

TWINNING NEWS No. 51



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49th RTA Training Session held in Brussels in February

Last February, the 49th RTA training session took place in Brussels. Nine RTAs, two PLs and twelve Twinning coordinators from EU Delegations or CFCUs participated to this edition. The combined participation of RTAs together with PLs and Twinning coordinators proved to be very useful for exchanging views and clarifying a number of practical issues linked to running projects.

As the New Twinning Manual foresees an increased role for Project Leaders and Junior Project Leaders (JPLs) they are most welcome to participate to the RTA training meetings organised by DG Enlargement three times a year. However, participation of PL is optional and cannot be financed through the Twinning budget.

The 50th training will take place on 13 and 14 June 2013.



From left to right, E. Merz PL, C. Casillas, P. Gozzi, A. Zilhão (IBU) and a number of RTAs, Centre Borschette, Brussels

Twinning Team members' missions to Turkey and Montenegro

A field mission to Ankara, Turkey, was organised by DG Enlargement's Institution Building Unit from 11-13 March. The mission allowed two members of the Twinning Coordination Team, Birgit Persson and Christophe Casillas, to meet with 6 Twinning project teams and to participate as observers in two selection meetings. They also gave presentations to EU Delegation and CFCU staff, as well as representatives of beneficiary administrations on the "New Twinning Manual 2012" and the "Twinning selection procedure and ways to improve it".



EU Member State proposal presentation in Ankara, Turkey 11 February 2013



Lecture at the EU Delegation premises in Ankara, 12 February 2013

Many thanks go to Ipek Geçim, Twinning coordinator at the EU Delegation in Turkey and to the CFCU staff for the organisation of the field mission!

Paolo Gozzi carried out a similar mission to Montenegro on 14-15 February, where he presented changes introduced by the New Twinning Manual 2012 to EU Delegation staff in Podgorica. During his mission he also met with EU MS' representatives based in the country.

Some considerations based on a review of recent statistics

In 2012 a new edition of the Twinning Manual was published with two main objectives, namely: a) to reduce the preparation time and b) to increase flexibility.

Since the entry into force of the new provisions in April 2012, the following initial results can be noticed:

So far, out of 19 projects with deadlines for application in 2013 no less than 14 belonged to IPA 2012. This is already a positive trend which should be encouraged in the future.

On the other hand, between 2010-2012, the average timeframe for the signature of contracts after award notification was 8 months (with a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 28 months). The New Manual aims at speeding up this process by introducing a 4 months delay for submission of the final draft to the StC. However, one can deduct from the above that not only the preparation time but also the time span between submission of the draft contract and its signature ought to be reduced.

Would you have any ideas how to achieve this goal? Then do not hesitate to send us your feed-back or any other comment you may have on this specific topic!

Croatia's enhanced responsibilities

Since February 2013, the CFCA Croatia acting as Administrative Office (AO) has been conferred management power without ex-ante control. Therefore, as foreseen in the Twinning Manual under point 2.7.1 'Role of the AO in IPA' in the section on "Decentralised management without ex-ante control": *"The AO assumes sole responsibility for most of the functions previously performed by the EU Delegation relating to the financial and administrative management of Twinning projects."* According to the

Manual, proposals are to be submitted to the Commission Head Quarters, who will then forward them to the AO in charge of organising the selection meetings.

New Financial Regulation in force since 1st January 2013

The need to introduce some preliminary adaptations to the Twinning Manual (see hereunder) following the entry into force of the new Financial Regulation obliged to briefly suspend the circulation of fiches. The situation was brought back to normality on 28 February, when the circulation of Twinning fiches launched after 1 January 2013 was reactivated. Seven new fiches have been circulated since the beginning of 2013.

A more comprehensive revision of the Twinning Manual to align it with the new financial rules is on-going and will be announced later.

New selection fact sheet for IPA projects

The selection factsheet for IPA has been updated, with the introduction of a distinction between "selection" and "award" criteria. While the latter are scored based on a 0 to 5 marking system, the former criteria are considered so fundamental that a single negative evaluation already disqualifies the proposal. Selection Committees are nevertheless very much encouraged to complete the evaluation and to fill the entire evaluation grid, so that all Member States having submitted a proposal receive proper feedback as foreseen in section 3.5 of the Twinning Manual. For Twinning Light projects, the Manual refers to a "selection fact sheet" but does not explicitly foresee the use of the selection grid provided in Annex C7. It is nevertheless considered to be good practice to use an adapted version of this grid. Thanks to contributions from the field, in particular by Pierre-Yves Bellot (EUD Podgorica) and Dimitrije Tmusic (EUD Belgrade), we are pleased to circulate together with this Twinning News a template of a possible selection grid for Twinning light projects.

