

Annex 2: Action Fiche for the ENPI East Regional Action Programme 2011 Part I

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	Support for the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership/Global Allocation (CRIS: ENPI/2011/022-991)		
Total cost	EUR 15.27 million		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Project approach – direct centralised management, joint management Project approach – indirect centralised management Implementing body: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency		
DAC-code	43010	Sector	Multisector aid

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Sector context

The Support for the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership/Global Allocation 2011 is a flexible mechanism giving the European Commission the possibility to decide on the financing of small-scale actions in accordance with the objectives of the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) as well as its operational and policy priorities. In this respect it follows the ENPI-East Global Allocation 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. As was the case under the 2010 Regional Programme, the proposed action for 2011 has also taken account of the political initiative launched by the EU to deepen cooperation with its Eastern neighbours, namely the Eastern Partnership.

Based on the ENPI Regulation¹, and in particular Article 16 "Support measures" thereof, the ENPI-East Support to the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership/Global Allocation 2011 provides funding directly necessary for the implementation of the ENPI Regulation and for the achievement of its objectives.

In line with the Commission Communication of December 2008, the Eastern Partnership was launched as a common endeavor of the Member States of the European Union and their Eastern European ENP partners at a summit in May 2009. The participants of the summit supported the launch of Flagship Initiatives in order to give momentum, concrete substance and visibility to the Partnership. This action to be financed in the present Action Programme will support 1) the operation of the Eastern Partnership multilateral framework, the Black Sea Synergy, and Northern Dimension, e.g. support activities primarily related to the functioning of the four Eastern Partnership platforms and in support of Black Sea Synergy and Northern Dimension, 2) the preparation of country and multi-country programmes, as well as activities in the fields of information and communication.

¹ ENPI Regulation 1638/2006 of 24/10/2006

2.2. Lessons learnt

Given the support nature of previous and current Global Allocations, past actions are assessed against the level of consumption of committed funds. This is one of the criteria, along with priorities and needs, taken into account in the initial programming, as well as in the planning exercise once the Decision is adopted. The average rate of consumption of past Global Allocations since 2007 was 90% of committed funds.

In spite of the relatively recent launch of the initiative, experience so far with the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership has shown that maintaining a certain level of flexibility as regards the original planning of activities is necessary to take account of developments in the work programmes of the EaP Platforms throughout the year.

2.3. Complementary actions

Global Allocations can be considered complementary actions to the Technical Assistance allocations existing in the frame of the bilateral Annual Action Programmes. Global allocations for information activities of the EU Delegations in the region will be complementary to the activities financed from budget line information programmes in third countries.

2.4. Donor coordination

While Global Allocations are not directly subject - by their support nature - to donor coordination, the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership entails by its own nature close coordination with EU Member States and partner countries in the framework of the Platforms and related panels. Other donors/entities are also represented in the Platforms (e.g. Council of Europe, OSCE, Committee of the Regions, etc).

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The objective of the ENPI-East Support to the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership/Global Allocation 2011 is two fold: 1- to advance the implementation of the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership and of the Black Sea Synergy and Northern Dimension; 2- to ensure rapidity of the commitment decision on actions and projects, while enabling the European Commission to act with flexibility through the use of an instrument capable of adapting to evolving circumstances, such as dealing with unforeseen situations.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

The ENPI-East Support to the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership/Global Allocation 2011 will be used as a framework for financing activities in the following fields:

1. Multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership, Black Sea Synergy, and Northern Dimension

This component covers activities organised mainly in the framework of the Eastern Partnership, as well as of the Black Sea Synergy and the Northern Dimension.

As part of the operational structure of the Eastern Partnership, the Commission Communication on the Eastern Partnership sets out the establishment of four thematic platforms, according to the main areas of cooperation, and of panels to support the work of the platforms in specific areas.² In their work programmes, the platforms may also identify further seminars, training programmes or studies to be implemented in order to advance the objectives of the Eastern Partnership. Capacity building activities may also be implemented in support to the Flagship initiatives launched under the Eastern Partnership. In the context of Eastern Partnership Platform 4 ("Contacts between people"), DG EAC proposed to extend the eTwinning programme to the Eastern Partnership countries and potentially Russia. eTwinning allows teachers from all participating countries to use the eTwinning online tools to find partner schools, meet virtually and exchange ideas and best practices.

To ensure involvement of civil society in the Eastern Partnership initiative, the European Commission provided also for the establishment of an Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, "to promote contacts among civil society organisation and facilitate their dialogue with public authorities". Meetings of the Civil Society Forum will also benefit from funding under this component.

