



TWINNING NEWS No 30

BUILDING EUROPE TOGETHER

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Getting even Better

Emphasis on Twinning Training in 2008

Essential to the continued well functioning of the Twinning instrument is proper training for those involved. Therefore, the Twinning and SIGMA coordination Team at DG Enlargement organises in 2008 again a whole series of training events:

RTA Training

On 5 March, the 35th RTA training was organised in Brussels for starting Resident Twinning Advisers. 14 RTA's attended the course, which included general presentations on the European Union's Enlargement policy, as well as detailed sessions on Communication and visibility issues in Twinning projects (see also 'Best practices' below) or Financial and budgetary matters in projects. It was an excellent occasion for the participants to make acquaintance with other RTA's going to the same beneficiary country, and to ask questions to the different speakers about issues that had come up in the start-up phase of their respective projects.

The next RTA training is scheduled to take place in June 2008. The training is destined to RTA's in the process of drafting the Twinning contract or in the first stage of the project.

In-house Twinning training seminar

On 21 May, an in-house Twinning training seminar is organised for Twinning coordinators in the EC Delegations and in the Administrative Offices in the New Member States. The aim of the training seminar is to discuss upcoming issues of twinning management and to define guidelines for a harmonised and efficient response to such issues. The training will also provide an opportunity for professional development for newly appointed twinning co-

ordinator, and for all participants to exchange best practices in twinning management. For the Twinning and SIGMA coordination Team, the training is important to provide a think tank for future developments and orientations in twinning management.

Institution Building Days

On 22 and 23 May, we organise the annual meeting of National Contact Points for Twinning and TAIEX in Brussels. The primary aim of this event is to further develop the network of those involved in Twinning from the beneficiary as well as from the Member State side. Moreover, the meeting presents an excellent occasion to provide information on the policy perspectives in relation to enlargement and to discuss practical issues related to the 2007 Common Twinning manual.

Phasing-in of the new Delegations

Furthermore, the Twinning and SIGMA Coordination team is involved in the phasing-in of new EC Delegations in the Western Balkans. In Serbia, fYRoM, Montenegro and Kosovo [UNSCR 1244] Delegations of the European Commission are taking over the tasks formerly carried out by the European Agency for Reconstruction. There is a need for training of staff in the newly established or reinforced Delegations in the field of the Institution Building instruments Twinning and TAIEX. Besides the in-house training mentioned above, the Twinning and SIGMA coordination Team on a regular basis visits the potential candidate countries involved in order to assist staff in the Delegations with specific tasks related to the institution building instruments.

Reminder Budgetary changes in Twinning contracts

Concerning budgetary changes for a PHARE or CARDS funded Twinning project for which the *2005 Manual* applies, all reallocations, also within the same components, should be summed up. Once the total amount of modifications via side letters reaches 10% of the total budget, any further modification (independent of its size) to the breakdown of costs should be done via an addendum to the Twinning Contract, including full approval of the two Project Leaders plus the AO (post EDIS) or CFCU and EC Delegation/EAR (prior to EDIS).

The described interpretation does not apply retroactively. This means *in concreto* that intra-component changes effected by side letter before January 2008 shall not be included in the summing up of all budgetary changes (both inside and between budget components), if this has not yet been the procedure in a given project. The global summing up will then only be applied as from January 2008.

For those Twinning projects for which the *2007 Manual* applies, all budgetary changes through side letters are summed up until the threshold of 15% of the total Twinning budget is reached.

If, for any reason, after this clarification the rule on budgetary changes would continue to pose problems in specific projects, please do not hesitate to contact the Delegation or Administrative Office in the Beneficiary Country in question. Together with the Twinning and SIGMA Co-ordination Team in Brussels, the specific situation shall be examined.

Prosecutors and Judges in Brussels

Study Visit of Macedonian Twinning project

In the framework of Twinning project "Fight Against Organised Crime and Corruption Unit - Public Prosecutor's Office" (MK 05 IB JH 01) in fYRoM, a study visit for the staff of the Public Prosecutor's Office took place to Brussels and The Hague in December 2007. The participants, a group of 10 Macedonian prosecutors and judges, had meetings with staff of the European Anti-Fraud Office OLAF, DG Justice, Freedom, and Security. The Twinning and SIGMA Coordination Team organised a meeting for the group at DG Enlargement, involving the chapter desk for the fight against organised crime and corruption and the fYRoM country team.

