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COMMISSION DECISION

of 5.6.2013

concerning the adoption of a financing decision and of a working plan for 2013 in the framework and for the implementation of the Preparatory Action "Enhancing regional and local cooperation through the promotion of EU regional policy at a global scale" to be financed under budget line 13 03 28

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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') and in particular Articles 54(2)(b), 84(2) thereof,

Having regard to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (hereinafter referred to as the 'Rules of Application') and in particular Article 94(1) thereof,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities and in particular Article 53d thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The objective pursued by the preparatory action "Enhancing regional and local cooperation through the promotion of EU regional policy at a global scale" is to continue developing a comprehensive strategy that would promote and disseminate knowledge and experience of regional policy in the framework of the partnerships between the Commission and third countries and to co-operate with and assist international organisations in building new regional partnerships in this field. It is envisaged that explaining how the cohesion policy works will contribute to an improvement in the understanding of European values, basic principles, delivery structures and policies.
- (2) In the budget of the European Union for 2013, the budgetary authority has allocated EUR 2 000 000 to the preparatory action "Enhancing regional and local cooperation through the promotion of EU regional policy at a global scale" under budget line 13 03 28.
- (3) In accordance with Article 84(2) of the Financial Regulation and Article 94(1) of 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.
- (4) In accordance with Article 84(3) of the Financial Regulation and Article 94(3) of the Rules of Application, where the implementation of appropriations is provided for by

an annual work programme constituting a sufficiently detailed framework, the work programme shall also be considered to be the financing decision for the procurement contracts involved.

- (5) In accordance with Article 53d of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002, evidence has been obtained that the international organisation to be entrusted by the Commission with the implementation of Union funds in joint management, apply standards which offer guarantees equivalent to internationally accepted standards in their accounting, audit, internal control and procurement procedures by the authorising officer by delegation.
- (6) This Decision should allow for the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 92(6) of the Financial Regulation and Article 111(4) of the Rules of Application.
- (7) 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 work programme for the implementation of the Preparatory Action "Enhancing regional and local cooperation through the promotion of EU regional policy at a global scale" (hereinafter "the Preparatory Action") for 2013, as set out in the Annex, is hereby adopted.

It constitutes a financing decision within the meaning of Article 84 of the Financial Regulation.

Article 2

The maximum contribution authorised by this Decision for the implementation of the Preparatory action is set at EUR 2 000 000 to be financed from the budget line 13 03 28 of the General Budget of the European Union for 2013.

Those appropriations may also cover interest due for late payment.

Article 3

The budget implementation of tasks related to Action 1 under Point 2.1 of the Annex may be entrusted to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which applies standards offering guarantees equivalent to internationally accepted standards in its accounting, audit, internal control and procurement procedures.

Article 4

Cumulated changes of the allocations to the specific actions covered by the work programme not exceeding 20% of the maximum contribution authorised by this Decision are not considered to be substantial provided that they do not significantly affect the nature 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, 5.6.2013

For the Commission
Johannes HAHN
Member of the Commission



ANNEX

PREPARATORY ACTION: ENHANCING REGIONAL AND LOCAL COOPERATION THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF EU REGIONAL POLICY AT A GLOBAL SCALE (BUDGET ARTICLE 13 03 28)

1. Introduction

1.1. *Budget line: 13 03 28*

1.2. *Basic Act: Not applicable*

1.3. *Policy context*

The promotion of EU Regional Policy on a global scale is an important component of the Directorate General's work programme as a contribution to the Union's external policies managed by the external relations family of DGs.

1.4. *General objectives of the preparatory action:*

The objectives of the work under the Preparatory Action will be to:

- **Support the implementation of the Eastern Partnership** (EaP), in close cooperation with the EEAS, DG DEVCO and EU Delegations in the concerned countries. The EaP is a response to the ambitions of a number of neighbouring countries from Eastern Europe and South Caucasus, (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) for closer relations with the European Union;
- **share the benefit of the EU's experience** of how regional and cohesion policies underpin the process of economic and political integration with main partners outside the EU (notably those with whom a dialogue on regional policy exists), regional organisations and world regions;
- **pool international responses and experience to the benefit of EU regions and cities** on the challenges faced by countries and regions worldwide (globalisation and recovery from the global economic crisis, ageing population, climate change, etc.), challenges that have a strong "territorial" dimension and that require action at local and regional level.

The resources for 2013 will help to develop the dialogue with third countries. These resources will help the Commission to deepen and widen its activities and to bring real help to third countries in their efforts to improve public policy in regional development, and regional and local governance issues.

2. Actions/ Type of financial intervention

In 2013 the preparatory action will be implemented through the use of specific contracts under framework contracts, direct contracts, cost reimbursements or indirect management. The actions supported will include the organisation of events, information activities, study visits, networking and studies. For certain actions, use will also be made of calls for tender.