The implementation of the Black Sea Synergy and the Northern Dimension supposes the establishment of partnerships in different areas. Activities to take place in the context of these partnerships, such as meetings or studies, will also rely on support from this component.

The indicative budget for this component is **EUR 9,000,000**.

2. Global Allocation – support to project cycle management and information activities

This component includes activities linked to:

- identification and formulation of projects which may result in funding from ENPI-East (e.g. sector studies, country or region studies, studies on cross-cutting issues or in specialised areas, preparatory activities, etc.);
- other small-scale activities to back up major projects during their implementation;
- 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.
- publications and other information and awareness-raising activities about the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership and the EU-Russia Strategic Partnership, designed and implemented in coherence and complementarity with the regional Information and Communication programme and with EU Delegations' activities financed from budget line information programmes in third countries, in order to enhance the visibility of EU-funded

² The following panels have so far been established in the framework of the Eastern Partnership: Fight against Corruption; Integrated Border Management; Environment and Climate Change; Trade and Trade Related Regulatory Cooperation linked to deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA).

activities as well as awareness and understanding of EU cooperation policies in each ENP East country and in Russia.

The indicative budget for this component is **EUR 6,270,000**.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

Given the nature of the action, no major risks are identified. Main assumption is related to the expected developments of the Eastern Partnership initiative towards closer integration with Partner Countries.

3.4. Crosscutting Issues

Not applicable

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Method of implementation

Component 1:

- Direct centralised management by means of service contracts and/ or grants.
- Joint management with international organisations. The choice of a particular international organisation will depend on developments to take place in the framework of Eastern Partnership Platforms' work programmes, and could include the Council of Europe, the OECD, UN agencies.

For support to the Northern Dimension, the possibility of joint management with the Nordic Council of Ministers or the Nordic Investment Bank may be envisioned, since these two structures host the secretariats of Northern Dimension Partnerships.

In this respect, the Commission would ensure that the final choice of international organisation would be made in an objective and transparent manner in conformity with the conditions of Article 53(d) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (hereafter, the Financial Regulation). Moreover, the Commission would ensure, on the basis of the prior audit conclusions as foreseen in Article 53(d) of the Financial Regulation, that the management system set up by the international organisation in question offers guarantees equivalent to internationally accepted standards in their accounting, audit, internal control and procurement procedures.

- Implementation of the partial extension of the eTwinning programme to Eastern Partnership countries and potentially Russia will be done through direct centralised management, by means of a services contract with European Schoolnet (taking into account that European Schoolnet has been managing the Central Support Services of the eTwinning programme since 2008), in accordance with Article 126(1)(f) of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. Provided that the mandate of the Executive Agency for Education and Culture (EACEA) is extended in 2012, the contract will be transferred to the EACEA and implementation of the programme will be further managed through indirect centralised management with EACEA as implementing body.

Component 2:

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

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

1) Contracts

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the implementation of external operations, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

Participation in the award of contracts for the present action shall be open to all natural and legal persons covered by the ENPI Regulation. Further extensions of this participation to other natural or legal persons by the concerned authorising officer shall be subject to the conditions provided for in 21(7) ENPI.

A service contract through negotiated procedure will be signed with European Schoolnet (EUN) for the extension of the eTwinning programme to EaP countries and Russia under EaP Platform 4. European Schoolnet will act as the Central Support Service for the programme.

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. They are established in accordance with the principles set out in Title VI 'Grants' of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget. When derogations to these principles are applied, they shall be justified, in particular in the following cases:

- Financing in full (derogation to the principle of co-financing): the maximum possible rate of co-financing for grants is 80%. Full financing may only be applied in the cases provided for in Article 253 of the Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.

- Derogation to the principle of non-retroactivity: a grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only if the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the grant is awarded, in accordance with Article 112 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget.

3) Joint management

All contracts implementing the action are awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the international organisations concerned.

4) Indirect centralised management

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the principles set out in Part one, Titles V and VI complemented by Part two, Title IV 'External Relations' of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the EU.

4.3. Budget and calendar

The total budget for this action is **EUR 15,270,000**, divided as follows:

- Component 1. Multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership, Black Sea Synergy and Northern Dimension – **EUR 9,000,000**.
- Component 2. Global Allocation – support to project cycle management and information activities – **EUR 6,270,000**.

Contracts can be financed under this Support to the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership/Global Allocation as soon as the Commission decision is adopted, until 31 December 2012 in accordance with the N+1 rule.

The operational duration is estimated at 48 months from the signature of the contracts/agreements.

4.4. Evaluation and audit

Certifications 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 done by external experts hired by the European Commission as well as external audits at the initiative of the Commission, if necessary. These evaluations and audits will be funded from other sources because of the "N+1" rule applying to the contracting-out period of this Decision.