



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 5.4.2024
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COMMISSION DECISION

of 5.4.2024

**on the financing of pilot projects and preparatory actions in the field of transport and
the adoption of the work programme for 2024**

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012¹, and in particular Articles 58(2), points (a)(b) and 110 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to ensure the implementation of pilot projects and preparatory actions in the field of transport, it is necessary to adopt an annual financing decision, which constitutes the annual work programme, for 2024.
- (2) The envisaged assistance is to comply with the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures² adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU.
- (3) The work programme should contribute to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in line with Commission Communication ‘The European Green Deal’³ and in the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources⁴.
- (4) Pursuant to Article 62(1), point (c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 (hereinafter “the Financial Regulation”), indirect management is to be used for the implementation of the programme.
- (5) The Commission is to ensure a level of protection of the financial interests of the Union with regards to entities and persons entrusted with the implementation of Union funds by indirect management as provided for in Article 154(3) of the Financial Regulation. To that end, such entities and persons are to be subject to an assessment of their systems and procedures in accordance with Article 154(4) of the Financial Regulation⁵ and, if necessary, to appropriate supervisory measures in accordance with

¹ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

² See www.sanctionsmap.eu – Note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy, the OJ prevails.

³ COM (2019) 640 final of 11 December 2019.

⁴ OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 28.

⁵ Except for the cases of Article 154(6) of the Financial Regulation, where the Commission may decide, not to require an ex-ante assessment

Article 154(5) of the Financial Regulation before a contribution agreement can be signed.

- (6) It is necessary to allow for the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 116(5) of the Financial Regulation.
- (7) In order to allow for flexibility in the implementation of the work programme, it is appropriate to determine the changes, which are not considered substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of the Financial Regulation,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The work programme 2024

The annual financing decision, constituting the annual work programme for the implementation of pilot projects and preparatory actions in the field of transport for 2024, as set out in the Annex, is adopted.

Article 2

Union contribution

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the work programme for 2024 is set at EUR 11 790 000. It shall be financed from the appropriations entered in the following lines of the general budget of the Union:

- (a) budget line PP 02 23 05 – European body for jet fuel standards and safety certification: EUR 990 000 (ongoing);
- (b) budget line PP 02 24 02 – Development of cross-border cycle lane infrastructure: EUR 800 000 (new);
- (c) budget line PA 02 24 01 – Environmental labelling for aviation II: EUR 3 000 000 (continuation of PP 02 20 02);
- (d) budget line PA 02 24 02 – Establishing book and claim system for SAF: EUR 3 000 000 (new);
- (e) budget line PA 02 24 03 – Preparation of the EU regulatory framework for Higher Airspace Operations: EUR 2 000 000 (new);
- (f) budget line PA 02 24 04 – Sustainable Innovative Air Mobility (IAM) Hub II: EUR 2 000 000 (continuation of PP 02 22 02).

The appropriations provided for in the first paragraph, points (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) may also cover interest due for late payment.

Article 3

Methods of implementation and entrusted entities or persons

The implementation of the actions carried out by way of indirect management, as set out in the Annex, may be entrusted to the entities or persons referred to or selected in accordance with the criteria laid down in point 3 of the Annex.

Article 4
Flexibility clause

Cumulated changes to the allocations to specific actions not exceeding 20% of the maximum Union contribution set in Article 2, first paragraph, of this Decision shall not be considered to be substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of the Financial Regulation, where those changes do not significantly affect the nature of the actions and the objective of the work programme. The increase of the maximum Union contribution set in Article 2, first paragraph, of this Decision shall not exceed 20%.

The authorising officer responsible may apply the changes referred to in the first paragraph. Those changes shall be applied in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and proportionality.

Done at Brussels, 5.4.2024

For the Commission
Adina-Ioana VĂLEAN
Member of the Commission

Work programme for 2024 for pilot projects and preparatory actions in the field of transport

1. Introduction

On the basis of the objectives laid down in the budget remarks, this work programme contains the actions to be financed and the budget breakdown for year 2024 as follows:

- (a) for procurement (implemented under direct management) (point 2);
- (b) for actions implemented under indirect management (point 3).

