Training in the field of phone services for the taxpayers

1. **Basic Information**
   
   1.1 CRIS Number: 2006/018-180.01-02  
   Twinning No: PL/06/IB/TE/01/TL

   1.2 Title: *Training in the field of phone services for the taxpayers*
   
   1.3 Sector: Tax administration

   1.4 Location: Poland, Ministry of Finance

2. **Objectives**

   2.1 Overall objective
   
   Increase the quality of services provided by the employees of Tax Information Bureaus (TIB).

   2.2 Project purpose
   
   Improved skills necessary for serving taxpayers and manage Tax Information Bureaus.

   2.3 Justification
   
   Need to improve efficiency of the tax administration and providing good quality of services to the compliant taxpayer has been underlined in the Comprehensive Monitoring Report on Poland’s preparations for membership of 5th November 2003 (Chapter 10: Taxes). In the Report, the European Commission states that Poland has established structures in the area of taxation, however there is still a need for their modernization and improvement of their effectiveness.

   The project aims at implementation of modern procedures for taxpayer services as well as improvement of using resources available to the tax administration. Trainings and organizational changes stimulated by the central level of the administration are in line with priorities set out in the “Transition facility programming” (Priority no. 4)

3. **Description**

   3.1 Background and justification
   
   The Secretary of State in the Ministry of Finances has accepted “Taxpayers Relation Strategy” which aims in providing wider scope and better quality of services for the taxpayers.

   The Polish tax administration has been making a significant progress toward being a service-oriented organization. Tax Information Bureaus are a new initiative aiming at taxpayers who is compliant. They will offer low-rate paid phone services for the taxpayers all over Poland. Tax Information Bureaus will be operational in July 2006. Bureaus will be created on the basis of the Regulation of the Minister of Finance no 22 issued on 3rd of November 2005. At first, employees will be recruited from the present employees of the Tax Chambers and Tax Offices. In the first period of operation, Bureaus will provide only general information about tax regulations in the country by means of the telephone and e-mail. Later on, with the development of the technology it will be possible to provide information about status of the individual taxpayer.
Due to difficult conditions and stressful work, and based on observation of other countries’ experiences, we expect high level of rotation in the first period of operation.

This project will allow the administration to review once more the assumptions concerning organization of work in the call centers as well as answer the need for training that will appear after the first phase of operation.

3.2 Linked activities
This project is directly connected with the following projects:

Phare 2001 PL 01.01.04 “Modernization of Polish Tax Administration”. This project was implemented until June 2004 with French-Swedish consortium. In one of its components the project aimed at developing Wielkopolska Tax Information Centre in Leszno”,

Phare 2003 PL 2003/004-379.01.03 Assistance to the Polish Tax Administration that has been implemented since October 2004 and is planned to be finished in September 2006. One of the aims of the projects is to establish a network of 4 Tax Information Bureaus that will provide services for the whole country.

Transition Facility 2005 PL2005/IB/FI/01 “Improving the quality of operation of the Tax Administration units” which will aim at implementing high level of quality standards of operation in all units of the tax administration, including Tax Information Bureaus (TIBs). The project will be implemented in the units of the tax administration, including new units such as the TIBs. Managers and employees will gain skills necessary for implementing the Quality Management System. Trainings provided in the TF 2006 project will be complementary to the trainings provided in scope of TF 2005 PL2005/IB/FI/01. The objectives of the project are:
- to improve efficiency of the tax administration by increasing the knowledge of the tax administration staff;
- to improve operating standards of the tax administration by describing them in the manuals and procedures;
- to improve flow of information internally within units of the tax administration as well as between different units of the tax administration;

3.3 Results
1. Skills of employees of the TIB in providing information over the phone and via e-mail developed.
2. Managerial skills of the top and middle managers of TIB increased.

3.4 Activities
The project will be implemented in the form of Twinning light contract (0,20 M€). There should be only one 6-month contract.

The twinning partner(s) should ensure that the following activities will be performed:
Training in scope of techniques used for providing information over the telephone.
Training in scope of techniques used for handling “difficult taxpayers”.
Training for the managers concerning efficient management of the call centre.
Training for the supervisors how to manage operators on the operational level.
Training for operators responsible for handling e-mails and chat.
The actions performed in the project will not require hiring a RTA.

The Beneficiary will assist project experts in the actions carried out in the framework of the twinning light contract by providing necessary knowledge about national context, by coordinating participation employees of the Polish tax administration in the expert missions as well as by providing necessary equipment for the missions.

As a result of the project ca. 150 operators and 10 managers and 32 experts should be trained.

Implementation of the project will require hiring minimum 6 short-term experts and thus ca. 130 experts’ working days:
- 90 working days – basic training for communication with taxpayers over the telephone,
- 10 working days – training for supervisors,
- 10 working days – training for the TIB managers and/or their deputies,
- 20 working days training for experts in scope of handling difficult phone calls.

