

Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA within the European Neighbourhood and Partnership countries **2013** activity report



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Foreword

In a period of prolonged economic and financial difficulties, it is encouraging to see how the fundamental ideals of the European Union (EU) continue to represent a powerful example and incentive for reforms in our neighbourhood. Our enlargement and neighbourhood partners have not ceased to seek support and assistance for a better understanding of the *acquis* and the way it is implemented and enforced at EU Member State level and for reinforcing the capacity of their public administrations. In this context, this report provides evidence of how the European Commission's institution-building instruments Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA act as facilitators of the sharing of experience, know-how and best practices between EU Member States and our partner countries.

The enlargement perspective and that of a special relationship between the EU and its neighbourhood require commitment, seriousness and credibility by both providers and recipients of assistance. Thanks to the fundamental contribution of EU Member States' officials, through the short-term activities developed by TAIEX, the longer-term and programmed approach of Twinning and the horizontal domains of public governance addressed by SIGMA, these principles materialise in concrete actions and develop a clear meaning.

As this report shows, the continued rise in demand in 2013 for peer-to-peer technical assistance, and correspondingly for TAIEX, Twinning and SIGMA support, demonstrates how valuable it is to offer opportunities of direct cooperation between civil servants.

On 1 July 2013, the European Union welcomed Croatia as its 28th Member State. This accession marks another milestone in the construction of a united Europe and it is also a touchstone for the Union's enlargement policy. TAIEX and Twinning have accompanied Croatia throughout the whole approximation process since the beginning of accession negotiations.

In the neighbourhood, 2013 has seen some progress towards the objectives of contributing to an area of security, prosperity and good neighbourliness with our partners but at the same time witnessed crises that reinforce the necessity for a sustained assistance to reforms implemented by the eastern and southern countries of the region.

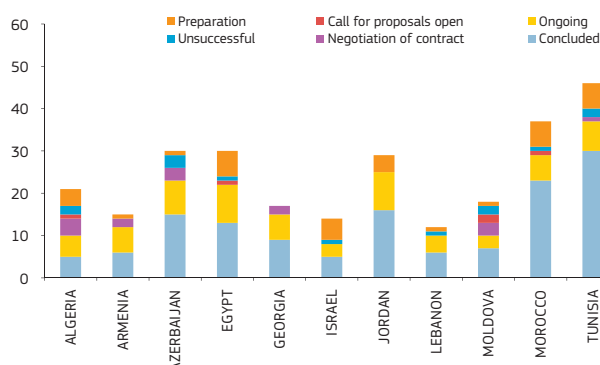
With big challenges in the enlargement and neighbourhood regions, the 2013 activity report on the EU institution-building instruments underlines their increasing relevance as platforms for a constructive interchange of ideas and expertise. Well-established tools, they continue to be valuable assets for public administrations engaged in reforms.



Twinning Activities in 2013

Since 2004, a total pipeline of 329 twinning projects in the neighbourhood countries

Distribution per country, forecast included (status at end 2013)

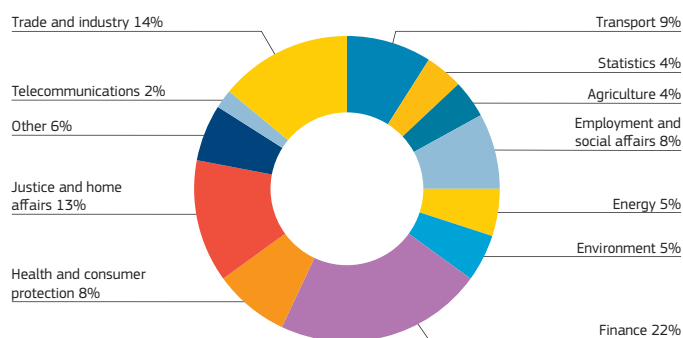


Algeria: During 2013, five projects were under way in the fishing and aquaculture sector, agriculture, transport, trade and justice. In addition, at the beginning of 2014, four projects will begin in the agriculture, health and consumers, the environment, and trade sectors.

