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ANNEX 2: ACTION FICHE FOR BELARUS 2009

1. IDENTIFICATION

	Title	Capacity Development Facility to support the implementation of sector programmes under the ENPI AAPs for Belarus – CRIS n° ENPI/2008/20652		
	Total cost	€1.5 million		
	Aid method / Management mode	Project approach (technical assistance) Centralised management		
	DAC-code	43010	Sector	Multi Sector

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Sector context

The main priorities of EC assistance to Belarus, under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) are identified through the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for the period 2007-2013 and the National Indicative Programme (NIP) covering the period 2007-2010. The NIP identifies two priority areas of assistance to Belarus: “Social and Economic Development” and “Democratic Development and Good Governance”.

The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument– as successor to TACIS - provides for a sector approach to programming. Two Annual Action Programmes (AAPs) stemming from the NIP 2007-2010 have already been developed, and the sector programmes for 2009 and 2010 are presently being designed. The AP2007 relates to the Energy Sector, and the AP2008 deals with the Environment. Furthermore, the Framework Agreement and the Financing Agreement for the AP2007 were signed by both parties in December 2008.

These sector programmes are all formulated in such a way as to link with a national initiative – be it a strategy or a reform programme. Such an approach, coupled with the adequate capacity of the authorities to implement these programmes, is designed to ensure ownership of the Government. Furthermore, these programmes have the objective of supporting the development of the regulatory environment of a particular sector and to promote the active involvement of local authorities and civil society in the application of principles and provisions.

In view of the above and the number of technical cooperation initiatives being organised, it is anticipated that there will be a need to strengthen the capacity of Belarusian institutions endowed with the responsibility of implementing sector programmes under the AAPs and with the formulation of subsequent initiatives.

2.2. Lessons learnt

Adequate capacity within Belarusian institutions responsible for the implementation of the sector programmes from the government's side is essential to ensure the success of the programmes. The specific situation of Belarus whereby the vast majority of Belarusian institutions have limited if no knowledge of the requirements for successful implementation of EC assistance programmes has been attributed to the political isolation the country has been in with regards to the EU.

The intensified technical cooperation between the European Commission and Belarus has given rise to the need to strengthen the institutions responsible for the implementation of sector programmes of mutual interest – and specifically the ones targeted by the ENP Annual Action Programmes.

Furthermore, in response to the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness and subsequent Accra Conference of September 2008, the Commission developed a strategy for the implementation of recommendations made at these events, with a view to, inter alia, increase Partner Government Ownership (Demand driven approach and/or country managed programmes); enhance Capacity Building with a strong result orientation; enhance donor coordination; increase the quality and make better use of available technical expertise; and avoid the creation of parallel PIUs.

These elements are being taken into account whenever applicable in the various stages of the project cycle.

2.3. Complementary actions

The European Commission has been implementing under TACIS AP 2005-2006 one project aimed at supporting the National Coordinating Unit develop its capabilities in view of the introduction of the new Neighbourhood instrument in Belarus. The present programme will complement and build on the experiences gained by the above TACIS project.

The TAIEX instrument has recently been made available to Belarus as part of the intensified technical cooperation between the European Commission and Belarus following the positive developments resulting from the release of the political prisoners in August 2008.

2.4. Donor coordination

Currently the Ministry of Economy (MoE) is the leading institution coordinating donors' financial support in Belarus with activities being coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). The national contact point for TAIEX operations is also at the MoFA. The National Coordination Unit (NCU) is specifically in charge of the coordination of EC assistance with other donors and line ministries. From late 2008, the NCU also deals with the TAIEX instrument in a complementary role as provider of information on the matter to authorities in Minsk and in the regions.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

General Objective

- The general objective of this targeted facility is to enhance the capacity of selected Belarusian institutions to implement the ENPI Annual Action Programmes, and to further develop strategies in these sectors in line with the EC-Belarus technical cooperation.

Specific Objectives

- To build the capacity of specific Belarusian ministries and agencies responsible for the implementation of sector programmes under the ENPI Annual Action Programmes, and to enable to build national reform and development programmes upon them in order to comply effectively with the commitments under EC-Belarus technical cooperation, including commitments that could stem from future EC-Belarus

bilateral agreements;

- To support the capacity of the National Coordinating Unit to act as the office of the National Coordinator, thereby increasing effectiveness of coordination and implementation of EC external assistance by Belarusian authorities and supporting the identification and coordination of further EC assistance to Belarus in the framework of the ENP;
- To provide specific assistance at various stages of the EC-funded project cycle management to selected ministries and NCU (hereafter PCM-related TA), notably in the priority sectors of the 2007-2010 NIP.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

The project expected results are:

- Sector programmes of the Annual Action Programmes are being successfully implemented by the responsible Belarusian institutions that have received support;
- The selected Belarusian institutions have developed the capacity to design sector specific reforms and national development programmes based on the Annual Action Programmes, and stemming from engagements made through the technical cooperation between the European Commission and Belarus;
- Strengthened National Coordination Unit to effectively coordinate the implementation of the programmes under ENPI and to deal with identification and programming issues;
- EU assistance is better integrated into the national planning process through provision of TA in the management of the project cycle.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

Risks:

Beneficiaries do not fully utilise the potential of this Facility within their structures due to the relative inexperience of most institutions concerned with the implementation of EC assistance.

The NCU does not receive the appropriate mandate and resources to fulfil its role

Assumptions:

Commitment by the Belarusian Government to the implementation of agreements between the European Commission and Belarus.

The political situation allows for further technical cooperation between the European Commission and Belarus as per the Council conclusions on Belarus of 13 October 2008.

It is also assumed that the Belarusian beneficiaries will contribute to the logistical arrangements to ensure the successful implementation of this programme.

3.4. Crosscutting Issues

The impact of the measure on cross-cutting issues can be summarised as follows:

Development/crosscutting objectives	Directly targeted	Significant indirect
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	objective	impact
Poverty reduction		✓
Good Governance	✓	
Democracy, Human rights		✓
Integration in world economy	✓	
Environment	✓	✓
Gender		✓

3.5. Stakeholders

The beneficiaries will be a number of selected Belarusian administrations directly concerned with the implementation of the sector programmes under the Annual Action Programmes 2007-2010. Special attention will be given to line ministries directly responsible for planning and implementing reforms, i.e. the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Environment, *Gosstandart*, and to another extent the National Coordination Unit and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Method of implementation

Centralised management.

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the European Commission for the implementation of external operations, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

4.3. Budget and calendar

The programme foresees an envelope of €1.5 million, for contracts for the support to the Sector programmes implementation (indicatively €0.9 million) and to the Project Cycle Management-related TA (indicatively €0.6 million).

Necessary provision for audit, evaluation and communication/visibility activities will be incorporated into each action (see sections 4.5 and 4.6 below).

The foreseen operational duration is thirty six (36) months from the signature of the service contract that will be concluded within three years of the signature of the Financing Agreement. Evaluation and audit activities may take place after this period.

4.4. Performance monitoring

The project will be monitored according to standard European Commission procedures. Project monitoring and evaluation will be based on periodic assessment of progress on delivering of specified project results and towards achievement of project objectives. Suitable objectively quantifiable indicators will be agreed between the contracting Authority and project partners.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

Each of the sub-projects to be defined under the measure will undergo financial audit, as foreseen by the standard procedures, which foresee that such audit be properly budgeted under each of such sub-projects. Evaluation can also take place, if so decided by the European Commission.

4.6. Communication and visibility

Proper communication and visibility of the measure will be achieved via widespread dissemination of project achievements and results.