU and international shared principles and values such as gender equality and women empowerment. The action will be implemented in indirect management with international organisations, notably UN Women and ILO;

(11) The action entitled "Promoting economic empowerment of women at work through Responsible Business Conduct – G7 countries" aims to support sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth by promoting economic empowerment of women in public and private sector in G7 countries. This project will ultimately contribute to promote EU and international shared principles and values such as gender equality and women empowerment. The action will be implemented in indirect management with international organisations, notably UN Women and ILO;

(12) The action entitled "EU-India cooperation and dialogue on Migration and Mobility" aims to contribute to a better management of mobility and legal migration between the
EU and India, as well as to prevent and address the challenges related to irregular migratory flows. The action will be implemented in indirect management with international organisations, notably ICMPD and ILO;

(13) The action entitled "Schuman Fulbright Fellowship" aims to support the EU agenda for new skills and jobs under Europe 2020, through the exchange of mid-career professionals using the framework of the US Fulbright programme. The action will be implemented in direct management via a the direct award of a grant to the Belgium-Luxembourg Fulbright Commission;

(14) The action entitled "Support to civil society participation in the implementation of EU trade agreements" aims to contribute to increased transparency and accountability of Sustainable Development (SD) chapters of Trade Agreements through increased and standardised participation of civil society. The action will be implemented in direct management via the procurement of services;

(15) The action entitled "Public and Cultural Diplomacy" aims to build trust and support the EU become a stronger global actor. The action will be implemented in direct management via the procurement of services, calls for proposals and the direct award of a grant to the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum;

(16) The action entitled "EU-China Partnership Facility (ECPF)" aims to contribute to the strengthening and enlargement of EU-China relations in line with the strategic framework represented by the EU Global Strategy, the EU Strategy for China, the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation and other relevant bilateral agreements. The action will be implemented in direct management via the procurement of services;

(17) The action entitled "EU-Mexico Sector Dialogues Support Facility (SDSF)" aims to contribute to strengthening and further enlarging the strategic partnership between the EU and Mexico by supporting the implementation of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement and the EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership Joint Executive Plan, as well as other relevant agreements concluded between the EU and the Mexican Government. The action will be implemented in direct management via the procurement of services;

(18) The action entitled "Support to project cycle management" aims to support the identification, formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and audit of actions under the Partnership Instrument. The action will be implemented in direct management via the procurement of services;

(19) The action entitled "Policy Support Facility (PSF)" aims to provide targeted, flexible and tailor-made support to specific EU’s policy priorities. The action will be implemented in direct management via the procurement of services and calls for proposals;

(20) The action entitled "Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX)" aims to facilitate the implementation of EU bilateral Cooperation Agreements or similar agreements, with a focus on regulatory convergence in partner countries. The action will be implemented in direct management via the procurement of services;

(21) 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.

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It is necessary to adopt a work programme for grants in accordance with Article 128(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and Article 188(1) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012. The work programme is set out in Annexes 4, 12, 14 and 18;

The action "Academic outreach through Jean Monnet activities", which is part of the action "Public and Cultural Diplomacy" should be implemented by the "Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)" in accordance with Decision No. 2013/776/EU of 18 December 2013;

The Commission should entrust budget-implementation tasks under indirect management to the entities specified in Annexes 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 to this Decision, subject to the conclusion of delegation agreements. In accordance with Article 60(1)(c) 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 European Union equivalent to that required when the Commission manages European Union funds. Entities specified in Annex 8, 9, 10 and 11 to this Decision comply with the conditions set out in 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. The entity specified in Annex 6 to this decision is currently undergoing the assessment provided for in Article 61 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. In anticipation of the results of this review, the authorising officer responsible deems that, based on the entity’s positive assessment prior to the entry into force of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and on the long-standing and problem-free cooperation with it, budget-implementation tasks can be entrusted to United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);

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;

It is necessary to allow for 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;

The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Partnership Instrument Committee established under Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 234/2014;

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Adoption of the programme

The Annual Action Programme 2017 (Phase 1) for the Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries, as set out in the Annexes, is adopted.

The programme shall include the following actions:

– (a) Annex 1: EU-China Energy Cooperation Platform
– (b) Annex 2: Energy Efficiency in Argentina
– (c) Annex 3: Support to the India – EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership
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 87,600,000 and shall be financed from budget line 19.0501 of the general budget of the European Union for 2017.

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

Article 3

Methods of implementation

Budget-implementation tasks under indirect management may be entrusted to the entities identified in the Annexes 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11, 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.
Article 4

Non-substantial changes

Increases or decreases of up to EUR 10 million not exceeding 20% of the contribution set in 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, 22.5.2017

For the Commission
Federica MOGHERINI
Vice-President