



TWINNING NEWS NEAR N.2



29 September 2015

Institution Building Days 2015 – The reform of Twinning in the spotlight

The 2015 "Institution Building Days" (IBD) are scheduled to take place in Brussels on 1-2 October.

One of the main topics on the agenda will be the reform of Twinning and in particular the outcome of the wide consultation of stakeholders launched in spring. This stock-taking exercise will also represent the wrapping-up moment before the whole process translates into a new Twinning Manual.

Other important issues on the programme of the IBD will concern the worldwide availability of TAIEX and the pilot project being implemented in Moldova with the selection and appointment of High Level Advisers (HLA) to support the local government.

Please find here under the links for the webstreaming of the Institution Building Days:

01/10:

<https://scic.ec.europa.eu/streaming/institution-building-days-annual-national-contact-point-meeting-for-twinning-and-taie-ex-instruments>

02/10:

<https://scic.ec.europa.eu/streaming/institution-building-days-annual-national-contact-point-meeting-for-twinning-and-taie-ex-instruments-2>

These links will be active on the day of the meeting and the sessions are protected by this password: **2015IBD-NEAR**. Interpretation will be available in DE – FR – EN.

In-house training

Back to back with the IBDs, an in-house training for IPA and ENI Twinning coordinators from EU Delegations/Office, Central Financial and Contracting Entities (CFCEs) and Programme Administration Offices (PAOs) is scheduled to take place on 30 September 2015.

RTA training October 2015

The second joint Pre-accession and Neighbourhood RTA training is scheduled to take place in Brussels on 15-16 October. Beneficiary institution project leaders or RTA counterparts will also have the opportunity to participate in the training.

IBU Activity Report 2014

The IBU Activity Report 2014 was issued in July. Following the setting-up of DG NEAR and the concentration of competences for TAIEX and Twinning within the Institution Building Unit, the Activity Reports 2014 covers both the neighbourhood and the enlargement regions. 2014 edition of Twinning "Success Stories", on Turkey, Serbia, Azerbaijan and Egypt can be found in the Report. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/taie-ex/taie-ex_activity_report_2014_en.pdf

Training on Twinning at EIPA, Maastricht

On 17-18 September took place a Seminar "Successful Preparation and Implementation of Twinning Projects" at the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), Maastricht (Netherlands).

The seminar is intended for civil servants and other persons interested in enhancing their knowledge on the Twinning instrument. As it has already been the case on previous occasions, Christophe Casillas, from the Twinning coordination team participated as lecturer during the second day of training.



EIPA Seminar on Twinning 17-18 September 2015

New management of Unit C3

As of 1st September 2015, Heike Gerstbrein has taken up duties as Head of the Institution Building, TAIEX, TWINNING Unit. She is already familiar with both the enlargement and the neighbourhood policies, having served as Deputy Head of the Unit of DG NEAR in charge of Thematic Support, Monitoring and Evaluation. Prior to this, she was Deputy Head of the Albania Unit in the former DG Enlargement. She also gained specific experience working in the Turkey and Tunisia teams, while at the beginning of her career she was the Commission's spokesperson for regional and cohesion policy. The current organisational chart can be found on DG NEAR Website:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/who_does_what/20150901-near-org-chart.pdf

First IPA-ENI RTA training took place in June 2015

The first joint training for Resident Twinning Advisers (RTAs) with assignments in IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession assistance) and ENI (European Neighbourhood Instrument) regions was held on 4 and 5 of June 2015. This was the 54th RTA training session organised for IPA beneficiaries and the 11th one for ENI beneficiaries.

34 RTAs were present coming from the administrations of 14 Member States, together with 17 beneficiary institution project leaders and RTA counterparts, 2 Member State Project leaders, one participant from the MS NCPs office (Netherlands) as well as representatives of the Programme Administration Office (PAO) from Egypt. The training focused in particular on the specific responsibilities

of beneficiary institutions in Twinning. 65% of participants evaluated the core training on procedural matters "very useful" and 35% as "useful".



