COMMISSION DECISION
OF 1998

Establishing an Implementation and Enforcement Support for the Environmental Acquis Programme in 1998,

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 3906/89 of 18 December 1989 on economic aid to certain countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 753/96 of 22 April 1996 and in particular Article 9 thereof,

Whereas Regulation No 3906/89 lays down the rules and conditions for the granting of economic aid to certain countries of Central and Eastern Europe,

Whereas the measures provided for by this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Committee on Aid for Economic Restructuring in certain countries of Central and Eastern Europe,

HEREBY DECIDES AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The programme described in the Annex to the present decision is hereby adopted.

Article 2

The maximum amount of Community assistance shall be 10 MECU to be financed through Budget line B7-500.

Done in Brussels,
Financing Proposal 1998

IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACQUIS

1. IDENTIFICATION

Programme Type Multi-beneficiary
Year 1998
Cost 10 Million EURO
Implementing Authority European Commission
Expiry date for contracting 31.12.2000
Expiry date for payments 31.12.2001
Sector EN
Group L
Budget line B7 - 500
Task Manager Implementation - Ben Griepink SCR
Programming - Julian Wilson DG IA

2. SUMMARY

Since the release of Agenda 2000, it is clear that certain environmental directives are proving very difficult for the applicant countries to implement. It has also emerged very clearly that certain critical groups in the applicant countries - notably NGOs, municipalities and nature parks - have not been involved sufficiently in the approximation and accession process.

The 1998 multi-country programme for environment - entitled Implementation and Enforcement Support for the Environmental Acquis - directly addresses these problems by providing applicant countries with clear guides and advice on how to better structure their administrative systems and to more effectively implement and enforce these problematic directives and by building up the networks needed to ensure that the neglected groups of NGOs, municipalities are better integrated into the whole approximation process.

The programme also marks a transition in multi-country support, as called for in the New Orientations of Phare by providing the necessary bridge in environmental approximation support to the moment when TAIEX shall provide environmental approximation support and by ensuring that the Black Triangle and EuroParcs networks shall be able to continue their activities without further support from the Commission.
3. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This programme addresses two key problems which have emerged in the enlargement process in environment - the low administrative capacity for implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation and the relative neglect of three critical groups in the enlargement process, namely municipalities, NGOs and nature parks.

3.1 Past Multi-country Environment Programmes

Started in 1991, the Phare Multi-Country Programme for the Environment has been an integral part of Phare’s environmental support to the countries of central and eastern Europe.

To date, it has addressed key multi-country environmental problems at three levels:

1. sub-regional programmes. Specific sub-regional environmental programmes were developed for the Black Triangle, Danube River Basin, Black Sea and Baltic Sea, each representing particular environmental problems in the central European region. These Phare programmes have produced strategies and action plans for tackling these transboundary environmental problems and have developed networks within which the relevant national officials are able to meet and discuss their shared problems.

2. participation of applicant countries in the European Environment Agency (EEA) and in the Nature Parcs federation. The EEA is a key body for monitoring Europe’s environment. Past Phare support has assisted applicant countries in producing the necessary data to feed into EEA through such programmes as Corine and Mars programmes which monitored air pollution and land use. In addition, the support helped applicant countries with the administration associated with participation in the EEA.

Nature Parcs is the NGO Federation of Nature Parks of Europe. This unique organisation has been working for the last two years to extend its network to incorporate the nature parks of the applicant countries, a critical step in ensuring their sustainable development and in meeting compliance targets on the Nature and Birds Directive.

3. support and advice on approximation issues in environment through the programme entitled Development of Strategies for Accession in the Environment (DISAE). Agenda 2000 and the current progress report on approximation indicates clearly that the level of compliance in environment is very low and that many of the problems experienced are shared by all the applicant countries. The DISAE programme has provided technical assistance for legal transposition, approximation strategies, sectoral strategies and general cost assessments in the environment sector. This assistance was provided both to individual countries and on a multi-country basis where common problems were identified.
3.2 Future Support

Since Agenda 2000 and the New Orientations of Phare in 1997, accession relevance has been the driving force behind programming of new Phare programmes. This has led to a refocusing and consolidation of the environment multi-country programmes.

The broad thrust of this reform is to bring to a finalisation all strategy work at the regional level and then to continue actions recommended in these strategies at the individual country level with Phare National Programme support, where appropriate. It shall also involve the delivery of support by TAIEX in the environmental approximation area.

