I. Basic information

1.1. Désirée number: PL0005.06
1.2. Title: Eastern border small projects fund
1.3. Sector: Administration
1.4. Location: Poland

Border districts: Euroregions: Baltyk, Niemen, Bug, Karpacki

2. Project Objectives

2.1 General Objectives

The Small Project Fund (SPF) supports one of the key objectives of the Integrated Polish Eastern Border Programme, notably the establishment and development of co-operative networks on both sides of the border and the creation of linkages between these networks and wider European Union networks.

2.2 Specific Objectives

The projects shall support development in particular in the fields of small-scale people-to-people activities across the border. In overall terms, the SPF will seek to:

- contribute to the development of the eligible districts of the four Euroregions on the Polish eastern border;
- enhance possibilities for cross-border tourism attraction and linkages between the tourism support infrastructures on either side of the border;
- the development of cultural co-operation between neighbouring areas in the border region;
- the support and increase in numbers of cross border meetings of various groups of the population, especially of youth;
- the support of educational activities for institutions and individuals involved in local/regional development, in local government and in organisations of public interest;
- the raising of the level of public awareness and information on cross-border co-operation affairs and on the process of European integration.
- encourage local involvement in the Phare Integrated Polish Eastern Border Programme and to support small-scale actions which may form the basis for larger cross-border co-operation projects;
- build and develop the specialist resources of local and regional institutions involved in regional development, groundwork and implementation of cross-border projects in line with EU practice;
- stimulation and support to the creation of permanent structures among the local and regional organisations in the border region in question, particularly organisations with membership for both sides of the border;
- develop and enhance co-operation between the communities on either side of the border with a view to joint improvement of economic development, living conditions and on-going contact.

2.3 AP and NPAA

The SPF will contribute to the realisation of a number of short term and medium term priorities of the AP regarding the upgrading of Poland’s Eastern border. This project is also foreseen in Poland’s NPAA and will help to realise Poland’s recent integrated border management strategy.

2.5 Cross-border Impact of the Project

The SPF emphasises projects with a cross-border impact and encourages the development of linkages between the communities/organisations/ institutions in the region.

The Regional Steering Committees will be composed of representatives of the relevant partners from various countries within the Euroregions.

3. Project Description

3.1 Project Background

The inclusion of the SPF in the Phare 2000 Integrated Polish Eastern Border Programme reflects the evolution in the overall Phare Programme in Poland from an exclusively project–by-project approach to the gradual inclusion of flexible funding mechanisms, beginning with Small Projects Fund in 1995 on the Polish-German border. The success of the mechanism in addressing identified local needs, popularity with local/regional actors and relatively quick implementation record prompted the inclusion of more funds in the next Phare CBC Programmes (further editions of the Small Project Fund on the Polish-German border, Baltic Small Project Facility). Within the Integrated Polish Eastern Border Programme 1997, the Small Project Fund was established including the Euroregions on the Polish eastern border. Thus all four eligible
Euroregions: Baltyk, Niemen, Bug and Karpacki have already gained experience, showing a professional approach and efficiency in managing the Fund.

The inclusion of the SPF into the programme is a logical step forward in the overall context of the Poland’s future accession to the EU, and in the specific context of the development of cross-border co-operation and evolution of the Phare Integrated Polish Eastern Border Programme in the pre-accession context.

3.2 Project Description

As noted earlier, the SPF will provide financial support to small-scale actions in the Euroregions.

3.2.1 General Criteria for Eligibility

In general terms the eligible actions should meet the following conditions:

- have a strong and evident cross-border aspect (joint projects, especially where co-financed jointly by Polish and foreign project partners within the Euroregion, will be particularly prioritised)
- funding will be used only on the territory of Poland
- be financially assessed realistically and transparently
- be ready for implementation
- contribute to institution and capacity building
- be supportive to, but under no circumstances be in contradiction with the long-term development plans of the municipality or the region (projects that are part of an overall strategy/plan for the development of the region/town/municipality will be prioritised)
- contain innovative approaches (e.g. pilot projects).