Armenia: Ten projects were implemented during 2013, notably in the fields of statistics, civil aviation, competition, consumer protection, intellectual property, customs, food security, justice, migration, and the environment. Four of these were finalised, while two more began at the start of 2014, concerning the control of public finances, and education.

Azerbaijan: In 2013, Twinning projects were under way in maritime administration, radiation protection, migration, the supervision of financial markets, tourism and cadastre. Two projects began in building safety and social protection for people with disabilities, while three others were ready to start early in 2014, in the taxation, financing of social protection, and standardisation sectors. Four projects were finished in 2013, concerning the control of public finances, intellectual property, vocational training in agriculture, and social affairs.

Twinning projects in the neighbourhood countries per sector (status at end 2013)



Egypt: During 2013, four Twinning projects were carried out in training, education, property tax and consumer protection. Four new project contracts were signed in the fields of rail transport, power generation, metrology and accreditation. In addition, four Twinning documents – on competition, standardisation, agricultural research, and accounting standards – will be launched in the first quarter of 2014.

Georgia: Three projects were completed in 2013 in the areas of finance, the environment, and culture. Progress continued in 13 Twinning projects in the following sectors: transport, customs, standardisation, the environment (2), justice, tourism, accreditation, home affairs, energy, e-governance, culture and public finances. At the beginning of 2014, two other projects were started in finance and audit.

Israel: Four Twinning projects continued during 2013, in the rural development, environmental protection, veterinary services and statistics sectors. A Twinning project in the field of energy was relaunched at the beginning of 2014. Two additional calls for proposals are being prepared – in veterinary services and environmental protection – to be launched in May and June 2014.

Lebanon: In 2013, four Twinning projects were under way in the following fields: customs, taxation, accreditation and finances.

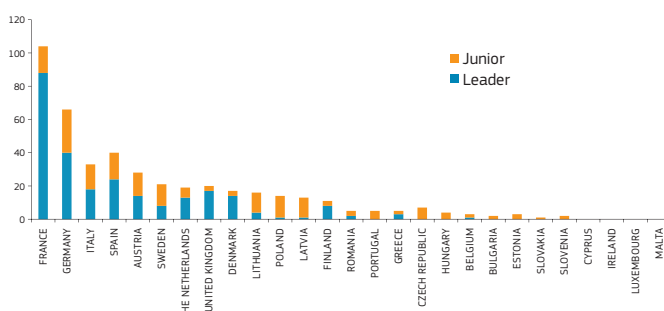
Jordan: Thirteen twinning projects were carried out during 2013 in the following sectors: social affairs, energy, tourism, transport, agriculture, cadastre, environmental protection, statistics, justice, security and finance.

Moldova: Five projects were in progress in 2013, in the fields of agriculture, finance, regional development, trade, and consumer rights. Two Twinning contracts were signed at the end of the year for projects related to health and public-private partnerships. Five projects will begin in 2014 in finance, trade and cadastre.

Morocco: Fourteen projects continued during 2013, in particular in the following sectors: finance, trade and industry, employment and social affairs, the environment, and transport. A new project on human rights will begin early in 2014.

Member States selected for twinning projects

23 Member States were selected for 255 attributed twinings in the neighbourhood (status at end 2013)

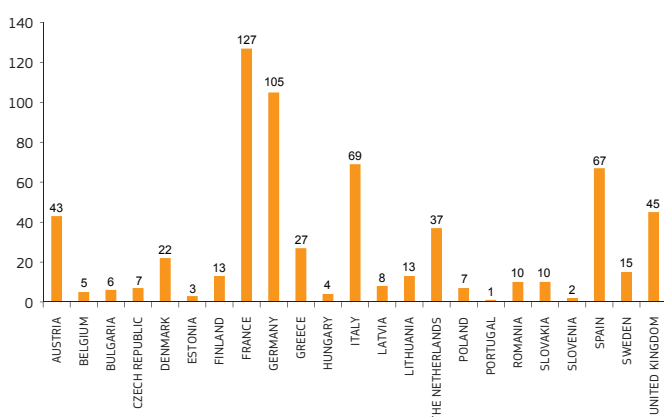


Tunisia: The number of Twinning projects being implemented rose to 16 in 2013. The sectors concerned included employment and social affairs, the environment, finance and trade. A new telecommunications project will be launched at the start of 2014.

