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ANNEX

Work programme for 2020 in the framework of the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund for the use of technical assistance

1. Introduction

On the basis of the objectives given in Article 58 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, this work programme contains the actions to be financed and the budget breakdown for year 2020 as follows:

- a) for grants, implemented under direct management: point 2,
- b) for prizes, implemented under direct management: point 3: N/A,
- c) for procurement, implemented under direct management: point 4,
- d) for actions implemented under indirect management: point 5,
- e) for contributions to trust funds: point 6: N/A,
- f) for financial instruments: point 7: N/A,
- g) for contributions to blending facilities: point 8: N/A,
- h) for other actions or expenditure: point 9: AMI-list experts and administrative agreements.

Legal basis

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006¹, and in particular Article 58 thereof.

Budget lines

13 03 65 01 - European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) — Operational technical assistance
13 04 61 01 - Cohesion Fund (CF) — Operational technical assistance

Objectives pursued

¹ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320

Technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission will support the preparatory, monitoring, administrative and technical assistance, evaluation, audit and control measures necessary for implementing Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

Expected results

Technical assistance will result in

- Active contribution to deliver Commission priorities (Jobs, Growth and Investment, Digital Single Market, Energy Union, etc.)
- Development of Cohesion Policy and establishment of close links to other EU policies
- Demonstration and dissimulation of the EU added value of Cohesion Policy
- Territorial cohesion in Europe
- Sound management of the Funds
- Improvement of the performance of the internal processes

2. *Grants*

The global budgetary envelope reserved for grants under this work programme is EUR 43 826 000 of which EUR 32 276 000 will be supported from ERDF operational budget line 13 03 65 01 and EUR 11 550 000 will be supported from CF operational budget line 13 04 61 01.

2.1. **Development of 24 "Smart Regions" episodes**

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The grant will be awarded to Euronews, based on the Framework Convention between the European Commission (represented by DG CONNECT) and Euronews.

Following the adoption of the proposals for the draft European Budget for the next programming period 2021-2027, DG REGIO is working on the narrative of the programmes for the new funding period, which will largely focus on smart growth. It is in this context that the branding proposed by Euronews under the series 'Smart Regions' can prove particularly effective. In addition, Euronews is a body pursuing an aim of general European interest in the field of information, broadcasting simultaneously in 13 different languages out of which 8 EU official languages. Therefore, only Euronews can offer the language coverage and the expertise we need to reach out to a large number of EU/Non-EU regions, where our partners mostly prefer using their local language instead of English.

Description of the activities to be funded by the specific grant directly awarded under a framework partnership

The grant will finance the production and dissemination of monographies with the aim of explaining to EU citizens how regional policy has a real impact in their lives, supporting the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs.

Implementation

The grant will be implemented directly by DG REGIO.

2.2. Outreach creative dialogues at local and regional level

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The grants will be awarded to Europe Direct Information Centres (EDICs) via an invitation to submit proposals under the Framework Partnership Agreements signed between the European Commission (represented by DG COMM) and the structures hosting EDICs.

The EDICs network supports DG COMM in its mandate to outreach towards citizens. EDICs contribute to communicating about the European Union (EU) through engagement with the public at local and regional level. This makes the EDICs network an ideal partner for DG REGIO to implement communication activities on cohesion policy targeted towards the general public at local and regional level.

Description of the activities to be funded by the specific grants directly awarded under framework partnerships

The grants will provide financial support for regional or local activities organised by the EDICs to increase the general public's awareness of the Commission's activities in the context of cohesion policy.

The projects selected should contribute to an increase in the number of people who are aware of and understand the positive impact and role of the cohesion policy in their region.

Implementation

The grants will be implemented by DG COMM via a co-delegation type II, according to Article 3 of Commission Decision of 3 August 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union (European Commission section) for the attention of the Commission departments.

2.3. Media Call 4.0

Type of applicants targeted by the call for proposals

Beneficiaries will be media organisations / news agencies, non-profit organisations, universities and educational institutions, research centres and think-tanks, associations of European interest, private entities and public authorities (national, regional and local), with the exception of the authorities in charge of the implementation of Cohesion policy in accordance with Article 123 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

Call for proposals for funding information measures relating to Cohesion policy, in particular for reporting/broadcasting about regional policy projects and results.