2.1. *ACTION 1: Studies and technical assistance*

Joint management

A National Urban Policy Review of China will be undertaken, in joint management with the OECD to help Chinese authorities to better design multi-faceted and holistic urban development policies, and perform its guiding and monitoring role, linked to the planning

process. The OECD has been identified as the organization which focuses principally on the thematic areas which fall under the priorities of cohesion policy e.g. innovation, sustainable economic growth, environmentally friendly ‘green growth’ strategies etc.

The Review would aim at providing the national Chinese public officials with an international standard statistical methodology and set of indicators to follow and monitor urbanisation in China and its development, which integrate broader socio-economic and environmental objectives and policy recommendations to develop an urbanisation strategy based on the guidelines established in the 12th Five Years Plan including implementation and monitoring tools.

The following aspects will be addressed by the Review:

- Diagnosing urban structure, development trends, and competitiveness in a comparative, transnational framework.
- Identifying and analysing the main challenges for urban areas.
- Assessing strategies of central government towards urban regions.
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation for urban areas
- Examining governance issues.
- Assessing the overall coherence of the various urban policies.
- Formulating recommendations for a multi-sectoral comprehensive urban policy that maximises economic efficiency and fosters sustainable urban development and social cohesion.

OECD and the Commission have signed an agreement in 2006 allowing for this kind of joint activities given the proximity of the policies pursued by the two Institutions. OECD has the [specific technical expertise needed to carry out this study, as it has been done in the past in several occasions with excellent results.](#) Moreover, OECD applies standards offering guarantees equivalent to internationally accepted standards in its accounting, audit, and internal control and procurement procedures. Therefore, the 4 pillar assessment has been successfully carried out for this international Organization.

Furthermore, OECD and DG REGIO have agreed that the objectives and results expected of such a study were in the interest of both organisations. More specifically, for DG REGIO, this study is meant to contribute to its analytical work on urban development in the framework of the EU-China regional policy dialogue and provide recommendations that could lead to future joint activities and cooperation between EU and Chinese cities.

That part of the cost of the Territorial Review of China to be met from the budget of the preparatory action will be a maximum of EUR 280 000.

Direct management (to be implemented following public procurement procedures)

In Ukraine, in 2010/2011 a useful study was carried out on economic competitiveness and institutional capacity in two representative regions. In 2013 a number of similar studies could be carried out in other Eastern or Southern partner countries. Such studies typically analyse strengths and weaknesses in economic performance and institutional capacity enabling specific actions to be designed in response.

In Latin America in 2012-2013, a number of actions on cross-border cooperation were/will be organised (study visits, workshops, technical assistance) to discuss opportunities and problems that may arise in the implementation of European experiences in the light of Latin American local reality. It is intended to give appropriate follow up to some of the

recommendations that could be formulated in some of the outputs of these actions (action plans, final reports, handbooks, practical guides) for further technical assistance depending on concerned Latin American regions and actors expressing an interest.

In Latin America, namely Argentina, Brazil and Chile, technical assistance actions for the management of regional innovation strategies in selected regions were carried out in 2012 and will continue in 2013. On the basis of the successful outcomes of these actions, triangular technical assistance actions could take place with other countries which expressed an interest as Peru or Colombia.

In West Africa a study of opportunities for cross border cooperation was completed in 2012. Further to the detailed recommendations formulated by this study a follow up action promoting links between European Macaronesia, Senegal and Cap Verde was launched and will be completed in 2013. Such actions are designed to promote cross border cooperation and facilitate the involvement of local authorities and municipalities and could be extended to other areas highlighted in the report.

A number of further studies and technical assistance actions could for example cover the following topics:

- Technical assistance in improving the statistical base at regional level in Ukraine, in conjunction with capacity building in the context of the Pilot Regional Development Programme (PRDP);
- Contribution to the State Strategy for Regional Development in Georgia in particular to identify priority areas for action;
- Follow up cross-border cooperation in Latin America: support to specific cooperation actions in Central American, Brazilian or Peruvian border areas or any other border through the establishment for example of action plans proposing working lines for enhancing the collaboration in the border area with concrete actions and measures;
- Peru: study on the impact of sectoral policies on territorial development and cross-border integration.
- Regional innovation strategies in Latin America: support the improvement of the management of the regional innovation systems in selected regions through the establishment of technical guidelines and training of officials and experts;
- Follow up actions in West Africa further to the report on opportunities for cross border cooperation and the action developing relations between Macaronesia and Senegal.
- Study on the promotion of special economic zones and developing business and innovation clusters in South Africa.

The direct management part will be a maximum of EUR 420 000. Indicative budget for the whole action (including the action jointly managed with OECD): EUR 700 000.

