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## COMMISSION DECISION

C(2007)2208 of 12/10/2007

### **adopting a multi-beneficiary statistical cooperation programme to support the upgrading of the statistical systems in the Western Balkans and Turkey under the IPA - Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2007**

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 14(2)(a) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 lays down the objectives and main principles for pre-accession assistance to candidate and potential candidate countries.
- (2) In accordance with Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006, the assistance should be provided through multi-annual or annual programmes, which can be established by country and by component, or, as appropriate, by group of countries or by theme. These programmes should be drawn up in accordance with the general policy framework referred to in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 and the relevant multi-annual indicative planning document referred to in Article 6 of that Regulation.
- (3) The Council established for all candidate and potential candidate countries an Accession Partnership or a European Partnership. The Commission has adopted on 29 May 2007 the Multi-Beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) 2007-2009 which presents indicative allocations for the main priorities for pre-accession assistance to all countries concerned<sup>2</sup>.
- (4) Therefore the multi-beneficiary statistical cooperation programme to support the upgrading of the statistical systems in the Western Balkans and Turkey under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2007 aims at improving the availability and quality of statistical data in the beneficiary countries essential for developing and implementing Community policies and for the preparation of the beneficiary countries for future EU membership.
- (5) This decision meets the requirements of Article 90 of Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation No 1605/2002<sup>3</sup> (hereafter: "Implementing Rules") and constitutes thus a financing decision within the meaning of Article 75 of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> C(2007) 2205.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p. 1 Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 478/2007 (OJ L 111, 28.4.2007, p.13).

## **ANNEX: IPA 2007 MULTI-BENEFICIARY STATISTICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME**

### **1. IDENTIFICATION**

Beneficiaries	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Montenegro, Republic of Serbia, including Kosovo (as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10th June 1999), Turkey
CRIS number	2007/018-979
Year	2007
Cost	EUR 3,000,000
Implementing Authority	European Commission
Final date for contracting	30/11/2008
Final date for execution	30/11/2010
Sector Code	16062
Budget line concerned	22.02.07.01: regional and horizontal programmes
Programming Task Manager	DG Eurostat - Unit E4
Implementation Task Manager	DG Eurostat - Unit E4 (in sub-delegation)

### **2. PRIORITY AXES / (MEASURES) / PROJECTS**

#### **2.a Priority axes**

The project is in accordance with the strategic priorities of the multi-beneficiary multi-annual indicative planning document (MIPD) 2007-2009. The area of intervention is Public Administration.

The overall objective of this programme is to upgrade and strengthen the statistical systems in the Western Balkan countries<sup>1</sup> and Turkey and to align the methodologies used and practices applied with EU requirements. The strengthening of the national statistical systems in the beneficiary countries is critical for obtaining comparable and good quality official statistics, essential for the formulation, management and implementation of Community and national policies in the context of the Stabilisation and Association process (SAP) and where relevant the accession negotiations. A further aim is the integration of National Statistical Offices and their partners in the National Statistical Systems into the European Statistical System.

#### **2.b Description of projects**

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Montenegro, Republic of Serbia including Kosovo (as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10th June 1999).

The overall objective of this project is to continue to give assistance to the statistical authorities in the participating beneficiary countries in their preparation for future EU membership. The previous multi-beneficiary statistical cooperation programmes proved to be successful in developing the administrative capacity of the countries and in aligning their legislation with the EU statistical *acquis*. It is essential to ensure that technical assistance continues to be available according to the priorities defined by the Commission in the European Partnerships and in the Progress Reports.

The project will mainly focus on the following areas:

- macro-economic statistics
- price statistics
- external trade statistics
- agricultural statistics
- population statistics
- improved transmission of statistical data

These areas were chosen based on the results from previous and ongoing assistance programmes and on the results of regular assessments undertaken by Eurostat of the state of the statistical systems in the beneficiary countries.

The principal activities in each of these areas will include expert missions, workshops and seminars, financing of data collection as well as general statistical assistance. General statistical assistance will include the participation of the experts from the beneficiary countries in technical meetings organised by Eurostat and other Commission services, study visits to official statistics providers in Europe, training, consultation visits and traineeships.

Results to be achieved in beneficiary countries are:

- strengthened administrative capacity of the beneficiaries
- improved sustainability, transfer of knowledge, and ownership by the beneficiaries
- improved availability, quality and comparability of the statistical data in priority areas
- beneficiaries better prepared for full application of the *acquis*
- Improved effectiveness of the National Statistical Institutes to coordinate the national statistical systems
- Improved provision of statistical data to Eurostat

The project will be implemented by means of procurement. One service contract is foreseen for technical assistance with a global budget envelope of EUR 3,000,000. The launch the call for tender is indicatively foreseen for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2007.

## **2.c Overview of past and ongoing assistance (EU/IFI/Bilateral and national assistance) including lessons learnt and donor coordination**

The regional approach proved to be cost efficient under Phare and CARDS and should be continued. Support to the National Statistical offices and their partners started under the CARDS, Phare and USST (Upgrading the Statistical System of Turkey) programmes.

The candidate countries Croatia and Turkey are currently beneficiaries of the Phare 2005 multi-beneficiary statistical cooperation programme until December 2008. Croatia and Turkey are also beneficiaries of the multi-beneficiary statistical cooperation programme 2006 (implementation foreseen to start on 1 January 2008). Therefore, these two countries might be

invited to participate in the activities foreseen under this IPA programme to the extent that the activities are complementary to the ongoing statistical cooperation programmes mentioned above.