Legal basis

Article 58(2), points (a) and (b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012¹

Budget lines

PP 02 23 05 – European body for jet fuel standards and safety certification
PP 02 24 02 – Development of cross-border cycle lane infrastructure
PA 02 24 01 – Environmental labelling for aviation II
PA 02 24 02 – Establishing a book and claim system for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF)
PA 02 24 03 – Preparation of the EU regulatory framework for Higher Airspace Operations
PA 02 24 04 – Sustainable Innovative Air Mobility (IAM) Hub II

Objectives pursued

The main objectives pursued by this Work Programme are to develop and apply rules that will build a mobility system that is sustainable, smart, and resilient, by (i) enabling sustainable travel choices, (ii) addressing mobility challenges in the urban area, (iii) providing harmonisation in the fields of certification, standardisation, and labelling in the aviation sector, and (iv) preparing the legislative playing field in innovative areas such as urban air mobility and higher air space operations.

Expected results

The 2024 pilot project and preparatory actions are intended to bring the Union's transport policy closer to the European Green Deal objective of making the European Union carbon neutral by 2050. In particular, the actions in this Work Programme are expected to support

¹ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

the decarbonisation of the aviation sector, the digitalisation of mobility, and the promotion of sustainable and accessible transportation.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution

The actions included in this work programme contribute to climate mainstreaming by working towards achieving the objective set out in the Commission's Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy of a 90% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector by 2050.

2. *Procurement*

The global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement contracts in 2024 is EUR 800 000.

Budget line

PP 02 24 02 – Development of cross-border cycle lane infrastructure

2.1 Pilot project – Development of cross-border cycle lane infrastructure

General description of the contracts envisaged

Study

Objectives pursued and expected results

Cycling is an accessible mode of transport that can cut road congestion and improve air quality. The objective of this pilot project is to gather information on the current state of cycling infrastructure in Member States in order to assess the extent to which it needs to be extended. This action will:

- define a methodology for the collection of relevant cycling data;
- collect data on (i) the number of kilometres of existing cycling infrastructure in Member States, (ii) the quality of the infrastructure, (iii) the modal share of cycling, and (iv) the development of cycling infrastructure over time.

Implementation

Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution

This action will contribute to promote cycling, which is a zero-emission means of transport that can decrease dependency on fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector.

3. *Actions implemented in indirect management*

The global budgetary envelope reserved for actions implemented in indirect management in 2024 is EUR 10 990 000.

Budget line

PP 02 23 05 – European body for jet fuel standards and safety certification

3.1 Pilot project – European body for jet fuel standards and safety certification

Implementing entity

European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) , a decentralised agency falling under Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The aim of this pilot project is to assess the feasibility and associated requirements to set up a European body with the capacity for specification, standardisation and certification of aviation fuels. As a continuation of a previous pilot project, the objective is to explore the structures and processes that need to be in place for the Union to decide on aviation fuel standards and associated criteria. This pilot project will:

- conduct a feasibility study to set up an EU Aviation Fuel Standards Body;
- define and test several use cases for a European fuel standard regarding non-CO₂ emissions from aviation fuels;
- assess possible legal actions to optimise the fuel content in aviation fuels according to the RefuelEU Aviation regulation.

Given the safety implications of this pilot project for the aviation sector, the project will also identify the role of EASA in setting up a European body for jet fuel standards and safety certifications. The final decision on whether such body is needed will be taken by the Commission

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution

The creation of a European body that regulates standards regarding the type of fuels used in the aviation sector will foster innovation in the zero-emissions and zero-pollution front and will support the ReFuelEU Aviation proposal in the area of certifications of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF).

Budget line

PA 02 24 01 – Environmental labelling for aviation II

3.2 Environmental labelling for aviation II

Implementing entity

European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), a decentralised agency falling under Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The RefuelEU Aviation Regulation noted that levels of emission performance of flights cannot be compared because of the lack of common methodology, criteria and indicators among aircraft operators. The Regulation mandated EASA and the Commission to set up

criteria and indicators to communicate the level of emissions performance of flights of aircraft operators under a voluntary common environmental label ('the label').

The objective of the environmental label for aviation is to inform passengers about their environmental impact at the point of purchase, enabling sustainable travel choices whilst providing a harmonised approach in the EU market.

The preparatory action will build on EASA's findings for pilot project PP 02 20 02 "Ecolabelling for aviation", which developed methodologies to assess aircraft and operation externalities, technical criteria and category rules, label demonstrators on the green record of individual aircrafts and carriers, and other operational measures. The objective is to prepare for the introduction of a voluntary common environmental label of aircraft operators.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution

This preparatory action contributes to the climate neutrality objective by creating environmental transparency in aviation through a labelling scheme that will empower passengers to make informed sustainable choices when booking their flights.