Ukraine: In 2013, 16 institutional Twinning projects were in progress in various sectors, including justice, public service, standardisation, statistics, transport, and telecommunications, a third of which had been the subject of a call for proposals during the year. In the coming months, prospects for Twinning lie in public finances, integrated border management, and the training of public servants.

Number of twinning proposals made by Member States

646 proposals, as leader, from 23 Member States for 271 Twinning calls for proposals closed (status at end 2013)



Twinning: Success stories

Trade facilitation – support for the implementation of the roadmap for the conclusion of the agreement on conformity assessment and acceptance of industrial products

Jordan

Context

The Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance (ACAAs) of industrial products is a type of mutual recognition agreement based on the alignment of the legislative system and infrastructure of the country concerned with that of the European Union. The adoption of the EU system will contribute to eliminating technical barriers to trade.

This agreement is currently being prepared and negotiated with neighbouring countries, notably in the Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority and Tunisia) and Ukraine. The main sectors concerned are machinery, electrical products, construction products, pressure equipment, toys, medical appliances, gas appliances and pharmaceuticals. A first ACAA with Israel on good manufacturing practice for pharmaceutical products entered into force on 19 January 2013.

The Twinning project aims to enable the conclusion of the ACAA between Jordan and the EU, based on the ACAA roadmap, which was approved by the Jordan Authorities in 2009. The 20-month project began in October 2011 with a budget of EUR 1.2 million. Electrical products, gas appliances and toys were identified as priority sectors.

Components

- The aim of the project was to assist the Jordan Institution for Standards and Metrology (JSMO) and the relevant stakeholders in implementing the roadmap for the negotiation and signature of the ACAA. It focused on four components: 1) the approximation and enforcement of all identified and valid EC legislation relevant to the selected priority industrial sectors; 2) the establishment of a market-surveillance system with defined responsibilities; 3) the development of accreditation policies and procedures for notified bodies and the creation of capacity among these bodies; and 4) the provision of information and technical assistance for the industries.
- The German Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing, in co-operation with the Slovenian Institute of Quality and Metrology, worked with the Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization (JSMO).

Achievements

- EU legislation for the three selected industrial sectors was transposed into Jordanian technical regulations and instructions and comments by the competent EU services were taken into consideration. The technical regulations and instructions came into force on 1 January 2014.
- The relevant EU standards were transposed into the Jordanian standards.
- JSMO's application to become an Affiliate Member of CENELEC (European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization) was approved in June 2012.
- A National Market Surveillance Committee was established and, under the leadership of JSMO, coordination among the relevant authorities has been ensured by means of an action plan, which has been in operation since January 2013.
- A notifying unit was established within JSMO, and its officials were trained to assess candidate Conformity Assessment Bodies. This unit has been recognised as an Associate Member of the European co-operation for Accreditation.
- An information centre was established within JSMO's Knowledge Management Department to provide services concerning CE marking and safety for industries.
- The Jordanian Authorities are technically ready to start the ACAA negotiation.



Strengthening public financial management in the Republic of Moldova

Republic of Moldova

Context

The Republic of Moldova targetted the adoption of the EU's concept of Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC) as its goal in its strategy for reform in the field of public finance management. Contrary to the Financial Revision and Control system, the PIFC concept moves the responsibility for internal controls to the managers, replacing that initial control with three different layers within each ministry. The old Financial Revision and Control model is based on the supervisory work of external bodies carried out for a given institution but without strengthening individual institutions to enable their better sound financial management.