Project Leader’s and expert’s profiles:

The Project Leader should be a public servant and have at least 5-year experience in call centre management. He/she should have general overview of the position the call centre(s) has in the administration and also be able to appoint right experts for the desired work. He/she should have good communication and computer skills and be fluent in English.

Experts should have at least 3 years experience in call centre operation. They should be skilled in at least one of the required areas: providing general information over the telephone, handling difficult taxpayers, providing training for top and middle call centres’ management.

Budget breakdown:
Costs of the experts’ visit (e.g. traveling, per diem, flat rate) – approx.: 0,16 M€
Costs of the training materials and translation – approx.: 0,04 M€.

3.5 Lessons learned
Establishing trust and confidence in the tax system, with the aim of improving compliance, will take considerable time. Within the timeframes of the projects it is unlikely that all of the desired reforms will be completed but on the basis of knowledge gained during the project tax administration (especially TIB) will be able to earn positive opinion about the quality of services they provide.

Within the Phare 2001 project, the Polish administration has been given an overall ground to be taxpayer oriented. However, in the long-term operation needs constant development and improvement. Next phase of “evolution” has been developed during implementation of Phare 2003 “Assistance to the Polish tax administration. Within this project, along with the French Tax Administration, Polish beneficiary was able to work out an initial plan for starting a TIB network serving the whole country. That means that the employees as well as the managers have received initial training also the organizational structure has been prepared and
implemented. However, the training needs as well as expectation of the trainees will change with experience the gain. This project should provide opportunity to gain deeper and more detailed knowledge for the operators and the managers.

4. **Institutional framework**

The beneficiary of the project is the Ministry of Finance, Department of Tax Administration and Tax Information Bureaus.

Tax Administration Department is responsible for supervision over tax chambers (TCH) and Tax Information Bureaus (TIBs). Therefore, the Tax Administration Department will coordinate and pilot implementation of the project on the regional level.

There are no institutional constrains which might influence realization of the project. In the first period of operation, the Tax Chambers appropriate for their localization will supervise TIBs. In the later stage, the TIBs will be supervised directly by the Ministry of Finance.

5. **Detailed Budget**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(€M)</th>
<th>Transition Facility support</th>
<th>Co-financing</th>
<th>Total cost (TF + co-financing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investment support (I)</td>
<td>National Public Funds (*)</td>
<td>Other Sources (**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract 1 Twinning light</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0,20</td>
<td>0,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0,20</td>
<td>0,060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) contributions from National, Regional, Local, Municipal authorities, FIs loans to public entities, funds from public enterprises

(******private funds, FIs loans to private entities

The amounts for national co-financing indicated in the table correspond to cash co-financing, unless otherwise stated. Contributions from the Polish administration for effective implementation of the twinning light may be further detailed in the twinning contract. Unless otherwise indicated joint co-financing is provided.

VAT does not constitute eligible expenditure except where it is genuinely and definitely borne by the final beneficiary. VAT which is considered recoverable, by whatever means, cannot be considered eligible, even if it is not actually recovered by the final beneficiary or individual recipient.

In case of parallel co-financing (0,060 M€), the following activities will be financed from the parallel co-financing provision in the budget table: costs of premises and equipment necessary for training, costs of travelling for the participants and other costs connected with participation of the employees of the Polish tax administration (e.g. necessary expertises and publications).

In the case of Joint Co-financing, where the final overall cost is lower than foreseen in the project fiche, the National Public and Transition Facility Co-financing are reduced...
proportionally so as to maintain the agreed rate of co-financing. In the case of Parallel Co-financing, where the final cost is lower than foreseen in the project fiche, it must be shown that the overall objectives of the project have been fully achieved.

The Polish authorities (beneficiary) assure that the co-financing of the project is available. The amount for co-financing for this project is entirely parallel co-financing.

6. Implementation arrangements

There will be a Project Steering Committee (PSC) established in order to speed up the implementation process of the given project component in the first months after Financial Decision for Transition Facility 2006 is taken. The structure of the Committee will be working as an advisory and monitoring body until particular components are contracted and thus were appropriate may be replaced by the Twinning Steering Committee.

The participants of the Project Steering Committee will be representatives of the following institutions: PAO, NAC, CFCU and beneficiary (SPO and contact person as indicated in the fiche). It is also recommended to invite representatives of NAO services while the issues of financial management flow are to be comprehensibly discussed. The Project Steering Committee will meet every quarter starting from the date of signing the Financial Decision and will concentrate on discussing the problems occurred at the beginning phase of project implementation as well as on defining possible solutions and corrective measures. The PAO representative will organise and chair the PSC meetings.

