



Brussels, 29.10.2018
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COMMISSION DECISION

of 29.10.2018

**on the Annual Action Programme 2018 (part 1) in favour of West Africa to be financed
from the 11th European Development Fund**

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) 2015/322 of 2 March 2015 on the implementation of the 11th European Development Fund¹, and in particular Article 9(1) thereof,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) 2015/323 of 2 March 2015 on the financial regulation applicable to the 11th European Development Fund², and in particular Article 26 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The Commission has adopted the Regional Indicative Programme for West Africa for the period 2014-2020³, which prioritises (i) peace, security and regional stability, (ii) regional economic integration and support for trade, and (iii) resilience, food and nutrition security and natural resources.
- (2) The objectives pursued by the annual action programme to be financed under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Internal Agreement⁴ ("Internal Agreement") are to support West Africa competitiveness and to contribute to economic integration, trade and job creation.
- (3) The action entitled "West Africa Competitiveness Programme" aims to strengthen the competitiveness of West African countries and enhance their integration into the regional and international trading system. The programme's specific objectives are to improve the performance, growth and contribution to industry, regional trade and exports of selected value chains and to improve the business climate at national and regional levels.
- (4) It is necessary to adopt a financing decision the detailed rules of which are set out in Article 110 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323.
- (5) It is necessary to adopt a work programme for grants in accordance with Article 110(2) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 applicable in accordance with Article

¹ OJ L 58, 3.3.2015, p. 1.

² OJ L 58, 3.3.2015, p. 17.

³ Commission Decision on the adoption of the Regional Indicative Programme between the European Union and West Africa 2014-2020, C(2015)4093 of 19.6.2015.

⁴ Internal Agreement between the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of the European Union, meeting within the Council, on the financing of European Union aid under the multiannual financial framework for the period 2014 to 2020, in accordance with the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, and on the allocation of financial assistance for the Overseas Countries and Territories to which Part Four of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union applies (OJ L 210, 6.8.2013, p. 1).

2(1) and Article 37(1) of Regulation (EU) 2015/323. The work programme is set out in the Annex.

- (6) The Commission should entrust budget-implementation tasks under indirect management to the entities specified in the Annex to this Decision, subject to the conclusion of delegation agreements. In accordance with Article 154(3) and (4) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323, the authorising officer responsible needs to ensure that these entities guarantee a level of protection of the financial interests of the European Union equivalent to that required when the Commission manages European Union funds. These entities comply with the conditions set out in points (a) to (d) of the first subparagraph of Article 60(2) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and the supervisory and support measures are in place as necessary.
- (7) The Commission should entrust budget-implementation tasks under indirect management to the partner countries and regional organisation specified in the Annex to this Decision, subject to the conclusion of a financing agreement. In accordance with Article 154(6)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323, the authorising officer responsible needs to ensure that measures are taken to supervise and support the implementation of the entrusted tasks. A description of those measures and the entrusted tasks are laid down in the Annex.
- (8) The envisaged assistance to West Africa is deemed to strictly follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures concerning the countries of the West Africa region that are under those measures.
- (9) The authorising officer responsible should be able to award grants without a call for proposals only in the exceptional cases set out in Article 195 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 37(1) of Regulation (EU) 2015/323.
- (10) It is necessary to allow for the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 116(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 29(1) of Regulation (EU) 2015/323.
- (11) Pursuant to Article 110(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323, any substantial change to a financing decision that has already been adopted should follow the same procedure as the initial decision. It is therefore appropriate that the Commission defines the changes to this Decision that are considered non-substantial in order to ensure that any such changes can be adopted by the authorising officer responsible.
- (12) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the EDF Committee established under Article 8 of the Internal Agreement.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Adoption of the programme

The Commission Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2018 part 1 in favour of West Africa to be financed from the 11th European Development Fund, as set out in the Annex, is adopted.

The programme shall include the following action:

- Annex: West Africa Competitiveness Programme

Article 2

Financial contribution

The maximum contribution of the European Union for the implementation of the programme referred to in Article 1 is set at EUR 48 000 000 and shall be financed from the 11th European Development Fund.

The financial contribution provided for in the first paragraph may also cover interest due for late payment.

Article 3

Methods of implementation

Budget-implementation tasks under indirect management may be entrusted to the entities identified in the Annex subject to the conclusion of the relevant agreements.

The elements required by Article 110(2) and (3) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323, are set out in the Annex to this Decision.

Grants may be awarded without a call for proposals by the authorising officer responsible in accordance with Article 195 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 37(1) of Regulation (EU) 2015/323.

Article 4

Non-substantial changes

Increases or decreases of up to EUR 10 000 000 not exceeding 20 % of the contribution set in the first paragraph of Article 2, or cumulated changes to the allocations of specific actions not exceeding 20 % of that contribution, as well as extensions of the implementation period shall not be considered substantial within the meaning of Article 110(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323, provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objectives of the actions.

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

Done at Brussels, 29.10.2018

For the Commission
Neven MIMICA
Member of the Commission