The Twinning project aims to improve public internal financial control in the Republic of Moldova by strengthening the internal audit capabilities, fostering financial management control, introducing the concept of managerial accountability, and updating the relevant legislative and normative frameworks. The EU concept of PIFC is the reference for the reforms envisaged by the Moldovan government in the field of public finance management for 2014-2017, in particular through this Twinning project.

The 24-month project, running from November 2011-November 2013, has been funded by the EU to the sum of EUR 1.5 million and implemented by Sweden and the Netherlands.

Components

The project's overall objective was to improve public sector financial management in the Republic of Moldova in line with internationally recognised standards and European best practices, whilst its purpose was to support the Ministry of Finance in its efforts to improve the PIFC.

The mandatory results of the project were:

1. The enhanced capacity of the Ministry of Finance's Central Harmonization Unit to oversee the implementation of PIFC in Moldova;
2. The updating of legislative and normative frameworks;
3. The strengthening of financial management and control;
4. The strengthening of internal audit capacity.

In the opinion of the project partners, the achievement of these mandatory results, as measured against the benchmarks, meant that the project achieved its purpose and overall objective.



Achievements

The project was completed on schedule and, during its implementation, involved 25 activities, comprising 82 missions. These activities included four reviews, the drafting of three new norms for internal audit, the development of training material for internal audit and financial management, the training of 27 trainers, a large number of workshops and training events, four international study visits, the drafting of two manuals, drafting communication and PIFC strategies, and pilot activities involving 13 institutions. Twenty-seven experts from four Member States were involved in the project.

The Ministry of Finance's Central Harmonization Unit combined its efforts with the Swedish National Financial Management Authority and Dutch National Academy for Finance and Economics. The resulting joint effort contributed to providing the fundamentals for the development of the PIFC system within the Moldovan administration, which is already helping in the pursuit of a more transparent and accountable public administration.

Twinning: Success stories

Support for the National System of Research (NSR) in Morocco concerning its integration into the European Research Area (ERA)

Morocco

Context

This institutional Twinning is seen in the context of advances made by Morocco in recent years in the field of scientific research and technology (SRT). The objective is the harmonisation of the Moroccan research system with European standards, as highlighted in the Advanced Status (European Union (EU)-Morocco joint document on strengthening bilateral relations, signed in 2008). In particular, this Twinning, which is the first in the field of research and innovation in Morocco, targets support for Morocco's NSR towards better integration in the ERA. The European Commission has allocated a budget of EUR 1 350 000 under the support programme for the EU-Morocco Association (P3A) Agreement. The project was carried out between May 2011 and July 2013. The Twinning contract was signed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco as the contracting authority, Morocco's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research as the beneficiary administration, and the French and Spanish Ministries of Research whose consortium was selected as project manager.

Components

1. Harmonisation of Morocco's legislative and regulatory framework with the EU acquis
2. Strengthening the Research Department's organisational and institutional capacity
3. Developing and validating an information system
4. Transferring know-how on best practices and methodology tools associated with SRT
5. Methodology for management and programming mechanisms, promotion, the development of and international cooperation in SRT, and closer community practices.



Achievements

By the end of the project, the activities carried out had achieved the required results, including:

- Proposals for reforms to accelerate harmonisation with the ERA, such as drawing up a draft law for establishing a national evaluation agency, modification of the 01-00 law on the organisation of higher education in order to devote a chapter to research, and reform of the statutes for research staff, providing a benchmark from the French and Spanish legislative framework;
- Proposals for incentives to encourage the private sector to invest in research and development (R&D) and to promote the development of innovation and the application of SRT results in the private sector;
- Carrying out an inventory of legislative and regulatory systems, along with existing incentives and recommendations for strengthening the system for the protection of intellectual property;
- Identifying points which require careful attention regarding the adoption of all the texts required in the setting up of the national evaluation agency;
- Proposals put forward for the creation of a science and technology observatory/structure for the production of indicators for R&D.