In line with DG REGIO's Communication Strategy 2017-2020, these information measures shall aim to raise stakeholders' and citizens' awareness of Cohesion policy objectives and results and to inform them of its contribution to the development of the regions. They should also raise awareness of the win-win impact of Cohesion policy and the potential of Cohesion policy to induce political cohesion in the EU. In addition, these information measures will aim to increase the participation of stakeholders and citizens to debates about Cohesion policy and about setting priorities for the Cohesion policy post-2020. Ultimately they should help enhance citizens' trust in the EU.

Implementation

This Action will be implemented directly by DG REGIO through a call for proposals.

2.4. "Open Cohesion School" follow-up and final event in Brussels

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The grant will be awarded to the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, which is the body in charge of the Italian pilot project, and which will deploy and extend "A Scuola Di Open Coesione" model in more Member States following the pilot initiative launched by DG REGIO in 2019 with the participation of 5 countries.

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of point (f) of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation, i.e. awarded for activities with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative powers, on condition that the activities concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals

The grant will fund a range of supporting actions such as providing hands-on assistance to set up the project activities, developing ad hoc tools and providing expertise (i.e. toolkit, on-the-spot training, mentoring). Additionally, this action will also cover the organisation of a final event at the EURegionsWeek 2020 to bring together students participating in the pilot action. "A scuola di Open Coesione" is an Italian initiative promoting the engagement of secondary school students in the monitoring of ESI Funds-funded projects through the use of open data.

Implementation

The grant will be implemented directly by DG REGIO.

2.5. Interreg Volunteer Youth

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The grant will be awarded to the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).
The Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) is a registered association with the exclusive and direct purpose to promote cross-border cooperation in Europe. AEBR is a civil society body capable of conducting and promoting projects in the intended shape and scope. Its members are European border and cross-border regions in Member States of the European Union or the Council of Europe. Since its creation in the early 1970s, AEBR has been

establishing and refining a general network of border and cross-border regions, which is not limited to the members of AEBR or the European Union with significant expertise and experience.

The AEBR Secretariat's reputation, knowledge, quality control and administrative capacity to coordinate and manage cross-border cooperation pilot projects coupled with the cross-border specific knowledge can ensure successful implementation of this project.

The actions proposed by this project to offer the possibility to young Europeans aged 18-30 to serve as volunteers in Interreg programmes and projects, have specific characteristics that require the expertise of AEBR, in particular: a type of body on account of its reputation, independence, accountability, technical competence, its high degree of specialisation and its administrative power. Thus, AEBR is the only civil society body capable of conducting the actions of the project in the intended shape and scope.

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of point (f) of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation, i.e. awarded for activities with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative powers, on condition that the activities concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals

The Interreg Volunteer Youth initiative (IVY) is a part of the broader European Solidarity Corps Initiative launched by the European Commission. This initiative offers the possibility to young Europeans aged 18-30 to serve as volunteers in Interreg programmes and projects. The aim is to promote concrete achievements of Interreg programmes and projects, also via Citizens' Engagement Activities.

The grant will continue to contribute to setting up a scheme encouraging young people to participate actively, on a voluntary basis, to Interreg projects or on their promotion.

Implementation

The grant will be implemented directly by DG REGIO.

2.6. B-solutions - pilot project to tackle specific border obstacles

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The grant will be awarded to the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).

The Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) is a registered association with the exclusive and direct purpose to promote cross-border cooperation in Europe. AEBR is a civil society body capable of conducting and promoting projects in the intended shape and scope. Its members are European border and cross-border regions in member states of the European Union or the Council of Europe. Since its creation in the early 1970s, AEBR has been establishing and refining a general network of border and cross-border regions, which is not limited to the members of AEBR or the European Union with significant expertise and experience.

The AEBR Secretariat's reputation, knowledge, quality control and administrative capacity to coordinate and manage cross-border cooperation pilot projects coupled with the cross-border specific knowledge can ensure successful implementation of this project.

