



Concise overview of Poland as a donor of institution building twinning assistance

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The following information is addressed mostly to the Member States representatives dealing with twinning, but representatives of the beneficiary countries may also find it useful.

The main purpose of this paper is to briefly present the current twinning situation in Poland and show the Polish administration as a potential consortia partner of twinning cooperation.

The paper comprises seven sections and is organized as follows:

1. What is twinning?
2. Poland's track record as a donor of assistance within twinning projects
3. The main challenges for the Polish administration in twinning projects.
4. The basic structure of internal twinning coordination in Poland.
5. The main geographical directions of Polish twinning assistance.
6. The main factors when deciding on consortia partners.
7. Is it worth cooperating with Poland in twinings?



1. What is twinning?

According to the *Twinning Manual 2017* issued by the European Commission, twinning is an institution-building instrument based on partnership cooperation between public administration and mandated bodies of the EU Member States, and public administration of beneficiaries. The purpose of twinning projects is to achieve concrete results agreed on between the beneficiary and the EC. Twinning projects are financed out of the UE budget by means of two financial instruments: *Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)* and *European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI)*.¹ Twinning has a form of a grant awarded to the Member State institution by the EC. The following countries are currently beneficiaries of twinning:

- under the IPA financial instrument: Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo², Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.
- under the ENI financial instrument: the EU's 16 closest neighbors - to the East: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine; to the South: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine³, Syria and Tunisia.

2. Poland's track record as a donor of assistance within twinning projects.

In the time between *Phare allocation 1998* and the *Transition Facility allocation 2006*, Poland was one of the biggest beneficiaries of twinning assistance, both when it comes to the total number of twinning projects and the total allocated EU budget. Since the year 2004, the Polish administration has been acting also as a donor of twinning assistance. It has

¹ *Twinning Manual 2017*; European Commission; page 10.

² This designation is without prejudice to position on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

³ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of State of Palestine and is without prejudice to individual position of the Member States on this issue.

been a part of about 60 implemented projects, in which circa 25% were carried out independently or as a leading partner in consortia.

Within the last 5 years the success rate of all twinning proposals containing Polish institutions has hovered around 40%. The main areas of interest for Polish twinning assistance are ENI East countries and the IPA countries. Simultaneously, the Polish involvement in ENI South countries has been barely visible. Creating consortia proposals, Polish administration institutions have cooperated mostly with the administrations from Germany and France, whereas recently, one can see increasing cooperation with Lithuania. All in all, the twinning projects implemented by the Polish administration are highly rated by beneficiaries⁴.

3. The main challenges for Polish administration undertaking twinning projects.

One can generalize that at the strategic and political levels there has been a will that the Polish administration take part in foreign institution building projects - at least in those countries which are considered especially important for the Polish foreign policy. However, some obstacles are visible at lower levels.

On the whole, there has always been an apprehension in the Polish administration about taking on additional burdens that were often linked with a certain risk.

From the author's perspective, the Polish administration faces the following challenges when deciding whether to embark on twinning assignments.

First, in Poland there is no separate legal act on twinning programmes that would regulate, step by step, the internal implementation of projects. Thus, every single Polish institution has its own internal regulations. However, the three following general principles have been widely applied:

- Twinning missions are carried out by twinning experts in the form of business trips.
- Polish experts executing twinning activities receive expert fees for their additional work on the projects.
- Polish institutions pay their employees who work on twinning projects, but who are not twinning experts, out of *Twinning Management Costs*.

⁴ Based on information obtained by the Polish NCP from Polish institutions and beneficiaries of assistance.

Second, the Polish public administration is generally understaffed and for managers, who are assessed by their superiors on executing statutory assignments, it is sometimes difficult to send abroad experts to do additional twinning work, as they tend to be the best employees that these managers have.

Third, there is certain lack of experience, and, as a result, a lack of internal management systems, procedures, and internal good practices within some Polish administration institutions in the area of undertaking multinational projects. However, there are more and more institutions in which the problem does not exist.

Fourth, the weak involvement of Polish administration in ENI South is also due to the fact that French is not widely spoken within the Polish public administration⁵.

