



Brussels, 14.12.2017
C(2017) 8441 final

ANNEX 1

ANNEX

to the

COMMISSION DECISION

concerning the adoption of a financing decision and work programme for 2017 for the implementation of the pilot project titled "European Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR): generation and preparation of initiatives and projects with a genuine added value for the Region as a whole"

ANNEX

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Budget Line: 13 03 77 21

1.2 Legal Basis: not applicable

1.3 Policy Context

The EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) was adopted by the Commission on 17 June 2014¹ and endorsed by the General Affairs Council on 29 September 2014² and by the European Council on 23-24 October 2014³.

The EUSAIR is aimed at helping the eight participating countries (four EU Member States: Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, and four candidate/potential candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia) to strengthen their cooperation in the fields of blue economy, transport and energy networks, environment and sustainable tourism for the benefit of the 70 million citizens living in the macro-region.

1.4 General objective of the pilot project

The general objective of this-pilot project is to organise and develop:

- effective multi-level governance in pursuit of the objectives laid down in the EUSAIR;
- capacity building among EUSAIR key implementers as a pre-requisite for effective implementation of the EUSAIR Action Plan;
- generation, preparation and implementation of initiatives and projects with a genuine macro-regional value;
- awareness-raising initiatives, cultural events, training programmes and/or seminars for citizens and especially for young people in the Region, with the aim of creating ownership with regard to EUSAIR, emphasising shared regional identity and promoting partnership and networking across the Region. These programmes should stress civic education, transnational entrepreneurship, opportunities for cultural events and good neighbourly relations, and help promote effective EU integration of candidate and potential candidate countries for EU membership.

¹ COM(2014) 357 final and its accompanying Action Plan SWD(2014) 190 final.

² <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/25286/144951.pdf>

³ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145397.pdf, point 25.

2. ACTIONS/TYPE OF FINANCIAL INTERVENTION

2.1 Adriatic-Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities (AI-NURECC Initiative)

Under Article 190(1 (f) of the Rules of Application of the Financial Regulation, 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.

For the AI-NURECC initiative, a direct grant will be awarded to the AI-NURECC consortium. The AI-NURECC initiative is an initiative of key stakeholders of the Adriatic Ionian region, which have decided to join their efforts with the aim of supporting the implementation of the EUSAIR. The action will be implemented by a consortium involving:

- the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR – Not for Profit, French Association under “la loi du 1^{er} juillet 1901”. Legal representative: Eleni Marianou, Secretary General);
- the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion (Croatian NGO. Legal representative: Mr Nikola Dobroslavić, President, Governor of the Dubrovnik region, Croatia);
- the Forum of Adriatic-Ionian Chambers of Commerce (Not for Profit, Italian Association. Legal representative: Ms Mirjana Čagali, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Split, Croatia);
- the Forum of the Adriatic-Ionian Cities. Not for Profit, Italian Association. Legal representative: Mr Francesco Minna, Mayor of Vasto, Italy);
- the Forum of the Universities of the Adriatic Ionian Region (UNIADRION - Not for Profit, Italian Association. Legal representative: Mr Francesco Ubertini, Rector of the University of Bologna, Italy).

The members of the Consortium represent networks (regions, chambers of commerce, cities, universities) with a long-standing experience in promoting cooperation on regional development priorities among EUSAIR countries.

The AI-NURECC initiative is expected to provide a powerful tool to boost the political and technical dialogue among key Adriatic-Ionian stakeholders, thus fostering EUSAIR multi-level governance. AI-NURECC will provide the EUSAIR with a multi-level and multi-actor community which will ensure a flexible and effective coordination among institutions and organisations, thus fostering the sound implementation of the EUSAIR Action Plan through communication, networking, analysis on the multilevel governance of the eight EUSAIR countries etc..

In addition to the governance aspect, AI-NURECC is expected to identify common «flag» strategic large-scale project(s), aiming at mobilizing the available ESIF and IPA funds.

At the EUSAIR Governing Board meeting held in Ancona on 26-27 October 2017, the Commission consulted the National and Pillar Coordinators on the scope of this initiative.

For this action, a direct grant will be awarded to the members of the AI-NURECC Consortium. The EU co-financing would be maximum 97%.

The award criteria for the evaluation of the proposal for this grant will be a) cost-effectiveness and b) consistency of the proposal with the objectives of the pilot project.

Total budget

EUR 800,000

Indicative calendar for procedures

Procedures will be launched after the adoption of the financing decision. No grant agreement will be signed before. Indicative timetable for signature of the grant agreement is Q1 of 2018.

2.2 Support to candidate/potential candidate countries participating in the EUSAIR

Under Article 190(1)(c) of the Rules of Application of the Financial Regulation, grants may be awarded to bodies with a *de jure* or *de facto* monopoly, duly substantiated in the award decision.

For the support to candidate/ potential candidate countries participating in EUSAIR, direct grants will be awarded to the EUSAIR National Coordinators of Albania (Ministry of European Integration), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Directorate for European Integration of the Council of Ministers), Montenegro (Ministry of European Affairs), Serbia (Ministry of European Integration).

The initiative to provide technical/capacity building support to EUSAIR Pillar Coordinators of the candidate/potential candidate countries has been endorsed by the EUSAIR Governing Board.

In order to effectively implement the EUSAIR Action Plan, designated national administrations in the four candidate/potential candidate countries need technical support for building capacity. In particular, technical support is needed by the Pillar Coordinators designated by the respective countries to implement the EUSAIR Pillars together with the fellow administration of the EU Member States participating in the EUSAIR. Namely: Albania, for the implementation of EUSAIR Pillar 4 "Sustainable Tourism" together with Croatia; Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the implementation of Pillar 3 "Environmental Quality" together with Slovenia; Montenegro, for the implementation of Pillar 1 "Blue Growth" together with Greece; and Serbia, for the implementation of Pillar 2 "Connecting the Region (transport and energy networks) together with Italy.

This pilot project will allow the candidate/potential candidate countries to allocate one full time expert in the respective domains (two in case of Serbia: transport and energy), to work full time along with the designated Pillar Coordinator (two in case of Serbia) for the next three years: a period where capacity building is crucial to ensure the sustained successful implementation of the Strategy. It is to be noted that the same approach is followed by fellow EU Member States, where technical experts are hired to work along with the respective Pillar Coordinators for five years (until 2022).

Four grants, one per country, will be concluded with the designated national authorities of the candidate/potential candidate countries. The EU co-financing would be maximum 97%.

The award criteria for the evaluation of the proposal for this grant will be a) cost-effectiveness and b) consistency of the proposal with the objectives of the pilot project.

Total budget

EUR 500 000

Indicative calendar for procedures

Procedures will be launched after the adoption of the financing decision. No grant agreement will be signed before. Indicative timetable for signature of the grant agreements is Q2 of 2018.