Eligible actions to be supported under the SPF are defined in more detail below. More detailed operational guidelines are included in the “Guidelines for the Small Projects Fund” in Poland.

3.2.2 Small-scale projects

The general aim of the sub-programme is to support small-scale projects within the Integrated Polish Eastern Border Programme. The purpose of the support of these projects is to broaden the field of activity of the Programme, to encourage local involvement and to facilitate the implementation of small-scale actions that constitute the basis for larger cross-border co-operation projects.

The Fund will support small-scale actions across the following priority areas.

**Cultural Exchanges:** Those cultural exchanges that already exist and that are being newly established between local groups on both sides of the border region. Meetings and exchanges among youth; artistic and supporting activities; folk events and similar actions with the emphasis on the establishment of traditions and long-term co-operation, social service projects for family unification;

**Local Democracy:** Schemes will be supported that help create and intensify the skills of organisational structures in local and regional public administration and other elements of a democratic society (chambers of commerce, trade associations, trade unions, NGOs). Relevant training courses and information will be provided supporting exchange visits, project preparation and procedural matters. Exchange of know-how and experience in education at various levels will also be supported.

**Planning and development studies:** Projects providing a basis for planning within a border region. Projects can be supported that create the preconditions for joint planning in a border region, for framing joint research programmes, for drawing up joint strategies for regional development in a border area with the aim to jointly define the development priorities and so forth. Development of project applications and feasibility studies are also included;

**Economic Development:** support for small projects focusing on economies, which enhance the economic base of the border region. For example proposals for the development of small-scale enterprise, marketing initiatives, markets, exhibitions and advertising events, and so forth; the creation of cross-border co-operation structures and partnerships among supporting organisations;

**Environment:** Projects focusing on specific problems of the environment of the region, such as the drafting of studies, assessment of problems, training eg. for forest rangers, actions aimed at increasing public environmental awareness and so forth, managing of joint resource problems such as the Bug river pollution, national parks across the border.

**Tourism:** The SPF will provide funding for a range of actions for tourism development such as studies, planning, institutional strengthening measures, establishing tourist information centres, specific SME training and related HRD programmes, with a cross border impact.

3.3 Results

Development of small-scale people-to-people activities across the border in the following fields: Cultural Exchanges, Local Democracy, Planning and development studies, Economic Development, Environment and Tourism.
3.4 Activities
• carrying out of cultural exchanges, youth and sport meetings;
• training courses, exchange visits;
• language courses, conferences and seminars;
• elaboration of planning and development studies, feasibility studies, project preparation documents;
• marketing initiatives for the region, tourist information material printed;
• exhibitions visited and arranged;

3.5 Procedures
The SPF will operate under the General Guidelines of the Commission for SPF and detailed guidelines developed for SPF in Poland, which have been approved by the Commission.

4. Institutional Framework
4.1 Responsibilities:
The project will be implemented under the overall responsibility of the Implementing Authority for the Phare Cross Border Co-operation Programme at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration in Poland (the implementing agency. The IA CBC Phare is finally responsible for the management of funds allocated to the SPF and reserves therefore certain rights with respect to approving individual regional SPFs and supervise them: issuing of guidelines; definition of the responsibilities of institutions involved in the SPF; approval of the institutional set-up; specification of the rules for financial management and for regular submission of reports; the IA CBC Phare has the right of veto over certain projects that have been approved in contravention of the established rules; and finally the IA CBC Phare is responsible for the provision of on-going support to institutions in the regions in the form of training or consultation through experts chosen by the IA CBC Phare. Specifically the IA CBC Phare will manage the implementation of horizontal actions in support of institutional development. Regional Steering Committees will be established for each Euroregion. The Steering Committee will consist of representatives of the local/regional public administration and of other relevant institutions and organisations from all partner countries in the areas comprised by the respective Euroregion. The Regional Steering Committee will become the principal responsible institution for the operation of the Fund. Representatives of the IA CBC Phare and of the European Commission (Delegation) will participate in the meetings of the Committee as observers. The basic functions of the Regional Steering Committee are:
• issuing calls for proposals;
• appointment of expert panels for the assessment of project applications;
• decision-making on the selection of projects, in accordance with the Guidelines issued for the SPF;
• supervision of the operation of the SPF.