Advise: Regular Submission of Financial Reports

Following problems encountered in the past due to the submission by Twinning partners of all financial reports in one batch to the CFCU or Administrative Office at the end of projects, Twinners are reminded to keep to the deadlines for the quarterly and final reports:

- Interim quarterly reports will be due during the month following the quarter under consideration. The first interim quarterly report will be due in the fourth month after the date on which partners are notified of endorsement/signature of the Twinning Contract. (Manual 6.4.2)
- The final report shall be forwarded no later than three months after the implementation period as defined in article 2 of the General Conditions of the Twinning Contract. This means that the final report, final invoice, and expenditure verification report have to be submitted at the latest during the final month before the end of the Implementation period of the Action (*the legal duration*). (Manual 6.4.3)

Furthermore, the partners are reminded to use the templates provided in the annexes to the Twinning manual.

This helps to avoid problems with the regular check and clarifications of controversial points with the CFCU or the Administrative Office.

Selections: the need for Prompt and Comprehensive Communication of the Results

All partners involved put much energy in the selection procedure for a Twinning. The Member State team is eager to show why their proposal is the best. The beneficiary is eager to choose the best among many good proposals. A reminder of the Manual concerning the communication of results:

- It is recommended that the Contracting Authority communicates its choice of the selected Twinning partner at the latest within one month after the date of the selection meetings.

– The BC administrations or the EC Delegation should provide feedback for each MS who has submitted a proposal. Information on the reasons that motivate the BC's or the EC's choice constitutes valuable feedback for MS administrations to plan and adapt a future strategy on submitting proposals. MS are entitled to receive such feedback.

In this context, it is recommended to the Administration Offices and Delegations to attach the last page of the evaluation grid (annex C8 to the Manual) with the summary of the strong and weak points of the Member State proposal and oral presentation to the letter notifying the results.

Furthermore, the Administrative Offices and Delegations are reminded to always send a copy of the selection letter to the National Contact Point of the Member State that submitted the proposal.

Best Practice EU Visibility in Twinning Projects

The Twinning project 'Strengthening the capacity of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey' started in November 2007. The project is unmistakably European in its kind: it is a cooperation between the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the Hungarian National Assembly and the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, and in addition study visits to Denmark, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the European Parliament are foreseen. The Parliament has a vital role to play in informing public opinion about the EU accession process and the project will provide knowledge and training to facilitate this role. The project also helps to build relationships between Parliament and NGOs. The kick-off meeting of this Twinning was a great success, as the Italian RTA Massimiliano Eleonori, his Hungarian colleague Katalin Szaloki and their Turkish counterpart Fuat Küçükaydin had managed to have the speakers of both the Hungarian and of the Turkish parliament attend the meeting, thus focussing a lot of media attention on the event, the Twinning project and the Twinning instrument in general. The study visits are another important occasion to assure visibility of Twinning as the EU's most important institution building instrument. Indeed, Turkish lawmakers join the study visits and workshops, and their meetings with counterparts of the EU

Member States and the European Parliament will not pass unnoticed. The primary aim of the visits and workshops is to learn different practices in EU Member States of implementation of EU legislation by the national parliaments.

Submission of proposal *do's and don'ts*

- In order to allow a swift and accurate check of the eligibility of submitted proposals, it is important that the National Contact Points request mandated body status *before* submitting a Twinning proposal;
- For every Twinning project fiche, each Member State may only submit *one* proposal either individually or as participant in a consortium. That means for instance that two mandated bodies from the same Member State can not participate in two different consortium proposals as junior partner. In order to be sure that a Member State only participates in one single bid, all proposals, either as junior or as lead partner, should be channelled through the National Contact Point for Twinning.

Finally, remember not to hesitate to contact the Twinning and SIGMA Coordination Team for information or questions on both institution building instruments:

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

elarg-twinning-reports@ec.europa.eu - for sending all Twinning quarterly and final reports

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