



Brussels, 8.5.2013
C(2013) 2717 final

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 8.5.2013

modifying the Commission Implementing Decision C(2012)6074 on the Annual Action Programme 2012 (part I) in favour of the ENP South region to be financed from the general budget of the European Union

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)¹, and in particular Article 12 thereof,

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, and in particular Article 84 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The action "Euro-Mediterranean partnership global allocation for 2012-2013" was approved by Commission Decision C(2012)6074 adopted on 31 August 2012.
- (2) The purpose of the present modifying Decision is to include the pilot phase of eTwinning in Tunisia and possibly Egypt as one of the main activities of the action. Since this scheme will be implemented under indirect centralised management by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), this management mode will also be added to the action fiche. The focus of eTwinning is to promote school collaboration through the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) by providing support, tools and services for schools that are involved in the programme. The programme also provides a safe, online environment to engage with partner schools, work on projects and communicate with like-minded educational professionals in the existing eTwinning network, plus a selected number of schools from the neighbouring countries.
- (3) The Commission has ensured that the management system set up by the entities to which the Commission will entrust implementation of EU funds for the action "Euro-Mediterranean partnership global allocation for 2012-2013" complies with the conditions of Articles 56(1) of 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 Article 35 of its Implementing Rules with regard to the actions implemented under indirect centralised management.
- (4) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the ENPI Committee set up under Article 26 of Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006,

¹ OJ L 310, 9.11.2006, p. 1.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Annex 3 of the Commission Implementing Decision C(2012)6074 is replaced by the annex of this Decision.

Article 2

The budget-implementation tasks under indirect centralised management may be entrusted to the entities identified in the annex of this Decision.

Done at Brussels, 8.5.2013

For the Commission
Štefan FÜLE
Member of the Commission

ANNEX

Action fiche: "Euro-Mediterranean partnership global allocation for 2012-2013"

Action fiche for ENP South region Annual Action Programme 2012 (part I)**1. IDENTIFICATION**

Title	Euro-Mediterranean partnership global allocation for 2012-2013 (ENPI/2012/023-826)		
Total cost	EU contribution: EUR 16 million		
Aid method/ Management mode	Project approach – centralised Indirect centralised management – the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (for the extension of eTwinning)		
DAC code	43010	Sector	Multi-sector

2. RATIONALE

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership global allocation for 2012-2013 is a flexible “facility” giving the European Commission the possibility to decide to finance small-scale measures that are in keeping with the objectives of the Southern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy and its operational and policy priorities.

Based on the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006), in particular Article 16 on “Support measures”, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership global allocation for 2012-2013 provides funding which allows to implement the ENPI Regulation and achieve its objectives, e.g. supporting activities and studies relating to the country or multi-country programmes, organisation of ENP South meetings, activities in the fields of culture and information.

3. DESCRIPTION**3.1. Objectives**

The objective of this global allocation is to ensure a swift preparation of actions and projects, while enabling the European Commission to act with flexibility by means of an instrument which is capable of adapting itself to evolving circumstances and/or dealing with unforeseen situations.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

The global allocation will be used as a framework for financing activities in the following fields:

(1) Support for project cycle management

This component includes activities linked to:

- a) identification and formulation of bilateral and regional projects which may result in funding from ENP South (e.g. sectoral studies, country or region studies, studies on cross-cutting issues or in specialised areas, preparatory activities, etc.);
- b) small projects and other small-scale activities to back up major projects during implementation (programmes carried out under the country or multi-country programmes);
- c) audit and evaluation/impact assessment of projects for which financing of such activities could not be foreseen due to the N+1 rule or is no longer available.

The indicative budget for this component is **EUR 8.5 million**.

(2) Cultural, studies and information activities

This component supports activities in the Mediterranean countries and territories in the following areas:

- a) culture: support to local or regional cultural activities in the field of audiovisual and multimedia, arts, cultural festivals (cinema, dance, theatre, etc.), dialogue between cultures, etc.
- b) information: publications and other information and awareness-raising activities about the Euro-Mediterranean co-operation and partnership which are designed and implemented in coherence with and to complement the regional information and communication programme, in order to enhance the visibility of Commission's activities in each Mediterranean country.
- c) studies: studies on relevant issues, data collection and processing and the dissemination thereof.

This component will have an indicative budget of **EUR 3.25 million**, to be split among EU Delegations and Headquarters based on their annual programme of activities.

(3) Organisation of meetings and training activities

- a) This component covers different kinds of meetings organised by the Commission in the framework of the ENP South, including ministerial conferences conducted in co-operation with the EU presidency and thematic working groups, civil fora, sectoral preparatory meetings, etc.
- b) This component covers different kinds of training activities organised in the framework of the ENP South, including training seminars for Arab League's executives and other joint activities in the priority sectors of co-operation between the EU and the Arab League liaison office in Malta.

