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*(Announcements)*

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## HERCULE III

## Call for proposals — 2014

## Technical Assistance for the fight against EU fraud

(2014/C 227/08)

**1. Objectives and description**

This notice of call for proposals is based on Regulation (EU) No 250/2014 establishing the Hercule III programme<sup>(1)</sup>, in particular Article 8(a) ('Eligible Actions'), as well as the Financing Decision 2014 adopting the annual work programme<sup>(2)</sup> for the implementation of the Hercule III programme in 2014, in particular section 6.1, actions: 1, 2, 3 and 6 ('Specific actions for technical assistance').

The Financing Decision 2014 provides for the organisation of a call for proposals Technical Assistance 'Cigarettes and Investigation Support'.

**2. Eligible applicants**

The bodies eligible for funding under the programme are national or regional administrations ('Applicants') of a Member State or a country outside the European Union which promote the strengthening of European Union action to protect the European Union's financial interests.

**3. Eligible actions**

The actions eligible for funding under this call for proposals are:

1. The purchase and maintenance of investigation tools and methods used in the fight against irregularities, fraud and corruption perpetrated against the financial interests of the Union. Specialised training needed to operate the investigation tools is included. The investigation tools include:
  - Technical equipment for electronic and mobile surveillance, including the purchase and adaptation of cars needed for these purposes,
  - Technical equipment for the analysis of digital evidence,
  - Technical equipment for encrypted communications.

<sup>(1)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 250/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 establishing a programme to promote activities in the field of the protection of the financial interests of the European Union (Hercule III programme (OJ L 84, 20.3.2014, p. 6)).

<sup>(2)</sup> Commission Decision concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2014 and the financing for the implementation of the Hercule III programme C(2014) 3391 of 26 May 2014.

2. The purchase and maintenance of devices to carry out inspections of containers, trucks, railway wagons and vehicles at the Union's external borders and within the Union in order to detect smuggled and counterfeited goods imported into the Union with the aim or consequence to evade custom duties and excises. These devices include:
  - The purchase of mobile and fixed (X-Ray) scanners as well as the costs related to their installation and maintenance<sup>(1)</sup>, used by customs to check containers, trucks and cars crossing the EU's external borders or in transit over the territory of a Member State, in order to carry out checks on the presence of illicit goods, in particular smuggled or counterfeited cigarettes and tobacco,
  - Training for customs staff to operate the scanner as well as training for the correct interpretation of the images generated by the scanners,
  - Software and hardware to enable the exchange of images, generated by different types of scanners, within and between EU customs.
3. The purchase, transport, training, housing and feeding of animals used to detect smuggled and illicit goods on the basis of the goods' scent characteristics. These animals include sniffer dogs, but could be extended to include other animals, such as rats, pigs or bees, provided that the applicant manages to demonstrate that the use of these animals for this purpose has been proven on the basis of evidence based research. Research and Development activities for this purpose are excluded from the scope of this Call.
4. The purchase, maintenance and interconnection of systems for the recognition of vehicle number plates (Automated Number Plate Recognition Systems — ANPRS) or container codes for purposes related to the protection of the financial interests of the Union, provided these systems do not overlap with existing EU funded systems, such as the EUCARIS network<sup>(2)</sup> or the ERRU and RESPER systems<sup>(3)</sup>. Specialised training needed to operate these systems is included.
5. The purchase of services to support Member States' capacity to store and destroy seized cigarettes and tobacco.

#### 4. Award criteria

Each submitted eligible action will be assessed in the light of the following award criteria:

- Added value of the application for the protection of the financial interests of the Union,
- Conformity with the operational objectives of the programme,
- Quality,
- Value for money.

#### 5. Budget

The indicative available budget for this call is EUR 7 450 000. The financial contribution will take the form of a grant. The financial contribution awarded will not exceed 80 % of the eligible costs. In exceptional and duly justified cases, the financial contribution may be increased to cover a maximum of 90 % of the eligible costs. The Call lists the criteria that will be applied to determine these exceptional and duly justified cases.

The Commission reserves the right not to allocate all the funds available.

#### 6. Further information

All documents related to this call for proposals can be downloaded from the following internet website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/anti\\_fraud/about-us/funding/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/about-us/funding/index_en.htm)

<sup>(1)</sup> Maintenance costs not covered by a warrant.

<sup>(2)</sup> See: <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/community/eucaris/description>

<sup>(3)</sup> See for example: [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/road/access/erru\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/road/access/erru_en.htm)

Question and/or requests for additional information in relation to this call have to be sent by e-mail to:

OLAF-FMB-HERCULE-TA@ec.europa.eu

The questions and answers may be anonymously published in the Guidelines for filling in the Application Form on OLAF's internet website if they are relevant to other applicants.

**7. Deadline for submission of applications**

Applications must be submitted no later than: **Monday, 1 September 2014.**

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