Budget line

PA 02 24 02 – Establishing book and claim system for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF)

2.2 Establishing book and claim system for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF)

Implementing entity

European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), a decentralised agency falling under Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Article 15 of the RefuelEU Aviation Regulation² provides for a flexibility mechanism for different types of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) and stipulates that the Commission will report on this mechanism by 1 July 2024.

This preparatory action will cover the following points:

- Analysis of the existing EU legislative framework, notably ReFuelEU Aviation, Renewable Energy Directive³ (RED), and the EU Emission Trading System (EU ETS)⁴, in order to identify, assess and design possible implementation methods for a functioning book and claim system at EU level.
- Analysis of (i) ways to facilitate access to SAF for aircraft operators operating at Union airports lacking access to further SAF uptake, and (ii) potential problems in the access to SAF during the flexibility phase and possible impact of the development of accounting mechanisms on costs and the EU acquis.
- Assessing the need to design IT architecture for a SAF accountability system to complement the Union database under RED by identifying gaps and

² OJ L, 2023/2405, 31.10.2023

³ OJ L, 2023/2413, 31.10.2023.

⁴ OJ L 130, 16.5.2023, p. 134.

complementarities. If the analysis concludes that there is a need for complementary IT architecture, it should propose a system design that, among others, prevents irregularities and fraud, and addresses risks of double counting.

- Setting up and implementing a virtual accounting mechanism with features of a book and claim system to allow for comparison between the available SAF in the market and improvements in SAF availability and price.
- Setting up a platform of international expertise on accounting mechanisms for SAF to exchange information, best practices and experiences with the aim of aiding accountability systems to preserve the environmental integrity of SAF, while allowing the market to develop itself in a cost-effective manner.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution

SAF have the potential to decarbonise the aviation sector, but their production and integration in the aviation fuel supply chains remain low. The introduction of an accounting mechanism for SAF, such as a book and claim system, that is resistant to fraud and double counting could allow aviation stakeholders to trade SAF in the most cost-effective manner while preserving the environmental objectives of the European strategy for decarbonisation. Moreover, such a system could incentivise operators to go beyond the minimum objectives set out in ReFuelEU Aviation and decrease further greenhouse gas emissions from the aviation sector.

Budget line

PA 02 24 03 – Preparation of the EU regulatory framework for Higher Airspace Operations

3.3 Preparation of the EU regulatory framework for Higher Airspace Operations

Implementing entity

European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), a decentralised agency falling under Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

This preparatory action will help (i) build better knowledge of future higher airspace operations (HAO) and their environment; (ii) prepare future regulatory initiatives to build a useful ecosystem that supports industrial development, while integrating the security and defense dimension to protect the sovereignty of the European airspace, and (iii) build a global approach through ICAO by ensuring a strong European position.

EASA will provide the European Commission with technical assistance to:

- conduct scientific studies on the conditions at high altitude affecting flights and persons on board;
- support industrial development, for instance through special certification conditions and regulatory sandboxes;
- perform legal and regulatory assessments (including safety and environmental impact assessments), as well as gap analysis;
- exploit synergies with other EU policies;

- ensure regional and global interoperability, mainly through ICAO;
- build European know-how and raise awareness.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution

The preparation of the regulatory framework will look at the environmental impact (noise and air pollutant emissions) of the new types of vehicles and operations in order to further develop EU certification standards and ensure a high level of environmental protection. This action will also look at the measures to be taken to minimise the impact of these new type of operations on the flight trajectories and environmental performance of the current air traffic management operations.

Budget line

PA 02 24 04 – Sustainable Innovative Air Mobility (IAM) Hub II

3.4 Sustainable Innovative Air Mobility (IAM) Hub II

Implementing entity

European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), a decentralised agency falling under Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Innovative Air Mobility (IAM) consists of vehicles ranging from small drones used for cargo delivery operations to electrically powered aircraft capable of vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) for the transport of both goods and people.

This preparatory action will scale-up the ‘IAM Hub’ platform developed by the former pilot project PP 02 22 02 to improve its functionalities in line with feedback received from stakeholders. This action will:

- widen functionalities and extend accessibility of the platform to more municipalities and other users;
- increase synergies between EASA and National Aviation Authorities through wider uptake of the platform;
- increase synergies with other EU initiatives, such as CIVITAS (City-Vitality-Sustainability) and SESAR projects;
- facilitate compliance with the Drones/eVTOL regulations as well as safety, environmental, cyber and noise issues.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution

This preparatory action contributes to the European Green Deal’s objective to digitalise the economy by helping to deliver solutions offered by urban air mobility and addressing mobility challenges for the entire functional urban area, including synergies with spatial, energy and climate plans.