2.2. ACTION 2: Information seminars (study visits and seminars) - Direct management (to be implemented following public procurement procedures)

Seminars are an important means of exchanging information and promoting mutual understanding with third countries. There is an increasing demand from third countries for direct experience of the implementation of EU regional policy on the ground in different contexts. The preparatory action makes this possible, by assuming travel and accommodation costs incurred by nominated experts, trainees and third country participants.

A number of seminars and training programmes could be supported to be held *inter alia* in main partner countries on topics such as: strategic and governance issues, information systems, monitoring, evaluation, regional innovation systems and clusters, sustainable urban development, climate change mitigation and adaptation, cross-border cooperation, etc. For example:

- Eastern Partnership: regional conference in Georgia examining strategy formulation, governance issues and EU experience and involving all Eastern partner countries (this was proposed for 2012 but postponed due to a change in government);
- Ukraine: workshop on the results of the OECD Territorial Review launched in 2012 and on the progress of the Pilot Regional Development Projects;
- Seminars in southern neighbours (especially Tunisia and Morocco) as a follow up to the first study visits organised for officials from these countries;
- Open Days seminars, communication events and fellowships on regional policy co-operation;
- Brazil: monitoring and evaluation methods and regional statistical systems and methods; European funding experiences on regional development; integrated urban development;
- Brazil and/or other Latin American countries: Targeted training and capacity building actions for cross-border cooperation actors; exchanges of good practices on cross-border cooperation; regional policy seminars with regional representatives;
- China: High-level seminar on EU-China regional policy cooperation;
- China: Seminar on sustainable urban development in the framework of the EU-China Urbanisation Partnership;
- South-East Asia: seminar on impact and contribution of innovation to regional development.
- Multidisciplinary workshops and/or meetings to enhance the regional integration of the outermost regions in their respective geographic basins, namely Caribbean, Macaronesia, Indian Ocean. The objective is to improve the coordination and implementation of the EU funding in the three geographical zones, to foster greater trade and sharing of knowledge between the Outermost Regions and their neighbouring developing countries as well as developed countries with which they share historical and cultural links;
- Multidisciplinary workshops to address the specific challenges and needs of the European Union's ultra-peripheral territories which do not have the status of outermost regions during switchover to the status of outermost regions.

A number of programme exchanges could take place, namely for representatives from countries having a dialogue with the EU on regional policy and EU national and regional officials. Argentina, Mexico, Japan, South and West Africa could also participate in these exchange visits depending on them expressing an interest. Following the exchanges and visits, participants will be asked to report and provide concrete feedback on lessons learnt, good practices, possibly tips and relevance of the European experience for their respective areas of competence. Some of the following actions could be supported:

- Latin America: urban development programme exchange (URBELAC) for representatives from EU cities, visits to Latin American cities and joint seminar;

- Latin America: study visits and exchanges of representatives from partner countries, namely Brazil, Chile and/or Peru;
- China: continuation of the Chinese European Training on Regional Policy and exchange programme for Chinese and EU representatives;
- Eastern and Southern neighbourhood: programme of visits by officials from partner countries to examine issues of strategy development, governance and cross border co-operation in EU regions. After each such visit a report and a handbook of good practice will be put together by participants and organisers for distribution in the European Neighbourhood;
- India/Japan: Urban development programme exchange for representatives from EU cities.
- Russia: study visits for Russian representatives;
- West and South Africa: exchange programme following up developments in cross border cooperation, the contribution of the regional and local level to economic development, special economic zones and business and innovation clusters;

Other expert visits from third countries to Europe or to other third countries or from European regional policy experts to third countries, in particular to those countries with a proven experience on regional policy issues (e.g. Australia, Canada, United States) could take place depending on specific interests.

Indicative budget: EUR 1 250 000

2.3. ACTION 3: Support to information and communication tools - Direct management (to be implemented following public procurement procedures)

In order to increase the visibility of the activities and priorities of regional policy it is important to prepare, and translate into other languages, information and communication products. Furthermore, the Commissioner and/or DG REGIO are frequently called upon to make presentations, together with the provision of stands at conferences all over the world. Since we cannot satisfy all these requests it makes sense to prepare ready made visual or audio visual material which could be shipped to these destinations. This action will be implemented via a service contract.

Indicative budget: EUR 50 000

3. Total budget: EUR 2 000 000

4. Indicative calendar for procurement procedures

The Community contribution to the procurement procedures described in the work programme will be covered by commitment appropriations for 2013 for which an amount of EUR 2 000 000 is available. The indicative number of direct contracts is 8 and 10 specific contracts under framework contract. Most of the actions will start on the 1st quarter of 2013. All specific and direct contracts are expected to have been signed by end 2013.