These achievements have already made a significant contribution towards achieving the overall project objectives. The project was unanimously hailed as successful and exemplary by all stakeholders at both the final steering committee and closing conference. In fact, in addition to the results delivered, this Twinning project has proved very important for the Ministry and for Morocco's national research and innovation system as a whole. It has given significant impetus to the process of convergence with the EU acquis, the effects of which will be felt for years to come, including: 1) improving the governance of scientific research in universities and research centres; 2) establishing a culture of evaluation among national research bodies; 3) involving the private sector in scientific research; 4) sharing the resources devoted to research at the national level; and 5) promoting Moroccan skills internationally in those areas the country considers to be priorities.

Twinning in Croatia – on the road to the EU A glance at a former enlargement candidate country

Croatia

Context

The Twinning project 'Enhancement of capacity for effective management of EU cohesion policy funds' (HR 08 IB SPP 02) successfully provided assistance in an important sector, the management and use of EU Structural Funds and in particular of the Cohesion Fund – indeed a key topic for Croatia as a new Member State.

The project, which lasted for 27 months, was implemented by the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds and the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Croatia in cooperation with partners from Lithuania and Hungary – the Ministry of Finance and the Central Project Management Agency of the Republic of Lithuania and the National Development Agency of the Republic of Hungary.

Components

The main goal of the project, worth EUR 2 million, was to increase capacity for the overall coordination and use of Structural and Cohesion Funds (SCFs) and provide support to Croatia in:

- processes of coordination, programming, monitoring, information and publicity of the SCFs;
- efficient implementation of financial management and control and preparation for compliance assessment for the SCFs.



Achievements

- The 2007–13 programming documents were submitted to the European Commission, which approved the national strategic reference framework and three operational programmes.
- The management and control system for EU Structural Funds 2007–13 was set up and positively assessed by the nominated body (compliance assessment completed).
- The capacity of the beneficiary country in the management of EU Structural Funds has been significantly improved on a sustainable basis, i.e. about 800 people were trained in total and 14 training modules were created.
- A solid starting basis for the period 2014–20 has been laid: the main priorities for national development for the next seven years were discussed with a wider public and presented in the draft partnership agreement and operational programmes were elaborated and agreed with institutional and socioeconomic partners.

TAIEX Activities in 2013

What is TAIEX?

TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) was set up in the neighbourhood countries and Russia (Decision 2006/62/EC) in 2006 to foster alignment with the EU *acquis* on the basis of voluntary shared norms. TAIEX also assists neighbourhood countries with the application and enforcement of EU legislation. It is mainly demand-driven and helps deliver appropriate tailor-made expertise to address problems at short notice.

TAIEX provides four types of assistance:

Expert missions to beneficiary countries: These last five days at the most (with a maximum of two experts) and provide guidance on legislative projects and the functioning of the administrative process, to advise on legislative acts and their implementation, to explain the EU *acquis* and to present examples of good practice.

Workshops or seminars in beneficiary countries: These usually last two days at the most. They present and explain EU *acquis* issues to a large audience from the same country or from several countries where the issues are of common interest.

Study visits in Member States: These involve workshops lasting five days at the most (a maximum of three officials from the beneficiary country) to understand how Member States deal with practical issues related to the implementation and enforcement of EU legislation.

TAIEX assessment missions: Several EU Member States experts take part in such missions to provide feedback on the legislative, institutional and administrative 'state of play' in specific sectors of a beneficiary country and to produce analytical peer reports and recommendations.

Demand for TAIEX has continued to rise in the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)

In 2013, TAIEX registered 614 requests from 15 beneficiary countries, a yearly figure which matches that of 2010, and the highest since 2006 when the instrument was first made available in the countries covered by the Neighbourhood Policy and Partnership. This confirms the popularity of TAIEX among its beneficiaries.

