

Joint Baltic Sea Research and Development Programme (BONUS)

2009/0169(COD) - 22/09/2010 - Final act

PURPOSE: to allow the Community's participation in a Joint Baltic Sea Research and Development Programme (BONUS-169) undertaken by several Member States.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Decision No 862/2010/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the participation of the Union in a Joint Baltic Sea Research and Development Programme (BONUS) undertaken by several Member States

CONTENT: following a first reading agreement with the European Parliament, the Council adopted this decision approving Community participation in a research project in the Baltic Sea ("BONUS-169 programme") undertaken by several EU countries. BONUS-169 is a joint research programme undertaken by eight EU Baltic Sea Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden) in support of sustainable development of the Baltic Sea region.

Objectives of BONUS: BONUS shall enhance the Baltic Sea Region's research capacity to underpin the development and implementation of 'fit-for-purpose' regulations, policies and management practices, to respond effectively to the major environmental and key societal challenges which the region faces and will face in the coming years and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Baltic Sea Region's fragmented environmental research programming and approach by integrating the research activities in the Baltic Sea System into a durable, cooperative, interdisciplinary well-integrated and focused multi-national programme.

BONUS shall also contribute to the establishment and structuring of the European Research Area in the Baltic Sea Region. It aims to support scientific development and innovation by providing the necessary legal and organisational framework for trans-national cooperation between the Baltic Sea States on environmental research in the Baltic Sea region.

Relevance for Union policies: while largely focused on environmental research, BONUS cuts across a number of related Union research programmes on a range of human activities having accumulated impacts on ecosystems such as fisheries, aquaculture, agriculture, infrastructure (including in the field of energy), transport, training and mobility of researchers as well as socioeconomic issues. BONUS is of considerable relevance to a number of Union policies and directives including the Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region; the Common Fisheries Policy; the Common Agricultural Policy, water policy, and marine environmental policy, as well as international commitments of the Union such as the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. As a result, many other areas of Union policy will benefit from BONUS.

Implementation of BONUS: BONUS will be implemented by the Baltic Organisations' Network for Funding Science (BONUS EEIG) in two phases, namely, a strategic phase followed by an implementation phase in accordance with Annex I.

- **Strategic phase:** the strategic phase of BONUS shall last up to 18 months. It shall prepare the implementation phase. During the strategic phase, BONUS EEIG shall deal with the strategic development of BONUS to ensure that an optimal integration of Baltic Sea System research can be achieved. It shall seek to strengthen the involvement of stakeholders and user groups to ensure that the research is relevant to policy and management, and that the prioritisation of research themes is driven by policy needs and the full involvement of scientists and their respective research

institutions, as well as the broad stakeholder communities shall be actively sought. During the strategic phase of BONUS, the involvement of additional sector-oriented funding agencies should be sought to further enhance the integration of research addressing cross-sectoral end-user needs and to ensure the effective use and uptake of results for policy and resource management arrangements across a wide array of economic sectors. The Commission may, if appropriate, make recommendations for improving the Strategic Research Agenda. At the end of the strategic phase, the Commission will verify that the Strategic Research Agenda, Stakeholders Consultation Platforms and implementation modalities are in place for BONUS to enter the implementation phase.

- **Implementation Phase:** this shall last for a minimum period of 5 years. Provided that the specified conditions are in place and the ex-ante audit of BONUS EEIG is positive, the Commission and BONUS EEIG shall conclude the Implementation Agreement. During the implementation phase joint calls for proposals shall be published and carried out with a view to funding strategically targeted BONUS projects addressing the objectives of BONUS. The topics shall be taken from BONUS Strategic Research Agenda, respect as far as possible the established roadmap and cover research, technological development and training and/or dissemination activities.

Union financial contribution: the EU shall make a financial contribution not exceeding **EUR 50 million** for the entire duration of BONUS in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 during the strategic phase and in accordance with the Financial Regulation during the implementation phase. Within that ceiling, the Union financial contribution shall match the contribution of the Participating States.

The Union financial contribution **for the strategic phase shall not exceed EUR 1.25 million** and match, within that limit, the contribution of the Participating States. The commitment of the Union to contribute to the strategic phase shall be conditional upon an equivalent commitment from the Participating States.

The Union financial contribution **for the implementation phase shall not exceed EUR 48.75 million** and match, within that limit, the contribution of the Participating States. That ceiling may be increased by any amount remaining after the implementation of the strategic phase. During the implementation phase, up to 25 % of the contribution from the Participating States may consist in providing in-kind infrastructure contribution.

The Union financial contribution for the implementation phase shall be conditional upon (a) the establishment by the Participating States of the Strategic Research Agenda, Stakeholders Consultation Platforms and the implementation modalities referred to in the text and (b) demonstration by BONUS EEIG of its capacity to implement BONUS, including receiving, allocating and monitoring the Union financial contribution.

Annual reporting and evaluation: the Commission shall include a report of the activities of BONUS in the annual report on the Seventh Framework Programme. It will carry out an interim evaluation of BONUS no later than 31 December 2014, which will cover progress towards the objectives, as well as the recommendations of BONUS on the most appropriate ways to further enhance integration and the quality and efficiency of the implementation, including scientific, management and financial integration and whether the level of the financial contributions of the Participating States is appropriate, given the potential demand from their national research communities. The Commission shall communicate the conclusions of its interim evaluation, accompanied by its observations, to the European Parliament and the Council.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 3 October 2010.