6.1 Implementing Agency

PAO: Tadeusz Kozek, Under-secretary of State at the Office of the Committee for European Integration, Aleje Ujazdowskie 9, 00-918 Warszawa; phone 48 22 455 52 41.
CFCU: Foundation Co-operation Fund, CFCU Director, ul. Górnośląska 4a, 00-400 Warsaw: phone: +4822 622-88-20, fax: +4822 622-75-65
The CFCU is responsible for handling tendering, contracting and payments of contracts on behalf of the Ministry of Finance.

6.2 Twinning

The project will be implemented in the form of one Twinning light contract.

Function of the Senior Project Officer will be given to the Director or the Deputy Director of the Tax Administration Department in the Ministry of Finance.
Project Leader will be appointed by the SPO and will also be an employee of the Tax Administration Department in the Ministry of Finance.

Contact persons:
Artur Gostomski, Ministry of Finance - Tax Administration Department ul. Świętokrzyska 12, 00-916 Warsaw, phone (+4822) 6945546; fax: (+4822) 6944324, email: Artur.Gostomski@mofnet.gov.pl.

Most of the expert missions will take place outside Warsaw – in the regional training centers in Poland.
6.3 Non-standard aspects
N/A

6.4 Contracts

**Contract 1** – Twinning light contract - Total budget 0,26 M€ (0,20 M€ TF + 0,06 M€ national co-financing) parallel co-financing.

7. Implementation schedule

7.1 Commencement of contracting process – Q 4, 2006
7.2 Start of project implementation/signature of contract – Q 1, 2007
7.3 Project completion – Q 1 2008

8. Sustainability

There will be special unit responsible for implementation and coordination of the project situated in the Ministry of Finance. Besides, each unit involved in the project implementation will have appointed special person responsible for implementation of the project. Project implementation will not interfere with day-to-day activities of the involved units. Training materials will be distributed internally used later for training purposes.

9. Conditionalities and sequencing

- Successful creation of the Tax Information Bureaus,
## Annex 1: Logframe matrix

### LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR THE PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme name and number</th>
<th>Contracting period expires</th>
<th>Disbursement period expires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training in the field of phone services for the taxpayers</td>
<td>IV q. 2008</td>
<td>IV q. 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training in the field of phone services for the taxpayers</th>
<th>Total budget</th>
<th>Transition Facility Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>260 000 Euro</td>
<td>200 000 Euro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall objective</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Sources of Verification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase the quality of services provided by the employees of Tax Information Bureaus (TIB).</td>
<td>All employees of the TIBs will have necessary skills to provide high quality services to the taxpayers.</td>
<td>Reports prepared by independent institutions, Statistics and survey results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project purpose (Immediate Objectives)</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Sources of Verification</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved skills necessary for serving taxpayers and manage Tax Information Bureaus.</td>
<td>Employees as well as managers of the TIBs (together approx. 150 persons) trained. Tax Information Bureaus full operational for serving taxpayers by Q1 2008.</td>
<td>Mission reports. Internal statistics of the Ministry of Finance.</td>
<td>Employees and the manager s of the TIB must understand and apply policy that will lead to constant improvement of services they provide to the taxpayers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Sources of Verification</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
1. Skills of employees of the TIB in providing information over the phone and via e-mail developed.
2. Managerial skills of the top and middle managers of the TIB increased.
3. The number of complaints about the services provided by the TIB decreased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Twinning light contract:  
1. Training in scope of techniques used for providing information over the telephone.  
2. Training in scope of techniques used for handling “difficult taxpayers”.  
3. Training for the managers concerning efficient management of the call centre.  
4. Training for the supervisors how to manage operators on the operational level.  
5. Training for operators responsible for handling e-mails. | Twinning light contract signed with minimum 6 short-term experts, trainings. | Commitment on the part of employees. Twinning partner(s) interested in good co-operation. Ensuring high-class experts. Ensuring minimal level of fluctuation of the TIB employees. |

**Number of TIB employees trained – ca. 150.**  
**Number of TIB managers trained - ca. 10.**  
**Number of experts trained ca. 32.**

Lower number of complaints concerning work of TIB employees compared to previous periods.

Mission reports, Internal statistics of the Ministry of Finance and TIBs, Allocation of sufficient funds for the implementation of the project. Successful implementation of the project. Reluctance on the part of employees to change their working methods. Establishment of effective co-operation between beneficiary and twinning partner(s).

**Preconditions**

Tax Information Bureaus must be operational
## Annex 2-3: Implementation, contracting and disbursement schedules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training in the field of phone services for the taxpayers</th>
<th>Date of Drafting</th>
<th>Planning Period</th>
<th>Budget Allocation Cost Estimate in MEUR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>PLANNED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IV’06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation schedule</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D/C</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracting schedule</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbursement schedule</td>
<td>0,10</td>
<td>0,10</td>
<td>0,10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- **D** = design of contract and tendering
- **C** = signature of contract
- **I** = contract implementation and payment