4. The basic structure of internal twinning coordination in Poland.

The Polish National Contact Point (NCP) is located within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁶. In short, the NCP performs the duties laid out in the *Twinning Manual 2017*⁷, acting simultaneously as a coordinator, promotor and tutor of twinning. The NCP's main task is to channel information on twinning via the Focal Points located in respective ministries and other public institutions. The NCP is also responsible for the twinning website.⁸

In order to support Polish institutions in the process of implementing twinings, the NCP released in 2009 the document entitled: "Manual on institution building for the bidders".⁹ This document was based on best practices of Polish institutions implementing twinning projects abroad, and has become the main guideline for the Polish administration. Nowadays, with the introduction of the *Twinning Manual 2017*, the "Polish Manual" is being updated.

Since 2011 NCP duties in Poland have been performed by one person. There is no General Mandated Body institution in Poland, which size is comparable to those of Lithuania,

⁵ About 2% of Poles speaks French good or very good.

<http://serwisy.gazetaprawna.pl/edukacja/artykuly/1111366,jakie-jezyki-obce-znaja-polacy.html>

⁶ Until January 2010 the National Contact Point was located within the Office of the Committee for European Integration.

⁷ *Twinning Manual 2017*; page 26.

⁸ <https://twinning.msz.gov.pl/fiszki-twinning>

⁹ This document exists only in Polish. The original title: "Podręcznik współpracy bliźniaczej dla dawców pomocy".



Germany, Spain or the UK that would manage the administrative and financial issues while implementing twinning projects.

5. The main geographical directions of Polish twinning assistance since 2013.

ENI East countries and IPA countries have been the major areas of interest for Polish institutions providing twinning assistance. Only three Polish twinning proposals out of nearly 70 proposals prepared were directed to the ENI South countries. Since 2013, Polish institutions have been implementing the following projects:

- 5 twinings in Georgia
- 5 twinings in Moldova
- 5 twinings in Ukraine
- 2 twinings in Azerbaijan
- 1 twinning in Belarus

and

- 4 twinings in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- 2 twinings in Kosovo
- 2 twinings in Croatia
- 1 twinning in Albania, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Serbia and Turkey

The most active Polish institutions in twinning since 2013 have been:

- The Supreme Audit Office, the Polish Financial Supervision Authority, the Ministry of Finance, the Main Inspectorate of Road Transport, the Educational Research Institute (IBE), the Ministry of Interior and Administration group (including the Police and the Border Guard), “agricultural group” (including mostly small and medium-size institutions having mostly *Mandated Body* status) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A part of Polish institutions creates consortia based on their contacts established in times when Poland was a beneficiary of twinning assistance – so in the years 1998-2009. A good example of such a partnership would be the partnership in the agricultural sector between institutions of Poland and Italy.

The geographical directions of Polish twinning assistance are determined not only on the general political level, but also on tactical levels of respective institutions. The tactical levels



include, *inter alia*, the potential success rate of the proposal, which in turn is measured by taking into account the potential adjustment of the specific Polish administrative practices and standards to the needs of the beneficiary. Also, good existing cooperation in many fora of the Polish institution with the beneficiary one might be the decisive element for preparing consortia proposals.

6. The main factors when deciding on consortia partners.

Institutions create consortia mostly when they are unable to present their own content-related proposals. While monitoring processes of establishing consortia by Polish institutions one can conclude that other factors are also decisive. For instance, for some Polish institutions it is important that the consortium partner take the strain of financial and technical implementation of the contract. Generally, however, for the whole of the Polish administration the following three issues are most important when creating consortia:

- Good existing cooperation with the consortium partner in implementation of twinning projects or in other *fora*.
- Potential of the consortium partner to win the twinning competition.
- Ability of the consortium partner to reach consensus with the Polish institution when it comes to the division of man-days, project costs and other responsibilities.

The Polish administration seeks its consortia partners mostly independently, but also by asking for the assistance of the Polish NCP.

7. Is it worth cooperating with Poland in twinings?

The following features make the Polish administration worthy of being considered as a consortium partner in twinings.

- Experience of being once the beneficiary of twinning assistance makes it easier to empathize with today's beneficiaries.
- Good institutional memory from Poland's EU negotiation and accession process.
- Good success rate of Polish twinning proposals (around 40%).
- Twinings implemented by Polish institutions are highly rated by beneficiaries.
- Vast pool of experts with international background.



Ministry
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- More and more Polish institutions with very well-functioning international projects management units are ready to act as senior partners in consortia in sectors that include: public finance, audit, education, transport and agriculture.
- Many institutions are open to act as junior and leading partners in consortia.
- Good knowledge of Russian and very good knowledge of English.

Should you seek additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the Polish National Contact Point.

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