You can always contact the Twinning Coordination Team in Brussels should you or your colleagues require additional information.

Participation of local Project Manager to training in the Netherlands

Ipek Geçim, Twinning Focal Point and coordination

officer at the EU Delegation to Turkey, participated in the annual meeting for "all Dutch Resident Twinning Advisers (RTA) and foreign RTAs of Twinning Projects in which a Dutch organisation/Dutch organisations are involved", at the Hague on 21 December 2012.

Each year the Dutch National Contact Point (NCP) team organises a meeting for all RTAs of on-going or recently completed Twinning projects. This meeting offers the opportunity to exchange views and ideas regarding practices and daily tasks in these projects. The meeting furthermore informs on recent political developments in the enlargement area and provides up-dates on the Twinning programme in general.



Starting second left to right, Jan van Leent of the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA), Paul Lans of the Dutch Tax and Customs Administration, RTA in Georgia, Ipek Gecim EU Delegation Ankara and Daniela Bobeva, National Bank of Bulgaria, former PL in Montenegro

Best practice: Visualising & Sharing a Schedule of Activities

Schedule of activities displayed for all project participants of Twinning project TR 10 IB TR 01 "Control of Ship sourced Emissions in Turkey".



RTA Cibrán Fernández Silva showing the "magic board" everyone comes to consult in his office.

Best practice: Appointing Component Leaders in the Beneficiary Administration

In order to multiply the number of active stakeholders in a project, a best practice is to request the beneficiary to officially appoint

component leaders in its administration. These should ideally be decision makers with the required technical expertise to play an active role from the beneficiary side. Being officially appointed should "entitle" them to participate actively in Steering Committees (SC). Each component leader should be invited to describe achievements under their component during the last quarter, to highlight what went well or wrong, to present the activities planned for the next quarter and to make recommendations, as necessary. Such crucial input could be included in the draft quarterly report under review at the SC meeting.

Best practice: Setting up Working Groups for each component

Similarly, it can sometimes be useful to set up a working group (WG) for each component. These WGs should be led by the BA and the MS component leaders. Missions under preparation, training materials, etc. related to a component could be discussed in advance electronically by the members of the WG.

2013 IBD days

As announced to all stakeholders on 22 March, the next "Institution Building Days" will take place on 19 - 20 September in Brussels.

The meeting will cover Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA activities in the Enlargement and European Neighbourhood regions.

The meeting is jointly organised by Directorate-General for Enlargement and Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation EuropeAid. The Twinning team will update all participants in due time before the summer break.

Best Practices

If you have examples of "good practices" used in your project to share, please send your contribution (maximum 300 words) to the functional mailbox elarg-twinning@ec.europa.eu.

Twinning Community Tool

The Twinning Community Tool (TCT) is based on CircaBC and provides for a unique platform of collaboration between users from within and outside the European Commission to exchange files and comments.

The main purpose of TCT is to create a virtual

network of Resident Twinning Advisers, National Contact Points, EU Delegations and other relevant stakeholders of Twinning.

If you belong to one of the above groups and wish to participate to the network, please send a mail with your name, role, organisation and a valid e-mail account to the address:

elarg-twinning@ec.europa.eu

Frequently Asked Questions in Twinning Community Tool

A document comprising "Frequently Asked Questions" can be found in the library of the Twinning Community Tool platform.

A broad range of common topics are already included addressing themes such as the salary of RTAs, the situation of RTA assistants or visibility costs among many others.

Registration for access to TCT is open to all Twinning stakeholders of projects in the IPA region. (See box above).

We regret to inform about the departure of Marc Patuzzo whose contract with the European Commission will come to an end on 16 May 2013 after 3 years of dedicated work with the Institution Building Unit.

Dear Marc, thanks a lot for all your support on TAIEX and Twinning and good luck for the future!!!
The Brussels Twinning Coordination Team

DG Enlargement

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Functional e-mail boxes:

elarg-twinning@ec.europa.eu - for proposals sent by the National contact points for Twinning to the Twinning co-ordination team

elarg-twinning-stc@ec.europa.eu - for sending draft Twinning contracts and draft Twinning contract addenda to be examined by the Twinning steering committee

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