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 are beneficiaries of the Cards 2003 multi-country statistical cooperation programme. Implementation of this programme will end in March 2008.

Due to previous assistance, beneficiary countries have made progress in the areas of capacity building, legal harmonisation, education of staff and production and dissemination of statistics.

## **2.d Horizontal issues**

None.

## **2.e Conditions**

It is essential that governments of the beneficiary countries support the development of the national statistical systems in accordance with the European Code of Practice and allocate additional resources to official statistics providers.

## **2.f Benchmarks**

	N	N+1	N+2
Number of tenders launched	1	-	-
Number of calls for proposals launched	-	-	-
Contracting Rate (%)	-	100	-

## **3. BUDGET (amounts in million EUR)**

### **3.1. Indicative budget table**

	EU – IPA assistance			Total co-financing of project	Total (IPA plus co-financing)
	Institution Building	Investment	Total		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3.00</b>

### **3.2 Principle of co-financing applying to the projects funded under the programme**

Not applicable.

## **4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **4.1 Method of implementation**

The programme will be implemented on a centralised basis by the European Commission in accordance with Article 53a of the Financial Regulation<sup>2</sup> and the corresponding provisions of the Implementing Rules<sup>3</sup>.

The implementation of the programme will be sub-delegated to the Statistical Office of the European Communities (DG Eurostat).

## **4.2 General rules for procurement**

Procurement shall follow the provisions of Part Two, Title IV of the Financial Regulation and Part Two, Title III, Chapter 3 of its Implementing Rules as well as the rules and procedures for service, supply and works contracts financed from the general budget of the European Communities for the purposes of cooperation with third countries adopted by the Commission on 24 May 2007 (C(2007)2034).

Grant award procedures shall follow the provisions of Part One, Title VI of the Financial Regulation and Part One, Title VI of its Implementing Rules.

The Commission shall also use the procedural guidelines and standard templates and models facilitating the application of the above rules provided for in the "Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions" ("Practical Guide") as published on the EuropeAid website<sup>4</sup> at the date of the initiation of the procurement or grant award procedure.

## **5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

### **5.1 Monitoring**

The Commission may undertake any actions that it deems necessary to monitor the programme.

### **5.2 Evaluation**

Programmes shall be subject to ex-ante evaluations, as well as interim and, where relevant, ex-post evaluations in accordance with Articles 57 and 82 of the IPA Implementing Regulation, with the aim of improving the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the assistance from Community funds and the strategy and implementation of programmes.

The results of ex-ante and interim evaluations shall be taken into account in the programming and implementation cycle.

The Commission may also carry out strategic evaluations.

## **6. AUDIT, FINANCIAL CONTROL AND ANTI-FRAUD MEASURES**

The accounts and operations of all parties involved in the implementation of this programme, as well as all contracts and agreements implementing this programme, are subject to, on the

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<sup>2</sup> OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1. Regulation as amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1995/2006 (OJ L 390, 30.12.2006, p.1).

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p. 1 Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 478/2007 (OJ L 111, 28.4.2007, p.13).

<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/practical\\_guide/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/practical_guide/index_en.htm)

one hand, the supervision and financial control by the Commission (including the European Anti-Fraud Office), which may carry out checks at its discretion, either by itself or through an outside auditor and, on the other hand, audits by the European Court of Auditors. This includes measures such as ex-ante verification of tendering and contracting carried out by the Delegation in the Beneficiary Country.

In order to ensure the efficient protection of the financial interests of the Community, the Commission (including the European Anti-Fraud Office) may conduct on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with the procedures foreseen in Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) 2185/96<sup>5</sup>.

The controls and audits described above are applicable to all contractors, subcontractors and grant beneficiaries who have received Community funds.

## **7. LIMITED CHANGES**

Limited changes in the implementation of this programme affecting essential elements listed under Article 90 of the Implementing Rules to the Financial Regulation, which are of an indicative nature<sup>6</sup>, may be undertaken by the authorising officer by delegation (AOD), or by the authorising officer by sub-delegation (AOSD), in line with the delegation of powers conferred upon him by the AOD, in accordance with the principles of sound financial management without an amending financing decision being necessary.

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<sup>5</sup> OJ L 292; 15.11.1996; p. 2

<sup>6</sup> These essential elements of an indicative nature are, for grants, the indicative amount of the call for proposals and, for procurement, the indicative number and type of contracts envisaged and the indicative time frame for launching the procurement procedures.

Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities<sup>4</sup> (hereafter: “Financial Regulation”).

- (6) The measures provided for by this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the IPA Committee,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*

The multi-beneficiary statistical cooperation programme to support the upgrading of the statistical systems in the Western Balkans and Turkey under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2007, as set out in the Annex, is hereby adopted.

This programme shall be implemented by centralised management.

*Article 2*

The maximum amount of Community contribution shall be **EUR 3 million**, representing 100% of the total eligible expenditure to be financed through Item 22.02.07.01 (= regional and horizontal programmes) of the general budget of the European Communities for 2007.

Done at Brussels, [...]

*For the Commission*

[...]

*Member of the Commission*

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<sup>4</sup> OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1. Regulation as amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1995/2006 (OJ L 390, 30.12.2006, p.1).