The specific implications of this reform on the environment programmes are:

1. support to the four sub-regional programmes addressing the Danube River Basin, Black Triangle, Baltic Sea and Black Sea at the multi-country level shall be finalised in 1998 and 1999. But the specific projects recommended in the action plans prepared by these four programmes shall be put forward for possible financing at the national level. Phare support may continue for these national level activities but through the Phare National Programmes.

   The finalisation of the programmes at the multi-country level will involve the Commission in guiding the relevant authorities to ensure that accession relevance is incorporated into the national level projects. In addition, a specific project in the Black Triangle needs to be completed for the network to be sustainable without Phare support in the longer term.

   The Black Triangle refers to the industrial border area between the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland. This is one of the most polluted regions in Europe. Its “black” image is a result of its past history of environmental degradation caused by concentrated industrialisation, intensive agriculture and ineffective measures to protect the environment. In particular, air pollution arising from the widespread use of brown coal in power stations has created a serious legacy of poor human health and ecological destruction.

   A project was commenced in 1997 for an air pollution inventory which identified the main sources of pollution between the three countries of Poland, Czech and Germany. This project needs to be finalised under the ‘98 programme and a model for forecasting future pollution impacts needs to be developed.

2. Phare will consider financing specific projects which directly assist in countries’ meeting its obligations in membership of EEA (eg. production of pollution monitoring data) but there shall not be a region wide programme of support and no administrative charges will be provided, especially as regards advisors within the EEA. This reflects the need to responsibilise the applicant countries as they approach accession in regard to their participation in EU institutions and agencies.

3. Phase I of extending the Nature Parcs network and its activities to the applicant countries is near completion. Phase II involves detailed work on the management of parks which is necessary if the network is to be extended in a sustainable way to
the partner countries. As such, Phase II shall be completed under the ‘98 programme after which Phare support shall be stopped at a regional level. Countries shall finance their own participation in the Nature Parcs network but specific country level projects related to their participation in Nature Parc network may be eligible for continued support through Phare national programmes.

4. As decided in Agenda 2000, TAIEX shall expand its operations substantially in the area of approximation support. In the environmental sector, therefore, TAIEX shall take over the role currently played by DISAE when this support has terminated.

However, a number of specific directives have emerged as being critical stumbling blocks in the accession process amongst all the applicant countries. The applicant countries urgently require substantive and detailed guidance on these Directives, a task which can only realistically be done by a continued but temporary input from technical consultants led by the relevant Technical Departments of DG XI.

3.3 Detailed Guidance for Environmental Approximation

It has been long recognised that environment will be a key problem in the accession process because of the current low level of compliance to the wide number of existing EU environmental Directives coupled with the low administrative and financial capacities of the applicant countries to significantly raise those compliance levels.

The Commission has made significant advances in setting out the work required to be undertaken by the applicant countries in environment. This has focused on DISAE technical support and detailed Guidelines and Tables of Concordance relating mostly to transposition of the Directives into national legislation. The most important of these documents are:

2. Progress Monitoring Manual - guide to measuring compliance (ie. transposition and administrative conditions for implementation)
3. Table of Concordance (Legislative Transposition) for 25 Directives - targeted for transposition of all following directives:
   a) Horizontal: Environmental Impact Assessment, Access to Environmental Information,
   b) Air related: Ambient Air Quality Framework, VOC from Petrol Stations, Tropospheric Ozone and Large Combustion Plants
   e) Nature related - Habitats, Birds
   f) Industry related: Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control
g) Chemicals: dangerous substances, Genetically Modified Organisms, and Genetically Modified Micro-organisms
h) Nuclear Safety: Basic Safety Standards for Ionising Radiation

The approach enshrined in the Table of Concordance is pivotal in the guidance delivered to the applicant countries in environment. Such Tables take each directive in turn and provide a detailed breakdown of the steps required for that Directive to be adopted into national law by the applicant countries.

These Tables of Concordance have focused up till now on the transposition of laws but it has emerged over the last two years - and has been reinforced by the findings of the Opinions’ Status Report currently in finalisation - that, while significant advances have been made in legal transposition, limited advances have been made in implementation and enforcement of the Directives in the applicant countries, especially as regards a hard core of particularly problematic and expensive Directives.

