

## Project Fiche

Title	Support to legislative and executive bodies through support to the National Coordination Unit		
Total cost	€ 0.6 million		
Aid Method	Centralised procedures		
DAC-code	15040	Sector	Support for Institutional, Legal and Administrative Reform / Government administration

### 1 RATIONALE

#### 1.1 Strategic framework

Since the beginning of the Tacis Programme in Belarus, the NCU has been supported by a regional Tacis Project that will end in July 2005. This combination of local and EU expertise has provided significant support to Tacis programming and implementation in Belarus. The Donor and the Beneficiary recognize the need to extend this action in order to increase Belarus' capacity to contribute to programming and to ensure that all donors' assistance is used consistently and in accordance with Belarus international commitments.

#### 1.2 Lessons learnt

Valuable lessons learnt from past experience are that EC support to the NCU should be extended to the implementation phase and not limited to the programming process and it should embrace also other governmental and civil society entities.

#### 1.3 Complementary actions

Tacis project NAP 2003 "Support to National Coordinating Units". This support will be extended through a small bridging project (framework contract) scheduled for the period September 2005 - August 2006 under NAP 2003.

#### 1.4 Donor coordination

The activities intended to **support the TACIS National Co-ordination Unit (NCU)** include in their objectives to maintain and foster the links between TACIS and other donors' interventions, in order to coordinate the involvement of international technical assistance.

## **2 COUNTRY CONTEXT**

### **2.1 Co-operation policy of the beneficiary country**

Belarus has adopted detailed project registration procedures and other rules that are prerequisite for tax exemption to international technical assistance. Co-operation with the EU is often sought, in particular by specific Ministries, for activities of general interest as listed in the National Programme of International Technical Co-operation 2001-2005.

### **2.2 Sector policy**

The Tacis Programme of the European Union has been operational in Belarus since 1991. The preparation and implementation of the Programme is managed by the Commission services. A National Coordinator is the Commission's main partner within the partner state government. Formal communication on matters of major significance is normally the responsibility of the National Coordinator, although as a senior member of the administration he/she is unlikely to be engaged full-time on EU aid-related issues. Under present arrangements a National Coordinating Unit (NCU) provides assistance to the National Coordinator in his/her relations with the European Commission at key stages of the programming and project cycle. In accordance with a Government Resolution the NCU in Belarus is attached to the Tacis National Co-ordinator in Belarus and works under his guidance.

With specific reference to international technical assistance, the main tasks of the NCU are:

- To coordinate the implementation of all government activity related to the involvement of EU technical assistance, including official registration of projects, accreditation of international experts and monitoring of programmes/projects;
- To formulate "the strategic and annual programmes" for the involvement of EU technical assistance;
- To participate in the formulation of the legal and regulatory framework for international technical assistance, jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice and other ministries or State bodies eventually concerned.

Arising from the above, the main functions of the NCU are the following:

- In preparation of annual Action Programmes, to prepare the updated pre-programming document and to participate in the EC identification missions as well as to identify, analyse and assist in the elaboration of project proposals for further discussion with the Delegation;

- In the implementation of Action Programmes, to assist in the preparation of project ToRs and in securing the Statement of Endorsements (SoEs) signature; to participate in Steering Committees of on-going projects and monitor their implementation; to deal with relevant administrative issues such as projects State registration, tax exemptions etc.;
- In general, to disseminate throughout line ministries and other Government entities all relevant information concerning the EC Aid programmes and the procedures for the programming process, providing training in their application to selected personnel within them;
- In general, to disseminate all relevant information concerning the EC Aid programmes and the procedures for the programming process throughout regional and local authorities, providing consultations in their application to selected personnel within them;
- To maintain and foster the links between the Tacis and other donors interventions, in order to coordinate the involvement of international technical assistance;
- To establish and develop the dialogue with the wider society so that their instances can be taken into account in the programming of external technical assistance
- To support Neighborhood Programmes implementation

In this context, the role of NCU in assisting the Belarus Government in coordination and continuous identification and diversification of the technical assistance funds offered to the Republic of Belarus is at a high importance.

Currently a Technical Assistance project to the NCU (TANCU) is working in Belarus and they already elaborated several tools for working.

### **3 DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.1 Wider objective**

The **overall objective** of the project is to support the capacity of Belarus to make best use of EU assistance in supporting the needs of the Belarussian population .