RTA training, June 2015

Presentations can be found under: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/institution_building/2015/presentations_rta_training_4_-_5_june.zip

New Twinning Procedures

On 24 June 2015 a note introducing some changes in Twinning procedures was sent by former Director Gerhard Schumann-Hitzler to EU Delegations, CFCEs and PAOs. The purpose of the changes was to align IPA and ENI approaches in specific circumstances and to anticipate certain methodological adaptations in view of the forthcoming comprehensive reform of Twinning rules.

Changes exposed in the note refer to the body of the Twinning Manual and in particular to:

1. Role of the Twinning Coordination Team at Headquarters
2. Notification of the results of the selection
3. Regular information on results
4. Signature of the contract
5. Notification of the contract
6. RTA Training
7. Suspension or termination of a contract
8. Signature and notification of Twinning light contracts

On 17 July 2015, further guidelines and information were issued by the Twinning coordination team:

- Delegations must inform the Twinning coordination team in Brussels about the contract numbers generated by CRIS for all signed contracts. The contract number must be mentioned in the letter notifying signature of the contract together with the call for proposal number and the Twinning number.
- Projects under IPA II, (budget allocations of 2014 and successive years) align to the practice applied to projects under ENI on two important aspects:

- all expenditures related to **study visits** are covered by the budget of the project (including travel); and
- the rate of **co-financing** by the beneficiary is brought to zero, so the entire budget of the project is financed by the EU grant.

- Every six months, the Twinning coordination team in Brussels will provide to the 28 MS National Contact Points (NCPs) a complete overview of past and planned Twinning activities, with the following information:

- Standard and Twinning Light fiches circulated during the previous semester
- MS Proposals received for Standard and Twinning Light Fiches circulated during the same period
- Update about the pipeline of Standard and Twinning Light fiches, with indication of the quarter in which the circulation is foreseen.

Good to know

EU Publications Office in Luxemburg confirmed that the term to be used in official texts is "Union acquis". The terms "EU acquis" or "acquis of the European Union" can be used in informal texts.

Reminder: what the Twinning Manual says

"Section 5.7.2 Study visits in the MS and Trainee/internships for BC officials in MS Partner Administration", refers exclusively to Member States (MS) countries in its title and the last bullet point listing the principles guiding Study visits reads: "Study visits to non EU MS are not eligible." There are no exceptions to the rule.

Do not forget: project duration in Member States proposal

Project duration is part of the mandatory information that MS have to explicitly mention in their proposals. The fact that the Action document (Twinning fiche) already includes this detail does not justify its omission from a proposal. Selection procedures are also meant to assess whether a MS has a precise appreciation of what is expected from it and of the level of involvement requested. Too often MS forget to include this information in their proposals.

Recommendation to NCPs

Twinning National Contact Points (NCPs) and MS Administrations (including Mandated Bodies) which have references to the Twinning instrument or to Twinning projects on their institution website should ensure that EU funding is mentioned. A short notice "Twinning projects are funded by the European

Union" would suffice, possibly accompanied by the EU logo. Why not also include the link to our Twinning webpage? <http://ec.europa.eu/twinning/>

Good Practices

If you have examples of "good practices" used in your project to share, please send your contribution (maximum 300 words) to our new functional mailbox near twinning NEAR-TWINNING@ec.europa.eu

Twinning Community Tool (TCT)

The TCT 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 RTA, 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: NEAR-TWINNING@ec.europa.eu

DG NEAR

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

Functional e-mail boxes:

When sending a message to the Brussels Twinning coordination Team, please always put in copy: near-twinning@ec.europa.eu

For IPA-ENI proposals sent by the NCP for Twinning to the Twinning co-ordination team: near-twinning@ec.europa.eu

For sending draft IPA Twinning contracts and draft Twinning contract addenda to be examined by the Twinning steering committee: near-twinning-stc@ec.europa.eu

For sending all IPA-ENI Twinning quarterly and final reports: near-twinning-reports@ec.europa.eu