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ANNEX 1

**ANNEX**

*to the*

**COMMISSION DECISION**

**on the adoption of the work programme for 2017 for the Preparatory Action "Support for growth and governance in regions whose development is lagging behind"**

## PREPARATORY ACTION:

### "SUPPORT FOR GROWTH AND GOVERNANCE IN REGIONS WHOSE DEVELOPMENT IS LAGGING BEHIND"

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *Budget line: 13 03 77 19*

1.2. *Basic Act: Not applicable*

1.3. *Policy context*

The promotion of smart specialisation strategies is an important component of the Directorate General's work programme as a contribution to the Union's regional policy.

Lagging regions still face obstacles linked to fragmentation and sustainability of research and innovation infrastructures. They often experience difficulties in building institutional and legal environments conducive to innovation. As such, they require specific attention with regard to human capital, skills development and a more inclusive innovation process.

1.4. *General objectives of the Preparatory Action*

This preparatory action builds on the positive outcomes of the previous initiative of the European Parliament on refinement and implementation of the Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) in the Greek region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (REMTh).

It has served as a test bed for the theory of smart specialisation and ongoing support provided to seven EU regions (BG32-Severen Tsentralen, PL62-WarminskoMazurskie, HU32-Hajdu Bihar County, EL11-Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, IT4-Puglia, PT16-Centro, ES43-Extremadura).

The activities of the JRC under this preparatory action will require in-depth analysis of governance, transnational cooperation and refinement of the RIS3 model in two types of regions that are lagging behind:

- a) **low-growth regions** (regions in Member States with a GDP per capita in purchasing power standards (PPS) below the EU average in 2012 that did not converge with the EU average between 2002 and 2012 — regions in Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal) and
- b) **less developed regions** (regions with a GDP per capita in PPS below 50% of the EU average in 2011 — i.e. a number of regions in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Croatia).

## **2. Actions/ Type of financial intervention**

In 2017 the Preparatory Action implementation will be entrusted to the Joint Research Centre ('JRC') of the European Commission through the signature of an Administrative Agreement. 2017 appropriations constitute a continuation of the 2016 Preparatory Action.

The proposed activities build not only on the current lagging regions activity (focused on the seven low and slow growth regions) but also the closely complementary and concurrent EP preparatory action on Romania (the economic competitive advantages and the potential for smart specialisation at regional level in Romania). The new phase of work will therefore build on the outcomes, coverage and approach of both activities.

The duration of this Preparatory Action should not exceed 24 months from its launch.

The JRC will need to identify critical aspects for effective design of the RIS3 in regions lagging behind and identify drivers as well as obstacles for its efficient implementation while also recommend actions to:

- enhance quality and ensure a smoother implementation of smart specialisation strategies;
- build or improve the administrative capacity of administrations designing and implementing smart specialisation strategies;
- provide and report evidence on the results of RIS3 implementation, their effectiveness and added value;
- enhance dissemination of good practices of design and implementation of smart specialisation strategies;
- connect innovation actors to the wider research and innovation community and global value chains.

The JRC will also organise back-to-back on-site events in regions, including stakeholder events and peer reviews.

### **3. Total budget: EUR 1 000 000 and indicative calendar for implementation procedures**

The budget of EUR 1 000 000 (in 2017 commitment appropriations) will be entrusted to the JRC through an administrative agreement following the charge back process within the Commission for the provision of technical assistance services. Part of the budget i.e. 20% shall be used for externalised consultancy (through procurement). Most of the actions will start in 2018.