

TWINNING NEWS No 49

BUILDING EUROPE TOGETHER

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New management of Unit D2

As of 1st January 2012, Adriano Zilhão has taken up duties as Head of Institution Building Unit (IBU). Not really a newcomer in DG Enlargement, his previous job was Head of Strategic Planning, Internal Control and IT Unit.



The renewal of the IBU management was completed with the appointment of Michael Vögele as Deputy Head of Unit. His nomination coincides with his return to Brussels Headquarters, after two assignments in EU Delegations in Turkey and, more recently, in the Ukraine.



The Revised Common Twinning Manual enters into force on 2 April 2012

Article 77 of the IPA Implementing regulation (718/2007) provides that the Twinning manual is regularly updated. The latest revision to date having been in force since 2009, time was ripe to issue a new version. Although it does not completely overhaul the existing Twinning rules and procedures, in particular in the case of implementation in the IPA region the new Manual introduces significant changes intended to increase the speed and flexibility of the instrument.

The main changes are summarised in the table attached to this Twinning News.

The 2012 Manual applies to all Twinning Projects for which the notification of the selected Member State partner is issued as of 2 April 2012.

Member State Project Leaders can attend the RTA Training

Together with the RTA, the Member State Project Leader (PL) has a crucial role in the implementation of a Twinning Project. The PL is the person "supervising and co-ordinating the overall thrust of the project" (Manual 2.2.1) and ensuring the political backing within the Member State. Even if not directly involved in the day-to-day implementation of the project, the PL might find useful to receive some training on rules and procedures.

It has therefore been decided that PL can attend the RTA Training courses that DG Enlargement organises three times a year.

Participation is optional and on voluntary basis and cannot be financed through the Twinning budget.

Best practice: risk analysis

The risk analysis is a very useful tool that could lead to follow-up the possible threats to the implementation of the project. The Project Leaders and RTAs should raise early warnings to all the stakeholders concerned (mainly EU Delegation) in order to be prepared in advance and to start looking for solutions as soon as possible.

Community of Practice: Mission Reports

We are happy to share with you an example of good

practice suggested by Ms Katharina Tappeiner from E-Control Austria:

"We have created a template for mission reports which includes a list of action points at the end. The action points are numbered and they clearly specify who needs to do what and by when. The finalised mission reports are of course available to MS and BC experts alike (through a dedicated project website).

This serves to eliminate any uncertainties as to who is assigned a task or when it is due, and it allows the experts to consistently follow up on everything that was agreed. Open action points can be listed again in the report of the next mission, i.e. they can be kept visible and on everybody's mind until they are done.

This has proven useful to keep an overview for all experts involved."

This comment was posted in the Twinning Community Tool, which is available for all registered users (see information on page 3).

News from a Twinning Project: Support to the Ombudsman Office

The activities of the twinning project "Support to the Ombudsman Office" began in early March 2011 in Skopje. The project is jointly implemented by the French national Ombudsman (the former Médiateur de la République, now Défenseur des Droits) and the Spanish Defensor del Pueblo.

The goal of the twinning project is to strengthen the capacities of the Ombudsman Office in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The project is based on four pillars: internal revision of the working methods and of the IT systems used in the Ombudsman Office; preparation of a strategic plan for communication meant to increase public awareness about the Ombudsman's work; introduction of three new units (National Preventive Mechanism Unit; the Unit for children rights and rights of the persons with special needs and the Unit for anti-discrimination and equitable representation of minorities).

These units were established as a result of the latest

amendments of the Ombudsman Law. Another goal of the project is to contribute towards implementation of new proposals and reforms which may optimize the functioning of the institution and strengthen its financial independence.

The launch of the project and its public promotion took place on 30 of March 2011 in the premises of the European Delegation in Skopje. At this press conference, the Ombudsman of Spain, Ms Maria Luisa Cava de Llano, the (former) Ambassador of the European Union, Mr Peter Sorensen, the national Ombudsman, Mr Ihxet Memeti and the representative of the Défenseur des Droits Ms Charlotte Clavreul, were present. This event was facilitated by Ms Carmen Comas- Mata Mira, Counsellor and Chief of Cabinet of the Spanish Ombudsman. Beside representatives of the diplomatic corps in Skopje, such as Mr Fernando de Galainena Rodriguez, Ambassador of Spain, many other representatives from the European Union Delegation and international organizations present in the country (OSCE, ACNUR, UNDP, etc.) participated. The presentation was covered by the printed and the electronic media.

With the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Degrading and Inhuman Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) by the national Sobranie (Parliament), the Ombudsman Office was entrusted the role of the National Preventive Mechanism, in a similar way as its Spanish counterpart.

Throughout the whole project implementation, a Counsellor of the Spanish Ombudsman is residing in Skopje as Resident Twinning Adviser, coordinating all the activities on the project. At the same time he is the link among the three institutions concerned and the Delegation of the European Union.



Kick-off meeting.



Overview of main changes in the Twinning Manual 2012

General (IPA and ENPI)

Drafting of the Contract: reduction from 6 months to 4 months (IPA)/5 months (ENPI); the same number of reimbursed trips to the BC maintained in order to facilitate joint drafting.

Clarification of rules concerning RTA assignments: an individual can act as RTA for a maximum of four assignments; precise requirements concerning reintegration in the home administration are set.

Clarification of the role of the Junior Project Leader: reference is introduced to his/her participation at the Project Steering Committees.

Clarification of the role of Ad Hoc Mandated bodies: their participation to Twinning projects can be only exceptional and for a much specialised contribution.

Project Visibility: introduction of a provision formalising the organisation of a kick-off and of a closure meeting, allowing for the budgeting of up to EUR 500 to cover some costs.

First request for pre-financing: no need to submit a specific request: the signature of the contract will trigger the first pre-financing.

Changes to the Twinning Contract: no need to prepare addenda for suspension or termination of contract. **Budgetary addenda:** a budgetary addendum resets to zero the total of the budgetary re-allocations operated via side-letters, with the subsequent possibility of issuing new budgetary side letters till the moment in which the cumulative changes reach again 15 % of the total budget.

Integration in the Manual of provisions/clarifications issued over the years with formal letters or otherwise: among others, fact-finding missions guidelines; possible role of Universities; calculation of the RTA remuneration; etc.

Operational guidelines for Twinning Review Missions.

Update of the General Conditions following the PRAG 2012 and, by way of consequence, of the **Special Conditions** and the **Verification report** template.

Alignment of the wording of the Manual and of the Annexes of the Twinning Contract where inconsistencies were present.

IPA Specific

Detailed work-plan (and budget) outside the contract: the work-plan and budget included in the contract only mention the title of the foreseen activities and their global cost. Details (breakdown by concept, number of experts, names and dates) are presented in Operative Side Letters that cover a 6 month period; the first operative side letter is signed at the same time as the contract; successive operative side letters are issued every three months following the quarterly Project Steering Committee.