The actions proposed by this project have specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its reputation, independence, accountability, technical competence, its high degree of specialisation and its administrative power. Thus, AEBR is the only civil society body capable of conducting the actions of the project in the intended shape and scope.

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of point (f) of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation, i.e. awarded for activities with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative powers, on condition that the activities concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals

This grant will encourage EU cross border regions to develop and share pilot solutions to reduce legal and administrative border obstacles in various areas such as mobility, taxation, employment etc.

B-solutions-initiative helps tackle specific border obstacles by developing pilot solutions focussed on a number of topics selected for their reproductibility character (applications from regional institutions). This is the second phase of the already succesful b-solutions initiatives where more than 40 obstacles have already been identified and formulated. Solutions are currently being developed for all of them.

Implementation

The grant will be implemented directly by DG REGIO.

2.7. Cross border data collection

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The grant will be awarded to the consortium of national statistical offices (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Poland, Denmark and the Netherlands) which implemented the pilot phase. The lead partner in the consortium, the Dutch Statistical Office will coordinate the second phase.

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of point (d) of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation, i.e. awarded to bodies identified by a basic act, within the meaning of Article 58 of the Financial Regulation, as beneficiaries or to bodies designated by Member States, under their responsibility, where those Member States are identified by a basic act as beneficiaries

This grant will finance the second phase of cross border data collection, building on the successful grant allocated under the Technical Assistance budget in 2015-2016 for national statistical offices to explore new ways to collect cross-border data, particularly to measure flows of workers. The pilot phase identified three methodologies; this second phase will develop the most promising one, i.e. use of data from existing administrative databases.

This action is a direct commitment made in the 2017 Communication on "Boosting EU Border Regions".

Implementation

The grant will be implemented directly by DG REGIO

2.8. Homologues Group Meeting 2020

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The grant will be awarded to the Internal Audit Service of the Republic of Cyprus.

According to Article 128(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the Commission, the audit authorities and any coordination body (the Homologues Group) shall meet on a regular basis and, as a general rule, at least once a year to examine the annual control report, the audit opinion and the audit strategy, and to exchange views on issues relating to improvement of the management and control.

Because of the treatment and exchange of confidential and sensitive information during the meeting of the Homologue Group between the representatives of the Ministries of Finance of the Member States, the European Court of Auditors and the European Commission, the organisation of this meeting is limited to the national bodies of control and audit. These entities have decided to designate annually (during the meeting of year n-1) the body amongst them that will ensure the organisation of the meeting for year n. The Internal Audit Service of the Republic of Cyprus has been designated as such to host the 2020 Homologues Group Meeting. Therefore a de facto monopoly has been established.

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of point (c) of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation, i.e. awarded to bodies with a de jure or de facto monopoly or to bodies designated by Member States, under their responsibility, where those Member States are in a de jure or de facto monopoly situation.

This grant will finance the 29th Annual Meeting of the European financial controllers "Homologues Group". It is the annual gathering of representatives of Member States and the Commission, so as to discuss issues relating to controls of the management of the Structural Funds.

Implementation

The grant will be implemented directly by DG REGIO.

2.9. Data collection at the national level

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

Grants will be provided to National Statistical Institutes or other national authorities in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation (EC) 223/2009².

Description of the activities to be funded by the grants awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of point (d) of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation, i.e. awarded to bodies

² Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 on European statistics and repealing Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1101/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the transmission of data subject to statistical confidentiality to the Statistical Office of the European Communities, Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 on Community Statistics, and Council Decision 89/382/EEC, Euratom establishing a Committee on the Statistical Programmes of the European Communities (Text with relevance for the EEA and for Switzerland).

identified by a basic act, within the meaning of Article 58 of the Financial Regulation, as beneficiaries or to bodies designated by Member States, under their responsibility, where those Member States are identified by a basic act as beneficiaries

The grants will support the collection of geospatial data sets, such as those related to schools, hospitals and other important public services. They will also finance the collection of regional poverty data within the framework of the regulation on integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) and will support the gender based violence survey.

