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ANNEX

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1. Budget line: 13 03 67**

**1.2. Basic Act: Article 58 of Regulation (EC) 1303/2013**

**1.3. Policy context**

In order to promote the success of the Baltic Sea Strategy the European Parliament decided, every year since 2011, to introduce an allocation of EUR 2.5 million in the budget for activities of "Technical assistance and dissemination of information on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and an improved knowledge of macro-regions strategy". This is again the case in the 2014 budget. The EP has decided to include a financial allocation of EUR 2.5 million for activities supporting the EUSBSR in order for the Commission to promote:

the proper circulation of information through newsletters (including on-line), reports and conferences, and specifically an annual forum,

- the organisation of on-site events to familiarise all interested European regions with the Baltic Sea approach and the principles of macro-regions,
- successful governance of the strategy through the decentralised system that has been established and, in particular, the operation of the system of priority area coordinators and flagship project leaders,
- technical and administrative support for planning and coordination of activities related to the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region,
- availability of seed money for planning and preparing projects supporting the strategy,
- support for civil society participation,
- the continued helping of priority area coordinators in their coordination activity,
- participation in an implementation facility,
- the development of a more ambitious communication strategy on the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

The continuation of the support to the technical assistance action in 2014 should be used to:

- Keep on helping Priority Area Coordinators in their coordination activity;
- Participate in an implementation facility;
- Develop a more ambitious communication strategy on the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR).

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

Two different types of actions will be financed:

### **2.1. ACTION 1: Information and communication activities/ organisation of Annual Forum**

In its conclusions adopted on 15 November 2011, the Council "recommends that the Commission continues the good practice of holding the EUSBSR Annual Forum to provide a stable platform for debates on progress, results, challenges and solutions for implementation between a wide range of actors at all possible levels."

In June 2014, the Commission, together with Finland, will organise the 5th Annual Forum in Turku.

In June 2015, the Commission, together with Latvia, will organise the 6th Annual Forum in Latvia (Jurmala).

In addition, there is a need to develop a more ambitious communication plan for the EUSBSR. It will enable to coordinate the communication efforts of different actors at European, national and regional level, with the support of Interact. It will also help to communicate the Strategy to a wider public. To strengthen these communication activities some specific tools, such as knowledge management database will be developed. Some specific or thematic seminars will also be organised in order to reach the objective of a better dissemination of information. These seminars will contribute to a better linkage between partners' activities as well as between the Baltic Strategy and EU2020 priorities.

The macro-regional approach has generated a strong interest from other Member States throughout Europe. To familiarise all interested European regions with the Baltic Sea approach and with the principles of macro-regions, organisation of thematic seminars will be supported at the request of national and regional partners. It will contribute to exchange of experiences, practices and reflections on the main principles guiding the implementation of macro-regional strategies, as well as on the first concrete achievements of the EUSBSR. The experience and the lessons drawn so far from the Baltic Sea Strategy can also help partners developing other strategies (e.g. in the Adriatic-Ionian area, Alpine Space, etc.).

### **2.2. ACTION 2: Successful governance of the Strategy through the decentralised system and seed money initiative**

The successful governance of the Strategy through the decentralised system is of key importance for the implementation of the Strategy. The main actors of the decentralised governance system are National Contact Points (NCPs), Priority Area Coordinators (PACs), Horizontal Action Leaders (HALs) and Flagship Project Leaders (FPLs). They are appointed by the Member-States involved in the Strategy, and therefore they are in a de facto monopoly situation in delivering the Strategy. Their primary role is to take the appropriate measures to ensure the implementation of actions, projects and cross-cutting themes of the Action Plan. This cannot be done without involving a large number of stakeholders and partners, and without multiplying contacts and meetings in order to find the right actors at the right place, who will be the guarantors of the success of the Strategy. The experience they have developed so far, related to these different tasks, has highlighted a serious need for technical assistance funding.

Again in 2014, the main goal is to provide the technical and administrative support for planning and coordination of National Contact Points/ Priority Area Coordinators/ Horizontal Action Leaders/ Flagship Project Leaders activities related to the EUSBSR. Based on a work programme submitted to the Commission, financial assistance to them will cover staff costs

and organisation of meetings and conferences (travel costs, room rental, catering), It will also cover studies and/or expert costs for specific questions (on feasibility questions, on thematic issues, etc.)

To enhance successful implementation of the EUSBSR, seed money facility was set-up in 2012 for projects contributing directly to the Strategy. This action that provides the necessary funds for projects that lack sufficient funding, especially in the start-up phase, will be continued in 2014. In addition, it will also answer to non-financial needs of projects through making available the knowledge resources in the Region. This knowledge assistance in the preliminary phases of planning and preparation will help to envisage better links with the Strategy. Seed money initiative can also boost participation of civil society in the EUSBSR.

### **3. TYPE OF FINANCIAL INTERVENTION**

#### **3.1. Information and communication activities/ organisation of Annual Forum**

##### *3.1.1. Organisation of 5th Annual Forum*

A direct grant will be awarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland (or a Region, local authority or organisation appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland) that holds a de facto monopoly position, since it has been appointed by Finland to organise the 5th EUSBSR Annual Forum in Finland. The ERDF co-financing rate for this action will be up to 90% of eligible costs with a maximum EU contribution of EUR 364 367.

##### *3.1.2. Organisation of the 6th Annual Forum*

A direct grant will be awarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia (or a Region, local authority or organisation appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia) that holds a de facto monopoly position, since it has been appointed by Latvia to organise the 6th EUSBSR Annual Forum in Latvia. The ERDF co-financing rate for this action will be up to 90% of eligible costs with a maximum EU contribution of EUR 305 841.

#### **3.2. Successful governance of the Strategy through the decentralised system and seed money initiative**

Based on needs expressed and work programmes, a direct grant may be awarded to National Contact Points/Priority Area Coordinators/Horizontal Action Leaders/Flagship Project Leaders to implement the Strategy. Since those beneficiaries are designated by Member States to coordinate the implementation of the EUSBSR Action Plan they hold a de facto monopoly position in this respect and a grant can be awarded without prior call for proposal.

The Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein was appointed in 2012 to coordinate the implementation of a seed money facility for projects supporting the Strategy. This action will be continued in 2014.

Maximum indicative budget: EUR 1 829 792

#### **4. TOTAL BUDGET: EUR 2 500 000**

The indicative distribution of the budget between the actions is the following:

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Allocation</b>
1. Information and communication activities/ organisation of Annual Forum	EUR 670 208
2. Successful governance of the Strategy through the decentralised system and seed money initiative	EUR 1 829 792
<b>Total</b>	<b>EUR 2 500 000</b>

#### **5. INDICATIVE CALENDAR FOR PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES**

The total of the technical assistance budget will be spent through direct grants. The grant agreements will be signed with the beneficiaries in Finland and Latvia appointed by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs for the organisation of the 5th and 6th Annual Fora. In addition, grant agreements will be signed with National Contact Points, Priority Area Coordinators, Horizontal Action Leaders and Flagship Project Leaders no later than December 2014.

For other activities public procurement rules will apply.

#### **6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

The expected outcomes are those mentioned under Point 2. Among them, there is an expectation that the organisation of the Annual Fora will ensure an adequate momentum for the Strategy. The communication and information activities, including events through Europe, should foster the macro-regional concept. Regarding the financial support for National Contact Points/ Priority Area Coordinators/ Horizontal Action Leaders/ Flagship Project Leaders, it should improve the planning and coordination activities of these actors. The continuation of the seed money initiative will support projects that contribute directly to the Strategy. It will also help to reinforce the knowledge resources indispensable for further development of projects related to the Strategy.