For this reason, the Tables of Concordance (ie. detailed instructions) need to be expanded to cover the areas relating to substantive compliance, namely:

1. Administration: the administrative structures required in government and municipalities to ensure the efficient implementation of Directives.
2. Implementation and Enforcement: the procedures and regulations needed to ensure that the Directives are implemented on the ground.

3.4 Neglected but Critical Players

Most environmental legislation is implemented in a decentralised way - national governments adapt the laws to be in compliance and central Ministries oversee the legislative process but the relevant instructions on implementation and enforcement are then fed into the regional and municipal level structures to manage and monitor actual implementation on the ground. Municipalities play therefore a key role in the approximation process.

However most municipalities in the accession countries have only a very hazy understanding of the process of accession and do not generally comprehend the pivotal role that they must play in ensuring that laws which have been approximated at the national level are actually being implemented and enforced at the local. For them to undertake this role, they need to be incorporated into the debate and made aware of the process in all its intricacies.

Most environmental improvement in the EU has involved pressure from non-governmental organisations working at the local municipal level and at the national level. The EU’s acquis on participation and transparency are designed to facilitate the type of interaction and critique that is only possible from a healthy and effective NGO system.
However, NGO’s have not been fully incorporated into the accession process. For NGO’s to exercise the role foreseen for them, they need to be better integrated into the accession debate through awareness building and development of NGO networks. It should be noted that individual NGO projects may receive support from the specific Phare programmes set up for this purpose which lie outside of this multi-country programme.

In line with the refocusing of the Multi-country programmes as outlined above, the ‘98 multi-country programme will address the two critical aspects of raising implementation and enforcement capacities for compliance with the acquis and of bringing into the accession debate three critical but todate neglected groups - municipalities, NGOs and nature parks.

4 OBJECTIVES

4.1 Overall objective

The overall objective of this programme is to strengthen the administrative capacity of the ten applicant countries to actively implement and enforce the environmental acquis for specific and problematic directives.

These Directives have been highlighted in Agenda 2000, the Progress Report on Approximation and the Communication ‘Accession Strategies for the Environment’ (COM(1998)294/4).

4.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this programme are:

1. to raise applicant countries’ capacities to implement and enforce certain problematic directives for which substantive compliance levels remain very low.

2. to promote awareness and sustainable networks among key Ministries, NGOs, municipalities and nature parks which are key players in the implementation of the problematic Directives but which have not been involved as fully as necessary in the past.

5. SCOPE OF WORK

The above objectives shall be realised through two closely interrelated projects:

1. Regional Environmental Accession Project

2. Sustainable Nature Protection Project

5.1 Regional Environmental Accession Project
The Regional Environment Accession Project (REAP) will build capacity in the accession countries to implement and enforce specific Directives that have been identified as region-wide blockages to accession.

REAP is driven by accession requirements identified in the NPAA’s and the particular Directives it targets have been highlighted as being particular problems in the Opinions’ Status Report which assesses accession progress and which shall be completed by the end of 1998.

Unlike DISAE which focused on central government officials, REAP will involve a wider target group of decision and policy makers in the applicant countries, without whose full and integrated involvement the implementation and enforcement of the environmental acquis will fail. It is only by such a coherent and holistic approach towards all involved target groups that environmental legislation will be implemented. The large group targeted under REAP include:

1. National Ministries. These have been the traditional focus of Phare accession related support.

2. Environmental Financing Sources: These may include environmental funds but also other state or regional development banks involved in the environmental sphere.

3. Municipalities. This is a critical audience which have not previously been addressed. As explained in section 3, their involvement is critical in ensuring the implementation and enforcement of the environmental acquis.

4. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). These are a critical audience whose influence on national and municipal level authorities is critical in ensuring official commitment to implement and enforce the environmental acquis grows.

REAP shall have three components, each with their own specific outputs:

1. Support for Problematic Directives:
   • impact studies and compliance costing models for the implementation and enforcement of the target directives.
   • guidelines - including “best practices” manuals - for implementation, enforcement and monitoring of compliance for specific target directives.
   • projects related to the extension of the IMPEL network to the CEEC. IMPEL is an EU network of state enforcement agencies. This shall be less tied to specific directives as the IMPEL network covers all EU directives.

