



Brussels, 27.9.2013
C(2013) 6180 final

COMMISSION DECISION

of 27.9.2013

concerning the adoption of a financing decision and work programme for 2013 for the implementation of the Preparatory action titled "Definition of governance model for the European Union Danube region- better and effective coordination" to be financed under budget line 13 03 29 and for the implementation of the Preparatory action titled "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" to be financed under budget line 13 03 35

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to 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 (hereinafter referred to as the 'Financial Regulation')¹, and in particular Article 84(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In accordance with Article 84 of the Financial Regulation and Article 94(1) of the Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 (hereinafter referred to as 'the Rules of Application'), the commitment of expenditure from the budget of the European Union shall be preceded by a financing decision setting out the essential elements of the action involving expenditure and adopted by the institution or the authorities to which powers have been delegated by the institution.
- (2) In accordance with Article 54(2)(b) of the Financial Regulation, appropriations for preparatory actions in the fields of application of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Euratom Treaty, designed to prepare proposals with a view to the adoption of future actions may be implemented without a basic act provided the actions which they are intended to finance fall within the powers of the European Union.
- (3) In the budget of the European Union for 2013, the budgetary authority has allocated EUR 1 000 000 to the Preparatory Action, "Definition of governance model for the European Union Danube region- better and effective coordination" under budget line 13 03 29 and EUR 2 000 000 to the 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" under budget line 13 03 35.
- (4) In accordance with Article 128(1) of the Financial Regulation grants shall be subject to a work programme to be published prior to its implementation.
- (5) The 2013 work programme being a sufficiently detailed framework in the meaning of Article 94 (2) and (3) of the Rules of Application, the present decision constitutes a financing decision for the expenditure provided for in the work programme for grants.

¹ OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p.1.

- (6) 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 set up institutional capacity and cooperation', which holds a *de facto* monopoly position in the Strategy work. The PAC of PA 10 is the City of Vienna and thus a public body. The PAC of PA 10 shall manage a technical assistance facility providing expertise to project holders of transnational projects and matching of projects and project ideas to funds/financial instruments in the Danube Region through a financing platform. The appointment of the City of Vienna is based on an agreement by all countries involved in the Strategy. The Priority Area Coordinator of Priority Area 10 is also organising the 3rd Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region in 2014 on the basis of an agreement of all Danube countries given on 30 June 2013.
- (7) This financing decision may also cover the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Articles 92 of the Financial Regulation and 111(4) of the Rules of Application.
- (8) For the application of this decision, it is appropriate to define the term 'substantial change' within the meaning of Article 94 (4) of the Rules of Application,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The 2013 annual work programme for the implementation of the Preparatory action entitled "Definition of governance model for the European Union Danube region- better and effective coordination" and for the implementation of the 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", as set out in the Annex, is hereby adopted. It constitutes a financing decision in the meaning of Article 84 of the Financial Regulation.

Article 2

The maximum contribution authorised by this Decision for the implementation of the Programme is set at EUR 3 000 000 to be financed from the following lines of the General Budget of the European Union for 2013:

- budget line 13 03 29, EUR 1 000 000;
- budget line 13 03 35, EUR 2 000 000.

These appropriations may also cover interest due for late payment.

Article 3

Grants may be awarded without a call for proposals to the Priority Area Coordinator (PAC) for the Priority Area 10, identified in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, body with a *de facto* monopoly situation on the basis of an agreement among all the countries involved in the strategy, which includes the designation of the PAC, and which has been validated by the Council of the European Union, in accordance with the conditions detailed in the annexed work programme.

Article 4

Cumulated changes of the allocations to the specific actions covered by the work programme not exceeding 20 % of the maximum contribution per budget line authorised by this Decision are not considered to be substantial provided that they do not significantly affect the nature of the actions and objective of the work programme.

The authorising officer may adopt such changes in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and of proportionality.

Done at Brussels, 27.9.2013

For the Commission
Johannes HAHN
Member of the Commission

ANNEX - 2013 Work Programme

The preparatory actions under budget lines 13 03 29 and 13 03 35 both aim at facilitating the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The actions foreseen for the work programme 2013, as described below, fall under the Priority Area 10 of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and thus must be implemented through the designated respective Priority Area Coordinators. As both preparatory actions are to be implemented by the same PAC, one grant agreement is envisaged, covering both preparatory actions.