The Secretariat represents the executive SPF body in the region. Its chief function is to provide technical and specialist support to the Steering Committee and to ensure the everyday implementation and operation of the SPF. The secretarial services will be performed by Polish secretariats of Euroregions. The responsibilities of the Secretariat include:
• provide information to beneficiaries on the programme
• provision of support for the preparation of Steering Committee meetings;
• organisation of individual round of public calls for the submission of proposals;
• supporting applicants with project preparation;
• assist and co-ordinate the process of project evaluation, through passing project proposals to the expert panels and organising their sessions, etc.
• assist in the preparation of Terms of Reference and associated tender and contracting documents as required;
• conclusion and control of sub-contracts;
• monitoring and inspection of implementation; evaluation of benefits;
• the complete financial management of the SPF;
• reporting to the Steering Committee and to the IA CBC Phare.

The Secretariat will in particular ensure sound and professional financial management of the funds in line with Phare requirements. Overall, the IA CBC Phare through the provision of on-going advice and support and specialist consultancy and training inputs will assist the Secretariat in performing their role. In particular in the case of more complex services or supply procurement, the Secretariat will co-operate closely with the IA CBC Phare. The Secretariat will need to report regularly to the IA CBC Phare, in particular on the financial management and implementation record of the SPF.
There will be no Phare financing for running costs.

4.2 Involvement of Local and Regional Authorities

Due to the decentralised nature of the SPF, local/regional authorities will be directly involved in project selection and responsible for the management of the Fund and for the preparation and implementation of the projects. Moreover, local and regional authorities through their participation in the Regional Steering Committees will need to integrate the actions funded through the SPF with those supported through other programmes.

4.3 Institutional Assessment

Representatives of the eligible border regions have acquired experience of the operations of Steering Committees and the associated project selection and evaluation processes within the framework of the Small Projects Fund. There is a strong commitment on the part of regional/local public administration and other actors in this type of funding mechanism and enthusiasm for their active involvement in an EU Programme. In terms of the expert panels there is a pool of know-how on the defined themes which the SPF will address. Experts from regional/local level should be involved in the preliminary project evaluation exercise. This will help ensure that information on good practice experiences from elsewhere in Poland and other possible funding sources can be available to each committee.

5. Budget (MEUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Location</th>
<th>Phare</th>
<th>Poland*</th>
<th>Foreign partners**</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small-scale projects</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niemen Euroregion</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bug Euroregion</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karpacki Euroregion</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SPF</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.340</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*) This is the minimum Polish contribution required (25% of project value)

**) There is no formal requirement for financial support of foreign partners in the SPF. However, projects with financial contribution of foreign partners will be given priority in the Fund.

The Polish authorities have assured that the Government cofinancing is available either through the reserve budget foreseen specifically by the Ministry of Finance for this purpose each year, or directly through the budget of the relevant Ministry.

6. Implementation Arrangements

6.1 Implementing Agency: The Implementing Authority for Phare Cross Border Co-operation Programme; Krucza 36 Street; 00-522 Warsaw; phone +48 (0)22 695 99 10-11; fax: +48 22 695 99 12-13; e-mail: Phare@wwpwp.it.pl

Project Authorising Officer (PAO): Under-secretary of State in the Ministry of Interior and Administration, S. Batorego 5 Street; 02-591 Warsaw, phone +48 (0)22 621 03 91; fax: +48 22 849 52 13, e-mail: wydzej@die.mswia.gov.pl

Twinning: n.a.

Non-standard aspects: this project will be operated in conformity with the SPF guidelines issued by the Commission and the implementing arrangements foreseen in the Financing Memorandum. In addition, the General Guidelines of the Commission for Small Projects Funds and detailed guidelines for SPF in Poland, will be applied for the SPF.