1. Support for Environmental Financing Strategies, with an emphasis on environmental funds:
   • development of “best practices” manuals on procurement, financial control and project selection.
   • training on adoption and implementation of manuals through seminars and workshops.
1. Finalisation of the Black Triangle programme to consolidate its sustainable long term future:
   - completion of air pollution inventory pilot project
   - development of a model for forecasting future pollution origins, loads and impacts in the Black Triangle.

Support for Problematic Directives: A basic number of problematic directives have been identified already which present regional challenges because they have clear transboundary and regional challenges or because, as shown in the Opinions and the ’98 Status Report, they present the applicant countries with common problems in their application and implementation. These include the Seveso directive, the agri-environment regulation, the nitrates directive and the Birds and Habitats directives, Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control directive, waste management directive and the air and water framework directives. However, this list may be added to if the applicant countries and Commission so agree within the forum of the Environmental Permanent Representatives Group (EPRG) where senior environmental officials of the EU member states regularly meet with their counterparts from the applicant countries, after the Opinion Status Report has been completed and its findings discussed.

The Seveso Directive (Control of Major Accident Hazards, 96/82/EC) was developed to prevent serious accidents in industrial facilities, following the explosion at a chemical plant in Seveso, Italy. It calls for national governments to establish full inventories of potentially hazardous facilities and for the affected industries themselves to develop accident prevention measures, employee protection measures, public information plans and emergency contingency plans. Implementation of the Seveso Directive has transboundary implications (for example, through air and water pollution) and is of special interest to the Member States.

The Agri-Environment Regulation makes provisions for grants for pilot projects and other technical assistance for environmentally friendly agriculture in the Member States. Its extension to the accession countries is crucially important to ensure that the evolving structure of agriculture in these countries meets the EU’s standards for protecting soil, water and biodiversity.

Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) addresses non-point source nitrate run-off from agricultural production which is already a major problem for the Black Sea and Baltic Seas and causes eutrophication in lakes and rivers as well as contamination of ground water and other drinking water supplies. Excessive nitrate feeds the Black Sea from the Danubian countries upstream.

The Habitats and Birds Directives involves protection of natural habitat for birds, including nature parks.

The Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) directive which addresses all pollution emissions from industrial and energy sources (along with the Large Combustion Plant directive).
The Framework Air Directive (1996) and the Framework Water Directive (forthcoming) both require substantial inventories of pollution sources and remediation plans. Current regional programmes such as the Danube and Black Sea programmes need assistance to focus on the demands of the acquis here and to ensure their effective translation into national measures.

Linked to these specific directives but also addressing implementation and enforcement across the entire acquis, the Commission intends to extend the IMPEL network to the applicant countries.

IMPEL is the informal network which brings together representatives from the Commission and the implementation and enforcement authorities of the Member States. It aims to ensure harmonisation of approach and the exchange of best practice and common experiences in this field. REAP will support the newly created Accession Countries’ IMPEL network (termed AC-IMPEL) which works in parallel and close cooperation with the EU’s IMPEL. Specific activities will involve the funding of accession country representatives activities in AC-IMPEL and IMPEL and for the dissemination of information, training for inspectors, reviews of enforcement and implementation capacity in the accession countries and workshops to present results of reviews.

**Support for Environmental Financing Strategies:** The activities relating to the Support for Environmental Financing Strategies shall closely involve the OECD Task Force which has directly assisted in previous institution building efforts with Environmental Funds, the key target group of this component. The production of the manuals on “best practices” in procurement, project selection and financial control will reflect the St Petersburg Guidelines for the efficient operation of environmental funds. In addition, the relevant Commission services (especially as regards ISPA management, financial control and procurement) shall be involved throughout, not only in approving the best practice guides but also in identifying whether participating environmental funds have indeed adopted the guidelines concerned.

**Black Triangle:** During its first six years, the main achievement of the Black Triangle Project has been the establishment of a Joint Air Monitoring System (JAMS) and a functioning network system whereby the three affected countries can meet and discuss their shared environmental problems.

The monitoring system consists of an integrated network of forty-two automatic air monitoring stations, in the three participating countries, which have been set up to measure levels of emissions and provide technical data necessary for informed decision making. However a full inventory of key pollution sources is not yet completed and the last critical component for the network’s sustainable future development - a model forecasting future pollution emissions and impacts - has not yet been developed. The inventory and model shall be completed under the 98 programme, permitting the network to continue without Phare support in the future.