Work programme for Preparatory Action "Definition of a governance model for the Danube Region"

Introduction

Budget line

13 03 29

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 1 000 000 - will be used to support the governance of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region in its initial implementation phase. The governance structure consists of Priority Area Coordinators, National Contact Points, existing institutions and stakeholders. This preparatory action will support the communication, exchange of experience and capitalisation of results among the main stakeholders and ensure political commitment through the organisation of an Annual Forum in June 2014.

Furthermore, the objective is to improve the access to funding sources for Danube specific transnational projects, through a better matching of project ideas and funds/financial instruments in the Danube Region.

Finally the objective is to kick-start project development in the Danube Region and to facilitate the financing of transnational projects.

Expected results are a better governance system through closer networking, political commitment towards the Strategy and more efficient implementation through the exchange of experience. The implementation of the Strategy will be supported through the preparation of concrete transnational projects.

Actions/ Type of financial intervention

The grant shall be covered by a written agreement.

The Strategy is implemented through eleven Priority Areas, each of which will be coordinated by two Danube countries or regions. These countries are called Priority Area Coordinators (named PACs below).

The Strategy's Priority Area 10 "To step up institutional capacity and cooperation" has horizontal tasks for the implementation of the Strategy and also serves all other Priority Areas, such as the facilitation of transnational projects.

The Priority Area Coordinator of Priority Area 10 is also organising the Annual Forum in 2014. This decision is based on an offer from the City of Vienna from 20 February 2013 and an agreement of all Danube countries on 30 June 2013.

The assistance will be implemented through a grant to PACs of PA 10 'To step up institutional capacity and cooperation', which holds a *de facto* monopoly position in the Strategy work. PAC 10 belongs to the City of Vienna is thus a public body. The appointment is based on an agreement by all countries involved in the Strategy. 5% co-financing will be provided by the PAC. The maximum possible rate of EU co-financing is 95%.

The PAC is entrusted to organise the Annual Forum, a platform to match project ideas and funding institutions and to support projects in their initial phase.

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.

Legal and budgetary commitments of actions will be made in 2013.

The volume of the grant may vary according to the work plans of the Priority Area Coordinator, depending on which of the activities mentioned above it wishes to emphasise. The maximum indicative budget: EUR 1 000 000.

Indicative calendar for procedures

The grant agreement will be signed by the end of 2013.

Total budget

EUR 1 000 000

**Work programme for 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 35

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 2 000 000 - 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 facilitate the preparation, implementation and capitalisation of concrete projects through activities such as tailored expertise to project holders to facilitate the initial phase of transnational projects, and through more efficient and effective ways to coordinate different funding instruments in the Danube Region.

Actions/ Type of financial intervention

The grant shall be covered by a written agreement.

The Strategy is implemented through eleven Priority Areas, each of which will be coordinated by two Danube countries or regions. These countries are called Priority Area Coordinators (named PACs below).

The Strategy's Priority Area 10 "To step up institutional capacity and cooperation" has horizontal tasks for the implementation of the Strategy and also serves all other Priority Areas, such as the facilitation of transnational projects.

The assistance will be implemented through a grant to PAC of PA 10, which holds a *de facto* monopoly position in the Strategy work. PAC 10 belongs to the City of Vienna is thus a public body. The appointment is based on an agreement by all countries involved in the Strategy. 5% co-financing will be provided by the PAC. The maximum possible rate of EU co-financing is 95%.

The assistance will facilitate the preparation of transnational projects in their starting phase. This will be done through a project preparation facility providing assistance to project holders of transnational projects. The facility is already established and currently in its pilot stage, providing consultancy services to potential project owners. The continuation of the facility allows for an evaluation of the pilot stage and a potential adaptation, taking into account best practice examples from other macro-regional strategies.

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.

Legal and budgetary commitment of actions will be made in 2013.

The volume of the grant may vary according to the work plans of the PAC, depending on which of the activities mentioned above it wishes to emphasise. The maximum indicative budget: EUR 2 000 000

Total budget

EUR 2 000 000

Indicative calendar for procedures

The grant agreement will be signed by the end of 2013.