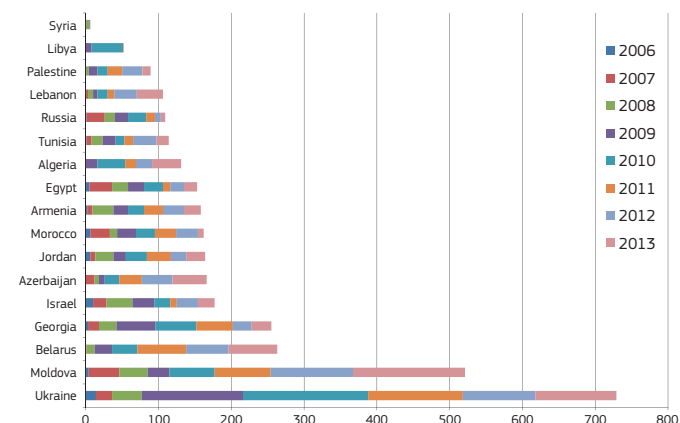
At the same time, TAIEX organised 408 events across the beneficiary countries divided equally between expert missions (119), study visits (162) and workshops or seminars (127).

Number of requests received for ENPI TAIEX assistance per year (2006-2013)

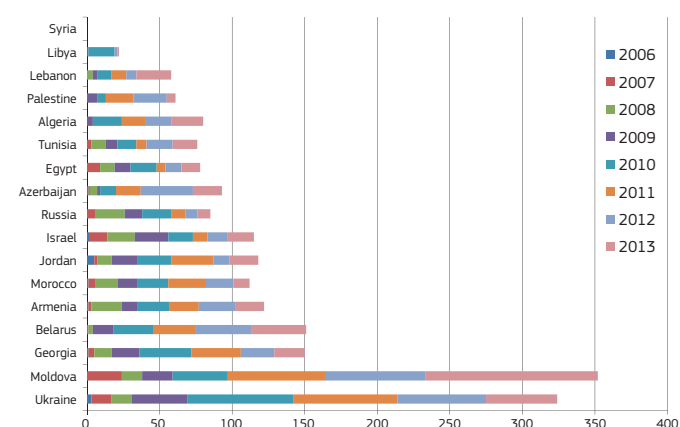
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
52	217	288	449	616	531	588	614

As in 2012, Moldova and Ukraine topped the list of the most ardent users of TAIEX, with 154 and 111 applications, respectively. This illustrates the continued interest of the governments in these countries in sectors related in particular to the *acquis*. In the south, Algeria demonstrated significant renewed interest in the instrument, almost doubling its demand from the previous year, up from 22 to 40. Other southern countries, such as Lebanon and Jordan, continued to make use of the support offered by TAIEX. It should also be noted that the Libyan authorities explored the possibility of resuming its use of TAIEX, which has been suspended since 2010.

Number of requests per single country



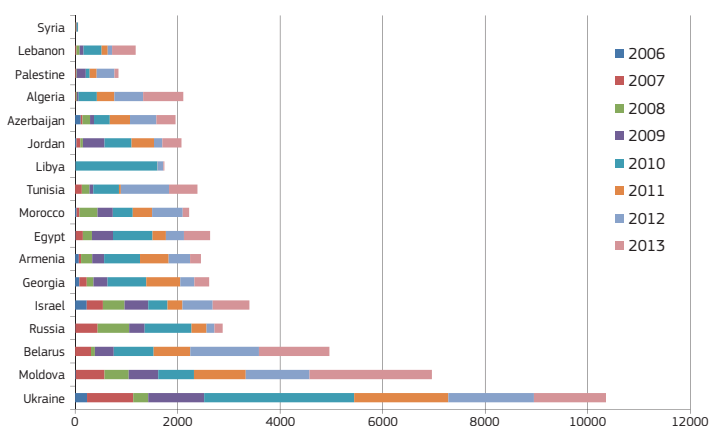
Number of events per single country



An instrument which affects a large number of participants

Since 2006, the countries have benefited from more than 2 000 activities in total at the national level, involving over 50 000 people, including 10 000 in 2013. This figure is equivalent to that of last year and underlines the instrument's capacity for dissemination.

Registered number of participants per country (2006-2013)



Areas covered in 2013

As in preceding years, the events covered most of the action plan areas and/or cooperation agreements, partnerships or associations.