**Inputs.** The key inputs to realise the outputs and objectives of the three project components shall be:
1. specific legislative and implementation advice to ministries and other involved agencies.

2. guidelines, costing and impact studies and models as highlighted above, each mapping out a critical aspect of implementation and enforcement.

3. development of regional networks among involved players and undertaking seminar activities to ensure the dissemination and adoption of the various practices for improved implementation and enforcement of the environmental acquis.

Inputs 1 and 2 shall be tendered competitively.

**Role of the REC:** The third input under the REAP involving networks and seminars will be heavily used to ensure the full discussion, dissemination and adoption of the various plans and policies developed under the programme. However, this input cannot be efficiently implemented by a straightforward external conferencing or consultancy company. It requires an organisation which has existing networks in all applicant countries and an existing track record of coordinating NGO, financial and central government institutions. For this reason, the Aarhus conference of European Ministers indicated in its concluding document that the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) based in Hungary should play a more leading role in this area.

To this end, the REAP contract will require extensive cooperation and integration of the REC for the technical aspects of this third input of conferencing, networking and seminar activities both in the regional centre in Hungary but also through the REC’s outreach offices in the applicant countries themselves. As such, the REC shall be a sub-contractor to the contractor which wins the open tender for this input.

Just like other target groups, NGOs will be covered under this programme in terms of networking support and seminar training activity at the regional level. Individual NGO projects will not be financed but may be put forward for financing under the relevant Phare support programmes for NGO projects.

The Regional Environment Centre is an independent, international, non-profit organisation which was established jointly by the applicant countries, the European Commission and other international donors in 1990 with the mandate to promote public participation in environmental decision-making and to provide information on the environment and encourage co-operation among stakeholders in the region. It has been supported by the European Commission and the Multi Country Environment Programme since its foundation, as have a number of grant and other programmes managed by the REC. It has a unique position and function in the region, being indeed the only independent CEE based policy institution working in the Phare countries on Local Environmental Action Plans, on municipalities and accession, and with NGOs. It is therefore ideally placed to manage this input of the REAP.

### 5.2 Sustainable Nature Protection Project.

This project concerns biodiversity protection and protected natural areas.
EU nature conservation policy is based on three main pieces of legislation - the Birds directive, the Habitats directive, and the CITES regulation, and has a specific financial instrument, the LIFE - Nature Fund. Its priorities are to create a European ecological network of special conservation areas, called Natura 2000, and to integrate nature protection requirements into other EU policies such as agriculture, regional development and transport.

This sub-project will fund the second phase of an on-going Phare funded project “EUROPARC Expertise Exchange”, managed by the Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe. It is working to improve the management of protected areas in central and eastern Europe, particularly those with transboundary components, and focuses on countries with a rich natural heritage but insufficient management and cooperation skills. The first phase started in early 1997 and is providing training exchanges, following a needs assessment of the skills necessary for the implementation of the Habitats and Birds directives. The second phase will focus on implementing the necessary management plans and inventories to comply with these Directives.

This project shall have the following outputs:

1. improved skills for the management of protected areas and for conservation.
2. support for the harmonisation of nature conservation standards in accession countries with those of the EU.
3. improved cooperation between protected areas in accession and EU countries.
4. improved environmental awareness amongst park visitors and in local people.
5. improved habitat and wildlife monitoring in protected areas, and sharing of information on best practices.

The project shall have the following inputs or activities:

1. Staff training and exchanges.
2. Preparation and distribution of booklets, posters etc. Information sessions for local people.
3. Short-medium term consultancies to assist with the improvement of monitoring methods.

### BUDGET

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7 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

This programme will be implemented by the Commission Service Commun on behalf of the national authorities. DG XI provides technical support and is closely associated. DG VI will collaborate with DG XI and the Service Commun on agri-environment issues.

TAIEX shall be closely informed of the REAP project’s activities to ensure that it gathers an understanding of the unique requirements in environmental approximation to ensure it can deliver approximation support in this sector in an efficient manner after the DISAE Facility has terminated its inputs.

The Sustainable Nature Protection Project shall be awarded through direct agreement with Nature Parcs, the official Federation of Nature Parks of Europe, because: (i) it is a recognised NGO with responsibility for nature parks in the EU; (ii) it already has a DA contract with Phare for Phase I of the network/training activities with applicant countries’ nature parks; and, (iii) the contract cannot be tendered competitively because the Federation is the only organisation which maintains this network.