This liaison office is designed to enhance co-operation between the Euro-Mediterranean partners and the Arab League.

The beneficiaries of this support are the Members States of the Arab League, taken into account eligibility of countries as set by Article 27 of the ENPI Regulation.

The indicative budget for these components is **EUR 3.95 million**.

(4) The extension of eTwinning to ENPI South countries (Tunisia and possibly Egypt)

Following the ENP Review and developments taking place in the Southern Neighbourhood, the Commission proposed to extend through a pilot, the **eTwinning** scheme to Egypt and Tunisia. eTwinning promotes school collaboration through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) by providing support, tools and services for schools that are involved in the programme.

This scheme provides a safe, online environment to engage with partner schools, work on projects and communicate with like-minded educational professionals in the existing eTwinning network, plus a selected number of schools from the neighbouring countries.

In this phase, the scheme will only partially be extended to schools from Tunisia and possibly Egypt (if the latter confirms its interest), i.e. teachers from partner countries will only be able to join existing projects, will not be able to initiate projects themselves and will be able to contact only those EU teachers who have clearly expressed their interest in cooperating. The partial extension will be carried out on a pilot basis.

The implementation of the eTwinning extension requires the creation of an online platform for partner countries and the set-up of Partner Support Agencies.

The action will be implemented under indirect centralised management by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). EACEA is also managing the contractual and administrative aspects of eTwinning in the framework of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and is best placed to manage also these aspects for the neighbourhood as well, having extensive experience in dealing with the specificities of the action and access to the LLP eTwinning platform to which the online platform for the neighbourhood countries needs to connect.

The indicative budget for this component is **EUR 0.3 million**.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Implementation method

Direct centralised management by means of service and/or grant contracts.

Indirect centralised management

The eTwinning Plus pilot will be implemented under indirect centralised management in accordance with Article 54(2)(c) of the Financial Regulation 1605/2002. The implementing body is the Education, Audiovisual and Culture

Executive Agency (EACEA), which already manages the eTwinning programme with the EU Member States and ENPI East countries, in co-ordination with and under supervision of the European Commission.

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

1) Contracts

Where the action is in the sole interest of the Beneficiary, contracts must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the rules set out in Part Two, Title IV, "External Relations" of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the EU, completed by rules of Part One, Titles V and VI when so provided by Part Two, Title IV.

Where the action is in the shared interest of the Beneficiary and the Commission, or in the sole interest of the Commission, contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the rules set out in Part One, Titles V and VI of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the EU.

Irrespective of the procedure used, the authorising officer may decide to use the Commission standard contract templates, adapted as may be necessary.

2) Specific rules for grants

The essential selection and award criteria for the award of grants are laid down in the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions. The maximum rate of co-financing for grants is 80%. Full financing may only be applied for actions implemented in the sole interest of the beneficiary and only in the cases provided for in Article 277 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation.

Indirect centralised management

EACEA is responsible for the administrative and contractual management of the extension of eTwinning under the supervision of the Commission.

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the rules set out in Part Two, Title IV, "External Relations" of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the EU, completed by rules of Part One, Titles V and VI when so provided by Part Two, Title IV.

The essential selection and award criteria for the award of grants are established in accordance with the principles set out in Title VI 'Grants' of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget completed by Part Two.

4.3. Indicative budget and calendar

The total budget for this action is EUR 16,000,000 divided as follows:

Component	Amount (EUR)
Support for project cycle management	8,500,000
Cultural and information activities	3,250,000
Organisation of meetings and training activities	3,950,000
eTwinning Plus	300,000
Total:	16,000,000

Contracts can be financed under this part of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership global allocation as soon as the Commission Decision is adopted and until 31 December 2013 in accordance with the “N+1” rule, provided the funds available under the previous Euro-Mediterranean partnership global allocation have been fully used.

4.4. Performance monitoring

The monitoring of the implementation will be carried out, including periodic assessment of progress and delivery of the project results.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

Certification of expenditure will have to be submitted as part of the contracts implementing this decision. Evaluations of the results achieved by some of the projects financed under this Decision may be conducted by external experts entrusted by the Commission, along with external audits on the initiative of the Commission, if necessary. These evaluations and audits will be funded from other sources because the “N+1” rule applies after the contracting-out period for this Decision.

4.6. Communication and visibility

Communication and information activities are an integral part of the action, aiming at enhanced visibility and better understanding of EU-funded activities in the Neighbourhood South. The Communication and Visibility Manual for External Actions will be respected and followed to ensure the visibility coherence.