Challenges and changes

In 2013, demand among Southern and Eastern European neighbours remained unbalanced, with 70 % of the applications coming from six Eastern Neighbourhood countries and Russia. TAIEX's significant popularity among Eastern countries will necessitate the prioritisation of applications decided jointly by the delegations and the beneficiaries' programme administration offices. Eventually, some of the Eastern partner countries which are heavily involved in the association process calling for more measures closer to the EU *acquis* will be given more attention. As regards the Southern countries, an effort should be made to encourage partners to use TAIEX in a more sustainable way, despite the volatile situations in some of these countries.

In 2014, TAIEX will be financed by the new European Neighbourhood instrument.

SIGMA: Success stories 2013

Georgia

In 2013, SIGMA supported **Georgia** by conducting a review of the structure and functions of the Chancellery of the Government. Focusing primarily on the core functions of policy planning and policy co-ordination, the review was undertaken in the context of the constitutional reform which came into force in October 2013 and redistributed powers between the president, the parliament and the government. The reform also had a significant impact on the Chancellery's role and, more broadly, on government working practices.

SIGMA's review involved a number of activities: an analysis of the relevant legislation, preparation of a detailed questionnaire completed by the Chancellery, interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, and a series of meetings with the Chancellery to discuss various drafts of the review. In addition to reviewing the Chancellery's structure and functions, the review also addressed its relations with other central institutions playing a major role in the central management of the policy planning and development process (Ministry of Finance and the Office of the State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration).



The findings of the review were supplemented with a set of recommendations for developing the Chancellery's capacities and organisational set-up and the related legislative framework, and for ensuring the complementarity of its functions with those of other government institutions.

Following the finalisation of the review, the Chancellery conducted consultations on the prioritisation of the review's recommendations. In 2014, SIGMA will provide support for the implementation of the priorities identified.

Moldova

SIGMA has been providing assistance on civil service reforms to **Moldova** continuously since 2009. In 2011-2012, it conducted a peer review of the civil service legal framework and human resource management (HRM) practices in state administrations. Based partly on the findings of this review, three areas were identified for further SIGMA support in 2013, including the development of a new planning, coordination and monitoring system for HRM in the civil service.

Work undertaken with the State Chancellery during 2013 included the development of an HRM scorecard, guidelines for monitoring and evaluating the scorecard, and recommendations on how to connect it with the public function and civil servants registry. The successful completion of this work means a comprehensive and solid monitoring and evaluation system is now in place. In particular, the new system clearly defines the general and specific strategic objectives tied to concrete performance indicators and targets, and gives responsibility to several key actors within the system. For example, if the monitoring system detects deviations from the legal provisions, the public authority concerned will develop and implement corrective actions.

Implementation of the new system will start in 2014 and will be led by the State Chancellery. After the first year of implementation, SIGMA will provide support through an event to analyse the results and further improve the system.

Algeria

In 2013, SIGMA worked with **Algeria's** Court of Accounts to conduct a peer review to support the Court's strategic development towards an independent supreme audit institution operating in line with international standards.

The review addressed three key issues: (1) the Court's strategic and methodological approach and organisation of its planning and follow-up activities; (2) its processes and procedures to perform its various audit and judicial review responsibilities at the national and regional levels; and (3) its management of human resources, information technology and communications. The peer review also presented recommendations to help the Court strengthen its competencies and institutional efficiency, and to improve the quality and performance of its audit activities.

The peer review has helped it to: (1) develop and standardise its audit methodology and harmonise it with international standards; (2) strengthen the professional development of its magistrates; and (3) identify areas for external support through a Twinning project. Importantly, the Court decided to publish the report on its website, contributing to the increased transparency and accountability of public institutions in Algeria.



The review will now serve as the basis for the development and implementation of the next phase (2014-2017) of the Court's strategic development plan, for which it has requested SIGMA support.

For more information, visit our websites:

Twinning

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/overview/twinning_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/tenders/twinning/index_en.htm

TAIEX

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/overview/taieux_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/taieux/index_en.htm

SIGMA

<http://www.sigmaweb.org>