REC shall provide the technical aspects foreseen under Input 3 (ie. networking, seminar activity, etc) of the REAP project, given its unique status as a non profit-making organisation, the leading role foreseen for REC by EU and CEEC environment ministers at the Aarhus Conference of Environmental Ministers, its diplomatic international status and its unique capacities in networking and awareness building through its Hungarian centre and its ten out-reach offices in the applicant countries.

8 AUDITING, MONITORING, EVALUATION SPECIAL CONDITIONS

The accounts and operations of this programme may be checked at the Commission’s discretion by an outside auditor contracted by the Commission without prejudice to the responsibilities of the Commission and the European Union's Court of Auditors as referred to in the General Conditions relating to the Financing Memorandum attached to the Framework Agreement.
The Commission services shall ensure that an ex-post evaluation is carried out after completion of the Programme.

The relevant Commission services will review in detail the progress of each programme, including its components and contracts, on the basis of regular Monitoring and Assessment reports produced with the assistance of external consultant (in accordance with the provisions of the DIS Manual), and will put forward recommendations on aspects of management and design, ensuring these are effected.

In the event that commitments are not met for reasons, the relevant Commission services may review the programme with a view, at the Commission’s discretion, to canceling all or part of it and/or to reallocate unused funds for other purposes consistent with the objectives of the Phare programme.

9 TIMING

Tendering shall start immediately for REAP in November 1998.

The processing of the Direct Agreement with Nature Parcs shall be processed in December 1998.

Disbursements under programme must be completed by December 31 2001, three years after the Commission Decision.

10. Visibility/Publicity

The relevant contractors will be responsible for ensuring that the necessary measures are taken to ensure appropriate publicity for all activities financed from the programme.
INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION’S PHARE PROGRAMME

1. Objective and scope

Information and publicity measures concerning assistance from the European Union’s Phare Programme are intended to increase public awareness and transparency of EU action and to create a consistent image of the measures concerned in all applicant countries. Information and publicity shall concern measures receiving a contribution from the European Union’s Phare Programme.

2. General principles

The appropriate Programme Authorising Officer in charge of the implementation of Financing Memoranda, and other forms of assistance shall be responsible for publicity on the spot. Publicity shall be carried out in cooperation with the Commission’s Delegations, which shall be informed of measures taken for this purpose.

The competent national and regional authorities shall take all the appropriate administrative steps to ensure the effective application of these arrangements and to collaborate with the Commission’s Delegations on the spot.

The information and publicity measures described below are based on the provisions of the regulations and decisions applicable to the Structural Funds. They are:


Information and publicity measures must comply with the provisions of the Information Handbook for European Commission Delegations in Central Europe. The relevant sections of the Information Handbook will be annexed to all contracts related to works and supplies.

3. Information and publicity concerning Phare programmes

Information and publicity shall be the subject of a coherent set of measures defined by the competent national, regional and local authorities in collaboration with the Commission’s Delegations for the duration of the Financing Memorandum and shall concern both programmes and other forms of assistance.

The costs of information and publicity relating to individual projects shall be met from the budget for those projects.
When Phare programmes are implemented, the measures set out at (a) and (b) below shall apply:

(a) The competent authorities of the applicant countries shall publish the content of programmes and other forms of assistance in the most appropriate form. They shall ensure that such documents are appropriately disseminated and shall hold them available for interested parties. They shall ensure the consistent presentation throughout the territory of the applicant country of information and publicity material produced, in accordance with the provisions of the *Information Handbook*.

(b) Information and publicity measures on the spot shall include the following:

(i) In the case of infrastructure investments with a cost exceeding ECU 1 million:

- billboards erected on the sites, to be installed in accordance with the provisions of the *Information Handbook*;

- permanent commemorative plaques for infrastructures accessible to the general public, to be installed in accordance with the provisions of the *Information Handbook*.

(ii) In the case of productive investments, measures to develop local potential and all other measures receiving financial assistance from Phare;

- measures to make potential beneficiaries and the general public aware of Phare assistance, in accordance with the provisions of the *Information Handbook*;

- measures targeting applicants for public aids part-financed by Phare, in the form of an indication on the forms to be filled out by such applications, that part of the aid comes from the EU, and specifically, the Phare Programme, in accordance with the provisions of the *Information Handbook*.