7. Implementation Schedule

| Establishment of the Steering Committees: | Third quarter 2000 |
| Contracts with Secretariats: | Fourth quarter 2000 |
| First calls for proposals: | Fourth quarter 2000 |
| Completion of projects: | Half 2003 |
8. Equal Opportunity
Equal opportunity principles and practices in ensuring equitable gender participation in the project will be guaranteed.

9. Environmental Impact
Concerns of the environment will be taken into consideration in all regional/local projects to be funded under the SPF. Tourism projects will respect the need to protect the environment and natural heritage.

## General Objectives

- to support the further development of the economic potential of the border regions by strengthening existing structures;
- to reduce the peripheral character of these areas, thereby improving the quality of life and creating a co-operative network on both sides of the border;
- to contribute to the development and strengthening of an effective implementation structure for the programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of Achievement</th>
<th>Sources of Information</th>
<th>Assumptions and Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>amount of border traffic of local character</td>
<td>data of the border and customs services reports and statistics from Euroregions, statistical offices, opinion polls</td>
<td>continued commitment of the Government towards the priorities of the programme and regional development; inclusion of Euroregions in the new system of financial flow within Phare functioning co-operation between all relevant partners in the Euroregions; sustained interest of the Euroregion’s population in development and co-operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amount of joint social, economic and cultural organisations, opinion on inhabitants living on the other part of the border (indicator of approval) increased command of the neighbours’ language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Specific Objectives

- contribute to the development of the eligible districts of the four Euroregions on the Polish eastern border;
- enhance possibilities for cross-border tourism;
- the development of cultural co-operation between neighbouring areas in the border region;
- the support and increase in numbers of cross border meetings of various groups of the population, especially of youth;
- the raising of the level of public awareness and information on cross-border co-operation affairs and on the process of European integration.

- encourage local involvement in the Phare Integrated Polish Eastern Border Programme and to support small-scale actions;
- build and develop the specialist resources of local and regional institutions involved in regional development in line with EU practice;
- stimulation and support to the creation of permanent structures among the local and regional organisations in the border region;
- develop and enhance co-operation between the communities on either side of the border with a view to joint improvement of economic development, living conditions and on-going contact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of Achievement</th>
<th>Sources of Information</th>
<th>Assumptions and Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• SPF’s in operation and used; • regional authorities’ personnel trained, regional institutions qualified; • number of projects carried out; • number of tourists in Euroregions</td>
<td>• Euroregional and IA CBC reports; • Project completion reports; • Monitoring and assessment reports; • Programme evaluation.</td>
<td>• Availability of qualified experts and contractors; • well functioning co-operation and co-ordination between IA CBC, Steering Committee, Secretariat, beneficiaries and other involved parties;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs of Sub-projects</td>
<td>Indicators of Achievement</td>
<td>Sources of Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• carrying out of cultural exchanges, youth and sport meetings;</td>
<td>• number of meetings of social, economic and cultural organisations with their partners from the other side of the border</td>
<td>• IA CBC reports;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• training courses, exchange visits;</td>
<td>• number of project participants from both sides of the border</td>
<td>• Project completion reports;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• language courses, conferences and seminars,</td>
<td>• number of publications, maps etc. on border areas</td>
<td>• Reports of Secretariats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• elaboration of planning and development studies, feasibility studies, project preparation documents;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitoring and assessment reports;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• marketing initiatives for the region, tourist information material printed;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Summary SPF reports of Euroregions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• exhibitions visited and arranged;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inputs:** Co-financing funds from IEBP Phare (1 MEUR) and from Polish side (0,340 MEUR); qualified technical expertise.

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**Annex 2: Cumulative Implementation, contracting and disbursement schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme title</th>
<th>Date: 10.04.2000</th>
<th>Implementation schedule (quarters)</th>
<th>Budget allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PLANNED</td>
<td>In Euros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTERN BORDER SMALL</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECTS FUND</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>D = design / C = contracting / I = disbursement and implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracting</td>
<td>200.000</td>
<td>900.000</td>
<td>1.000.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbursement</td>
<td>50.000</td>
<td>250.000</td>
<td>450.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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