Implementation

The grants will be implemented by DG ESTAT via a co-delegation Type II, according to Article 3 of Commission decision of 3 August 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union (European Commission section) for the attention of the Commission departments.

2.10. EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) Annual Forum 2020

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The grant will be awarded to the Commissariat General à l'Egalité des Territoires (CGET) - French Commissariat.

France will take over the presidency of EUSALP in February 2020, as was decided by the EUSALP General Assembly (currently Lombardia region is holding the Presidency on behalf of Italy).

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of point (c) of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation, i.e. awarded to bodies with a de jure or de facto monopoly or to bodies designated by Member States, under their responsibility, where those Member States are in a de jure or de facto monopoly situation

The grant will contribute to the organisation of the EUSALP Annual Forum in 2020, as well as support the French presidency's actions along the year 2020.

The objective of this support is to ensure implementation of crucial policies for the Alpine area, in line with post-2020 objectives such as embedding of funds with mainstreaming programme, greener Europe, youth participation and stakeholders better involvement. It will ensure strategic coordination of the Strategy and facilitate its implementation, notably by supporting the Annual Forum which is the yearly main event where the EUSALP key implementers meet the stakeholders of the region and representatives of the civil society at large.

Implementation

The grant will be implemented directly by DG REGIO.

2.11. EUSALP Communication Strategy

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The grant will be awarded to the Commissariat General à l'Egalité des Territoires (CGET) - French Commissariat.

France will take over the presidency of EUSALP in February 2020, as was decided by the EUSALP General Assembly (currently Lombardia region is holding the Presidency on behalf of Italy).

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of point (c) of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation, i.e. awarded to bodies with a de jure or de facto monopoly or to bodies designated by Member States, under their responsibility, where those Member States are in a de jure or de facto monopoly situation

The European Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) endorsed a Communication Strategy in March 2019. In line with this Communication Strategy, this grant will support the implementation of Communication actions, in order to raise awareness of the strategy within the given territories, but also by promoting benefits of the Strategy at the EU level and the concrete actions a strategy can provide according to the 3 pillars :

- economic growth and innovation
- mobility and connectivity
- governance, including institutional capacity.

By getting in touch with citizens, stakeholders, civil society, media and politicians at local, regional, national and EU level, the EUSALP strategy demonstrates the real impact of EU in the alpine region.

Implementation

The grant will be implemented directly by DG REGIO.

2.12. Cultural Routes in Macro Regional Strategies - Routes4U

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The grant will be awarded to the Council of Europe - Institute of Cultural Routes

As of 2016, there are 32 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, covering over 50 countries across the European continent and beyond. The certification and evaluation of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe is regulated by Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res (2013)67.

Since 2010, the Council of Europe and the European Commission have joined forces to raise the visibility of the Cultural Routes programme, increase capacity of the associative networks managing the Cultural Routes at European, national and local level, while supporting key actions to reinforce the routes' branding, visibility and communication.

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of point (c) of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation, i.e. awarded to bodies with a de jure or de facto monopoly or to bodies designated by Member States, under their responsibility, where those Member States are in a de jure or de facto monopoly situation

The project Routes4U is a partnership between the Commission and the Council of Europe aiming at developing cultural routes across the 4 Macro Regional Strategies (MRS) since 2017. This grant aims at supporting the continuation of the Routes4U project, taking into account the results achieved so far.

The grant aims at raising awareness of MRS and their cultural heritage, towards both the citizens and stakeholders of cultural routes. The goal is also to create a sustainable economic development across MRS throughout the cultural routes. Most importantly, this project contributes to implement pillar 4 of Adriatic and Ionian Strategy "sustainable tourism" (EUSAIR), Action group 2 of the Alpine Strategy (EUSALP), Priority Axis 3 "culture & tourism" of Danube Region (EUSDR) and Priority Axis "culture" and PA "tourism" of the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR).

Implementation

The grant will be implemented directly by DG REGIO.