.4. **Visibility of EU assistance in business circles and among potential beneficiaries and the general public**

4.1 Business circles

Business circles must be involved as closely as possible with the assistance which concerns them most directly.

The authorities responsible for implementing assistance shall ensure the existence of appropriate channels for disseminating information to potential beneficiaries, particularly SMEs. These should include an indication of the administrative procedures to be followed.

4.2 Other potential beneficiaries
The authorities responsible for implementing assistance shall ensure the existence of appropriate channels for disseminating information to all persons who benefit or could benefit from measures concerning training, employment or the development of human resources. To this end, they shall secure the cooperation of vocational training bodies involved in employment, business and groups of business, training centres and non-governmental organisations.

Forms

Forms issued by national, regional or local authorities concerning the announcement of, application for and grant of assistance intended for final beneficiaries or any other person eligible for such assistance shall indicate that the EU, and specifically the Phare Programme, is providing financial support. The notification of aid sent to beneficiaries shall mention the amount or percentage of the assistance financed by the Phare Programme. If such documents bear the national or regional emblem, they shall also bear the EU logo of the same size.

4.3 The general public

The media

The competent authorities shall inform the media in the most appropriate manner about actions co-financed by the EU, and Phare in particular. Phare participation shall be fairly reflected in this information.

To this end, the launch of operations (once they have been adopted by the Commission) and important phases in their implementation shall be the subject of information measures, particularly in respect of regional media (press, radio and television). Appropriate collaboration must be ensured with the Commission’s Delegation in the applicant country.

The principles laid down in the two preceding paragraphs shall apply to advertisements such as press releases or publicity communiqués.

Information events

The organisers of information events such as conferences, seminars, fairs and exhibitions in connection with the implementation of operations part-financed by the Phare Programme shall undertake to make explicit the participation of the EU. The opportunity could be taken of displaying the European flags in meeting rooms and the EU logo upon documents depending on the circumstances. The Commission’s Delegation in the applicant country shall assist, as necessary, in the preparation and implementation of such events.

Information material

Publications (such as brochures and pamphlets) about programmes or similar measures financed or co-financed by Phare should, on the title page, contain a clear
indication of the EU’s participation as well as the EU logo where the national or regional emblem is used.

Where such publications include a preface, it should be signed by both the person responsible in the applicant country and, for the Commission, the Delegate of the Commission to ensure that Phare’s participation is made clear.

Such publications shall refer to the national and regional bodies responsible for informing interested parties.

The above-mentioned principles shall also apply to audio-visual material.

5. **Special arrangements concerning billboards, commemorative plaques and posters**

In order to ensure the visibility of measures part-financed by the Phare Programme, applicant countries shall ensure that the following information and publicity measures are complied with:

**Billboards**

Billboards providing information on EU participation in the financing of the investment should be erected on the sites of all projects in which EU participation amounts to ECU 1 million or more. Even where the competent national or regional authorities do not erect a billboard announcing their own involvement in financing the EU’s assistance must nevertheless be announced on a special billboard. Billboards must be of a size which is appreciable to the scale of operation (taking into account the amount of co-financing from the EU) and should be prepared according to the instructions contained in the *Information Handbook*.

Billboards shall be removed not earlier than six months after completion of the work and replaced, wherever possible, by a commemorative plaque in accordance with the provisions contained in the *Information Handbook*.

**Commemorative plaques**

Permanent commemorative plaques should be placed at sites accessible to the general public (congress centres, airports, stations, etc.). In addition to the EU logo, such plaques must mention the EU’s part-financing together with a mention of the Phare Programme.

Where a national, regional or local authority or another final beneficiary decides to erect a billboard, place a commemorative plaque, display a poster or take any other step to provide information about projects with a cost of less than ECU 1 million, the EU’s and Phare’s participation must also be indicated.

6. **Final provisions**
The national, regional or local authorities concerned may, in any event, carry out additional measures if they deem this appropriate. They shall consult the Commission’s Delegation and inform it of the initiatives they take so that the Delegation may participate appropriately in their realisation.

In order to facilitate the implementation of these provisions, the Commission, through its Delegations on the spot, shall provide technical assistance in the form of guidance on design requirements, where necessary.