

EN
ANNEX II

13 03 77 12 - Preparatory Action
Towards a common regional identity, reconciliation of nations and economic and social cooperation including a Pan-European Expertise and Excellence Platform in the Danube macro-region

Introduction

Budget line

13 03 77 12

Legal Basis

Preparatory Action within the meaning of Article 54(2)(b) of 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 1605/2002

Policy context

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region has been endorsed by the European Council in 2011. This Strategy proposes a cooperation framework and an Action Plan for the 14 countries of the Danube Region (9 EU Member States and 5 non EU Member States). The implementation of the Strategy is done by the countries themselves. The Commission acts as a facilitator.

General objectives of the preparatory action

The resources allocated to this preparatory action - EUR 1 800 000 - will be used to support the establishment of economic and social cooperation in the macro-region, contributing to further integration and reconciliation of the participating nations in a practical way. It will support

- the work of key implementers (National Coordinators, Priority Area Coordinators) coordinating and implementing each Priority Area.
- the provision of online-guidance to Danube projects to find the appropriate funding sources.

Actions/ Type of financial intervention

1. Support to key implementers:

Under Article 190 (1) (f) of the Rules of Application grants may be awarded without a call for proposals for actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative power, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals, duly substantiated in the award decision. The assistance will be implemented through a direct grant to the Government of the Land Baden-Württemberg in its role as hosting organisation of the Strategy Point for the Danube Region (the “Danube Strategy Point”). Following the request of National Coordinators, Priority Area Coordinators and the Danube Transnational Programme’s Programming Committee, the European Commission, in its role as facilitator, developed in May 2014 a Concept Paper for the Danube Strategy Point. The 14 Danube Countries selected (by majority vote) the Government of Land Baden-Württemberg (that acts also as NCP in the framework of the Danube Strategy) to host the Danube Strategy Point.

The establishment of a Strategy Point is a recommendation in the report from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the governance of macro-regional strategies (2014/284), where the need for more coordination and interaction between the responsible stakeholders and organisations was identified.

The Danube Strategy Point will improve the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. It shall provide conceptual and developmental facilitation overall for the macro regional strategy. As an example platforms could support the work of key implementers, both in practical ways, and in terms of data collection, analysis and advice. It will coordinate and interact between the key stakeholders, through support to implementation (e.g. horizontal activities between Priorities, support for building up networks, organising events, support the work of key implementers PACs and NCPs etc), communication (e.g. gathering information about implementation, target development, communication activities to other stakeholders), monitoring and evaluation (e.g. analysis of reporting, providing consolidated reports, supporting evaluation procedures). Financial support to third parties (eg the PACs) shall not exceed EUR 60 000 per third party, in accordance with Article 210 RAP.

The State Ministry of Baden-Württemberg is the main responsible ministry for the Danube Strategy and is a public body.

The maximum rate of EU co-financing is 100%.

Two award criteria are to be applied for the evaluation of the proposal: a) relevance of the proposal with the objectives of the Strategy and b) efficiency.

The indicative budget: EUR 1 600 000.

2. Online guidance for Danube projects

Under Article 190 (1) (c) of the Rules of Application grants may be awarded without a call for proposals in the case of bodies with a *de jure* or *de facto* monopoly, duly substantiated in the award decision.

A direct grant may be awarded to the Priority Area Coordinator (PAC) of Priority Area (PA) 10 ‘To step up institutional capacity and cooperation’, which holds a *de facto* monopoly position in the Strategy work. It has horizontal tasks for the implementation of the Strategy and also serves all other Priority Areas, such as the facilitation of transnational projects. The PAC of PA 10 is the City of Vienna and thus a public body.

The PAC of PA 10 already manages the Start Project Fund for the Strategy (CCI 2013CE160AT130). As a complementary action to this project, the PAC of PA 10 will establish an online-tool for Danube project holders, an online one-stop-shop to find relevant funding sources.

5% co-financing will be provided by the City of Vienna. The maximum possible rate of EU co-financing is 95%. In accordance with Article 131(3) FR the Commission waives the verification of the operational capacity as the pre-selected beneficiary is a public body following a risk analysis.

Two award criteria are to be applied for the evaluation of the proposals: a) relevance of the proposal with the objectives of the Strategy and b) efficiency.

The indicative budget: EUR 200 000

Total budget

EUR 1 800 000

Indicative calendar for procedures

The grant agreements will be signed by end 2014.