2.13. JASPERS Specific Grant Agreement 2020

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

According to Article 31(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, a grant may be awarded to the European Investment Bank (EIB) covering initiatives implemented on a multiannual basis.

JASPERS will be implemented throughout the 2014-2020 programming period (in continuation of JASPERS action in the 2007-2013 programming period). On this basis a direct grant will be awarded to the EIB.

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of point (g) of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation, i.e. awarded to the EIB or the EIF for actions of technical assistance

JASPERS provides independent advice to beneficiary countries in order to prepare high quality major projects, which will be co-financed by EU funds. JASPERS focuses its support mainly during the preparation phase of projects - from identification to submission of the request for EU grant assistance. This support typically covers cost-benefit analysis, engineering, financial, environmental and procurement issues, review of documentation (such as feasibility studies or grant applications) and advice on compliance with EU regulations. In some cases, advice can be provided up to the start of the construction phase. JASPERS operates to a large extent from the EIB external offices of Bucharest, Vienna, Warsaw and Sofia.

Implementation

The grant will be implemented directly by DG REGIO.

2.14. Support for Citizen engagement in Cohesion policy implementation

Type of applicants targeted by the call for proposals

Authorities involved in implementation of REGIO funds and civil society organisations (CSOs).

Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

In line with the political guidelines of the next Commission, DG REGIO wants to deepen and widen the engagement of citizens in Cohesion Policy implementation.

The aim of the grant is to encourage, recognise and share good practices on how to work closer with citizens and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in implementation of Cohesion Policy at local level. It will incentivise the design and implementation of innovative actions in the field of citizens' engagement for cohesion policy. It will finance a number of Managing Authorities that have found innovative ways of working closely with citizens/civil society in their management and implementation of Cohesion Policy to implement those initiatives.

Implementation

This grant will be implemented directly by DG REGIO

3. Prizes

N/A

4. Procurement

The global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement contracts in 2020 is EUR 42 617 075 of which EUR 32 587 257 will be supported from ERDF operational budget line 13 03 65 01 and EUR 10 029 818 will be supported from CF operational budget line 13 04 61 01.

4.1. Service contracts

General description of the contracts envisaged

The procurement budget will be used to implement service contracts (both direct and specific under framework contracts) that will cover:

- Audit
- Communication and Publication
- Evaluation
- Informatics (IT)
- Meetings and Conferences
- Studies, statistics and data collection
- Technical and other administrative assistance to Member States

- Translations (externalised)
- Trainings (externalised)

Implementation

Part of the procurement budget dedicated to Audit will be co-delegated to DG EMPL via a co-delegation Type II, according to Article 3 of Commission Decision of 3 August 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union (European Commission section) for the attention of the Commission departments, to contribute to ARACHNE project that is developing, testing and implementing a risk scoring tool and to perform audits on direct grants.

Part of the procurement budget dedicated to Communication and Publications will be co-delegated to the Publications Office via a co-delegation Type II, according to Article 3 of Commission Decision of 3 August 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union (European Commission section) for the attention of the Commission departments, for publications and printing services; another part will be co-delegated to DG COMM via a co-delegation Type II, according to Article 3 of Commission Decision of 3 August 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union (European Commission section) for the attention of the Commission departments, for contributions to the Corporate Communication and other campaigns.

Part of the procurement budget dedicated to IT will be co-delegated to DIGIT via a co-delegation Type II, according to Article 3 of Commission Decision of 3 August 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union (European Commission section) for the attention of the Commission departments, for the hosting of SFC.

Part of the procurement budget dedicated to Meetings and Conferences will be co-delegated to SCIC via a co-delegation Type II, according to Article 3 of Commission Decision of 3 August 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union (European Commission section) for the attention of the Commission departments, for a stakeholders event to launch the Staff Working Document on Specific Territories.

Part of the procurement budget dedicated to Statistics and Data Collection will be co-delegated to ESTAT via a co-delegation Type II, according to Article 3 of Commission Decision of 3 August 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union (European Commission section) for the attention of the Commission departments, for access to road network data and administrative boundaries data.

