



TWINNING NEWS No. 50



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The Revised Common Twinning Manual – IPA implementation

The new Manual entered into force on 2 April 2012 and the first projects applying it have just started. It might therefore be useful to remind some important elements and considerations which represent the 'philosophy' of the new approach. As already mentioned on various occasions, the latest revision of the Twinning Manual pursued two main objectives:

- 1) shortening the time-gap between the identification of the needs and the actual provision of the assistance;
- 2) introducing enough flexibility in the implementation of projects to ensure that they match the situation on the ground.

On the first element, what could be achieved through the Manual was quite limited: we have reduced the time allowed for the fulfilment of some tasks, set deadlines for checks and communications, shortened the period for the preparation of the (simplified) contract. It is clear however that most of the delay is cumulated before the circulation of fiches and this problem cannot be solved by the Manual. We are however actively trying to change past practices related to the preparation of fiches and hope to see some positive results in this area as well.

The second objective (flexibility) could be tackled more directly. To achieve this goal we have removed all fine details from the Work Plan and the Budget annexed to the contract, including them in a "rolling" side letter to be updated on a

quarterly basis.

Perhaps the extensiveness of this change has not been immediately perceived.

In reality, it opens the doors to the possibility of implementing a project according to the real, concrete and "dynamic" situation, under the condition that the mandatory results are attained and the general rules for EU grants are respected – including of course all provisions of the Manual.

The reference to the fact that a Twinning project is financed by a grant of the EU is particularly important. The Member State that receives the grant is responsible of the sound financial management of the funds and must be able to justify the correctness and eligibility of all expenses incurred in implementing the project. For the rest, the new Manual offers to the Member State managing a Twinning project margins of manoeuvre much wider than in the past: the implementation pace, the choice of short term experts, the order of activities, the intensity of some actions, etc. are all now freed from the coercive shell of a programme covering the whole duration of the project. We are confident this increased flexibility will prove beneficial for all actors involved.

However, increased flexibility must be matched by increased responsibility from the side of those actors. We are referring here in particular to the MS Project Leader (PL) and of the RTA.

Under the 2012 Manual the PL is no longer a pure supervisor of the good implementation of the project, but becomes its real manager, fully

involved in the regular update of the work plan, compulsorily attending all quarterly Project Steering Committee meetings, personally signing the operative side letters and in the end responsible for the correct expenditure of the funds made available by the EU. The PL must therefore have the authority to decide on the mobilisation of the resources of the MS administration in order to ensure that the mandatory results are attained.

As for the RTA, she/he will have the new, critical task of preparing the draft update of the work-plan (and budget) before each Project Steering Committee. It goes without saying that the better the draft, the easier its approval and its subsequent implementation. Very close cooperation between the RTA and the MS PL will be even more crucial than in the past; but also contacts with the PL in the beneficiary administration will need to be stepped-up.

On the other hand, the commitment of the beneficiary will be reaffirmed at quarterly intervals by signing of the operative side letter and, even more, by the necessarily constructive participation to the meetings of the Project Steering Committee.

Eventually, the new procedures will hopefully simplify and lighten also the tasks of colleagues in Delegations and CFCU. The Work-Plan and the Budget included in the Contract being in an abridged form, checks should become less time-consuming: resources could therefore be concentrated on the analysis of the final reports and the eligibility of expenses, also on the basis of the audit report, whose importance is de facto increased.

As for any change to any procedure, some adaptations are requested to those who were used to the old patterns. We count very much on the goodwill and engagement of all concerned so that we can very soon see the hoped improvements translated into practice.

Changes in the Twinning Coordination Team

Christophe CASILLAS started working in the Twinning Coordination team last 3 September, replacing Jordi RODRIGUEZ RUIZ. Before, Christophe worked as project Manager at the EU Delegation in Azerbaijan, where he was

acting as Twinning, TAIEX and Sigma focal point for three years. Christophe has more than 15 years' experience in trade related technical assistance, having worked previously in private sector consultancies and the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO institution) in Geneva.



Trend in the circulation of fiches

The trend in 2012 was marked by less standard Twinning project fiches being circulated when comparing to 2011 (with more than 43 fiches) but a similar figure as in 2010 (some 27 fiches). According to the information provided by the Delegations and CFCUs', it is expected some 40 twinning fiches, will be circulated in 2013. We would like however to reassure you immediately: Twinning remains a key instrument of the IPA toolbox and will even increase its relevance in the prospect of the new sector-based approach under the new IPA strategy. The interest that the Commission takes in Twinning is testified by the explicit reference to it in the 'Explanatory Memorandum' that introduces the proposal of an 'IPA II' Regulation (http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/highlight/2011_1207_ipa_final_en.pdf, page 12).

48th RTA Training, October 2012

On 18 and 19 October, the 48th RTA training was organised in Brussels for starting Resident Twinning Advisers. 13 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 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 on 21-22 February 2013. The training design is tailor-made for RTAs in the process of drafting the Twinning contract or in the first stage of the project. Member State Project Leaders are also most welcome to participate, though at their own cost.

Twinning Community Tool

The Twinning Community Tool (TCT) is based on CircaBC and provides a collaboration tool that allows users (from within and outside the Commission) to exchange files, comments and links on a unique platform.

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 categories 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

Watch the video on peer-to-peer instruments



<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/article/capacity-development-aspects-taix-and-twinning-institutional-building-instruments>

Best Practices

If you have examples of "good practices" in your project to share, please send your article (maximum 300 words) to the functional mailbox:

elarg-twinning@ec.europa.eu .

You can always contact the Twinning Coordination Team in Brussels, should you or your staff require additional information:

DG Enlargement

Unit D.2: Institution Building Unit

Adriano Zilhão

Head of Unit

Tel. +32-2-299.3873

Adriano.Zilhao@ec.europa.eu

Michael Vögele

Deputy Head of Unit

Tel. +32-2-299.0674

Michael.Voegele@ec.europa.eu

Twinning Coordination Team:

Paolo GOZZI

Team Leader

Tel. +32-2-295.0755

paolo.gozzi@ec.europa.eu

Christophe CASILLAS

Twinning

Tel. 32-2-29.90321

Christophe.CASILLAS-VACHER@ec.europa.eu

Twinning Team Secretariat:

Birgit PERSSON

Tel. +32-2-296.46.76

birgit.persson@ec.europa.eu

Marc PATUZZO

Tel. +32-2-296.11.21

Marc.patuzzo@ec.europa.eu

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

Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/twinning/>

Fax numbers of the Twinning Team:

+32-2-296.47.12 / +32-2-29