Part of the procurement budget dedicated to Technical and other administrative assistance to Member States will be co-delegated to AGRI via a co-delegation Type II, according to Article 3 of Commission Decision of 3 August 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union (European Commission section) for the attention of the Commission departments, for running the Brussels based Facility for Broadband Competence Offices. Another part will be co-delegated to NEAR via a co-delegation Type II, according to Article 3 of Commission Decision of 3 August 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union (European Commission section) for the attention of the Commission departments, for participation in the

TAIEX-REGIO Peer 2 Peer scheme.

The procurement budget dedicated to translation will be co-delegated to DG DGT via a co-delegation Type II, according to Article 3 of Commission Decision of 3 August 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union (European Commission section) for the attention of the Commission departments.

The rest of the budget will be implemented directly by DG REGIO.

5. Actions implemented in indirect management

The global budgetary envelope reserved for actions to be implemented under indirect management in 2020 is EUR 9 470 000 of which EUR 7 595 000 will be supported from ERDF operational budget line 13 03 65 01 and EUR 1 875 000 will be supported from CF operational budget line 13 04 61 01.

5.1. Co-operation with the World Bank

Implementing entity

The World Bank Group works in every major area of development. They provide a wide array of expertise and technical assistance, and help countries to share and apply innovative knowledge and solutions to the challenges they face.

Agreements with the World Bank will be signed and implemented under indirect management, based on existing work and results from earlier contracts with the Bank and its required contacts, technical competence and legitimacy to implement these projects.

With 189 member countries, staff from more than 170 countries, and offices in over 130 locations, the World Bank Group is a unique global partner that can achieve results in the intended areas of technical assistance (see below) more efficiently and effectively than any other organisation.

Description

- Catching-up Regions Initiative in Slovakia:

The grant will finance actions to promote growth and investment in regions that have either experienced several years of negative GDP growth or that despite the efforts made are still at a low level of economic development and is focused on providing additional support and targeted technical assistance to competent authorities in implementing their investment strategies/projects in the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming period with a view to ensure that Cohesion Policy investments achieve their full impact in terms of growth and job creation. The project is a continuation of ongoing support since 2018.

- Public sector human resource diagnostics

Continuation of a four year project to measure human resources and productivity in the public sector.

- Sub-national doing business

This concerns the latest instalment to fund the sub-national doing business reports. DG REGIO and the WB are working together to produce these sub-national doing business reports for each MS with a population of at least 4 million inhabitants. The (sub-)national

doing business surveys measure the costs of business regulations in countries and regions to firms. The survey looks at factors such as ease of setting up a company, paying taxes, obtaining planning permission etc.

5.2. Co-operation with OECD

Implementing entity

Agreements with the OECD are based on the technical competence and high degree of specialisation present in the Organisation. Together with governments, policy makers and citizens, the OECD works on establishing international norms and finding evidence-based solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges. From improving economic performance and creating jobs to fostering strong education and fighting international tax evasion, the Organisation provides a unique forum and knowledge hub for data and analysis, exchange of experiences, best-practice sharing, and advice on public policies and global standard-setting. No other organisation can implement the actions in a more efficient and effective way.

Description

- Transition into Functional Areas (FA) – Pilot

An FA is an area/region that operates as a single system in political, social and economic terms. An integrated territorial development pilot action will provide hands on support to authorities interested in following a functional area approach. It will recognise and assist the authorities with complex challenges that FAs face, and increasing effectiveness and efficiency of public investments with supported by EU Funds. It aims to help authorities to address difficulties in setting up and operationalising a functional area approach in the context of the Cohesion policy. The pilot will build on experience from 'Catching-up and Coal Regions in transition' pilots.

- SMEs and the business environment

Drawing on a new pan-European enterprise survey, the sub-national doing business reports and the business demography, this study will identify the main obstacles to better SME performance.

- Pilot on involving citizens in Cohesion Policy

The project will build good practices on how to work closer with citizens and Civil Society Organisations in implementation of Cohesion Policy at local level. Selected managing authorities will receive hands-on support in designing and implementing the initiatives.

- Global value chains in the outermost regions

The project will assess the current state of play, point out barriers and opportunities in the outermost regions to integrate global value chains, suggest solutions on how to reduce the effect of distance/periphery and how to assess lack of critical mass, determine potential linkages between the outermost regions' ecosystems and regional as well as international partners/markets (Caribbean and Atlantic) and analyse and propose recommendations as regards the outermost regions' capacity building.

- Study on manufacturing and extractive industries in rural and peripheral regions

The study will assess the potential and challenges of rural and peripheral regions in developing innovative activities linked to manufacturing and extractive industries.

- Seminars on the just transition in regions and cities

Organisation of five seminars on the basis of expert papers on a range of issues linked to the just transition in regions and cities to draw lessons from academic literature and other OECD member states and feed into the development of Commission's approach during the implementation of the programmes for post-2020 programming period and the implementation of the Just Transition Fund.

- Climate change at regional level

Improve the tracking of climate-related subnational expenditure and investment through a standardised international methodology to better track progress towards the Paris Agreement commitments. This will complement the existing climate change tracking for the EU budget, by providing detailed information on regional and city expenditure and will enable the Commission to better assess the overall commitment at subnational level to the achievement of climate goals.

- Preparation of roadmap for administrative capacity building for Romania for 2021-2027

On the basis of the experience and first results of the pilots on fronloading administrative capacity building for 2021-2027 and in addition to the 5 Member States initially selected, the action will deliver a specific roadmap for Romania. It will include an assessment of the concrete needs and implementation of identified actions in terms of strengthening the capacity of certain big beneficiaries and streamlining the process of project preparation and implementation.

5.3. Cooperation with the European Environmental Agency

Implementing entity

The grant will be awarded to the European Environment Agency.

The European Environment Agency has a broad and deep knowledge on sustainability transitions, is closely linked to the academic community specialised in this topic and has extensive experience in monitoring and measuring environmental and climate policy.

Deeescription

This project will finance the development of a benchmarking tool for regions that are using cohesion policy to achieve in sustainability transitions (understood as the economic and societal changes required to meet long-term sustainability goals such as a climate-neutral and circular economy). This will strengthen the implementation of the cohesion policy programmes in the new programming period, as well as the delivery of the European Green Deal.

There is a need for better metrics to plan, prepare and implement investment. A 'Regional Transitions Scoreboard' allows regions to benchmark their capacity to effect sustainability transitions. This would not only capture regions' environmental performance (and headroom

with respect to ecological boundaries), but also reflect their socio-economic and socio-technical capabilities to manage a process of transition and the potential impediments/bottlenecks (consumer behaviour, public opinion, path dependencies, use of certain instruments, budgetary choices, governance aspects...).

The tool should be operational, helping regional authorities identify where they are and equip them to better understand the effects of their investment decisions in terms of their transition pathways. A scoreboard can also encourage a process of policy learning.

6. Trust funds

N/A

7. Financial instruments implemented in direct or indirect management

N/A

8. Contribution to blending facilities

N/A

9. Other actions or expenditure

9.1. Experts contracts – AMI list

Amount

The amount of EUR 2 595 000 of which EUR 2 113 500 will be supported from ERDF budget line 13 03 65 01 and EUR 481 500 will be supported from CF budget line 13 04 61 01.

Description

This action covers expenses for technical assistance provided by experts through simplified experts contracts based on the DG REGIO AMI-list³.

Experts will mainly give advice on the implementation of the current programming period, the preparation of post-2020 and on the negotiations with the Member States.

9.2. Administrative agreements with the JRC

Amount

The amount of EUR 4 250 000 of which EUR 3 530 000 will be supported from ERDF budget line 13 03 65 01 and EUR 720 000 will be supported from CF budget line 13 04 61 01.

Description

³ [Call for expressions of interest 2018/S 066-146033](#): Call for expression of interest for external experts to support the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds.

This action covers the administrative agreements to be concluded with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) on topics related to statistics and data collection and evaluation:

- URBADDEV project
- RHOMOLO regional economic modelling
- Analysing and visualising regional and urban data
- Supporting the global definition of cities and rural areas