#### **3.2 Specific objective**

- To promote the long-term self sustainability of the NCU
- To strengthen the planning and co-ordination capacity in relation to external assistance programmes.
- To increase public awareness of donors' assistance programmes.

### **3.3 *Expected results***

- The NCU has an increased capacity to produce in cooperation with line Ministries sectoral strategy papers and pre-programming documents and the quality of the latter is enhanced
- The NCU has an enhanced capacity to ensure coordination between donors and to foster a sector wide approach in each area of donors' intervention.
- The NCU has an increased capacity to cooperate with the European Commission officials while the latter is preparing the Terms of Reference for the projects
- The NCU has an increased capacity to cooperate with missions to be carried out in the country by EC staff or by experts recruited by the EC or through the EC - funds.
- The NCU has an increased capacity to actively take part to the projects' Steering Committees;
- The NCU has an increased capacity to support the Neighborhood Programmes' implementation
- The NCU has an increased capacity to register the projects and to guarantee that privileges due to the EU-funded projects are timely and effectively respected by all the relevant State bodies
- The NCU has an increased capacity to monitor and evaluate the EU-funded projects
- The visibility of the NCU activity is enhanced and its capacity to have an impact both at central and local level is enhanced;
- The understanding of the EC rules and procedures relevant for the EU assistance is enhanced among the NCU staff and other externally selected target groups
- NCU personnel development and training;
- The capacity of the NCU to maintain fruitful cooperation with other NCUs is enhanced
- The external assistance database continue to be updated and managed

### **3.4 *Main activities***

The project is expected to ensure continuity with the work already undertaken by the previous projects to support the NCU and will:

1. Provide regularly up-to-date information regarding recent developments within EU policy which can have an impact on Belarus;
2. Advise on the current EU regulations and rules;
3. Advise on the future programming in the context of the EU policy towards Belarus;
4. Provide support in the day-to-day work, including through on-the-job training to the staff;
5. List and describe all EU programmes, stating clearly eligibility criteria;
6. Contact the EU to see whether and how Belarus may be eligible for a certain number of 'new' programmes;
7. Update the analyses prepared by the previous TANCU project regarding the current and proposed institutional and functional structure of the NCU and network of line ministries regarding assistance programming in line with the new environment and will prepare training needs analyses of the NCU and units in line ministries responsible for aid coordination;
8. Prepare training plan in support which can be covered by the current project and deliver appropriate training;
9. Advise on EU and international practice in registering and monitoring the technical assistance and grants;
10. Contribute to the elaboration of the National Regulation and other normative acts in the field of registering and monitoring of the technical assistance and grants allocated by donors' community;
11. Prepare guidelines/recommendation with respect to preparing the TA impact assessment report. The Consultant should assist the project beneficiary to operate and maintain a Monitoring System that is up-to-date at all times as well as on how to integrate the data collected into the IDEA database and NCU website ;
12. Develop tools and publications in order to better understand the structure and process of aid coordination and will assist the Minister of Economy to design and launch a public awareness campaign, the objective of which will be to raise awareness amongst potential stakeholders in the aid coordination process;
13. Contribute to increasing public awareness of the eligible EU Programmes and other donor's funds. In this context the project team will:
  - Update the NCU website on a regular basis (once per month), ensuring that all new documentation related to the TA, EU and other donors programmes are widely available;

- Elaborate guidelines on how to get financing from different donors acting in Belarus;
  - Publish Flyers/Bulletins (best practices, examples of projects);
14. Regularly inform the Commission of political, economic or institutional developments of relevance to the project;

### **3.5 Stakeholders and institutional capacity**

*National Co-ordinating Unit of Belarus for the European Union's Tacis Programme* is the direct recipient of the assistance. The Tacis National Co-ordinator is the overall beneficiary.

### **3.6 Risks and assumptions**

#### Risk assessment

The main identified risk lies in the lack of political support for political and economic reforms.

#### Assumptions / Expectations

It is expected that the beneficiaries will actively contribute to the implementation of the project, appointing dedicated personnel and providing required inputs to the work of consultants.

## **4 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

### **4.1 Implementation method**

The implementation method will be Centralised Management by the EC Delegation to Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus (Kiev) with the assistance of the Delegation's TACIS Branch Office in Minsk. (Service contract)

### **4.2 Budget and calendar**

The budget is €0.6 million.

The operational duration of the project is estimated to be 24 months.

### **4.3 Procurement and award of grants procedures**

All contracts implementing the financing agreement must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the implementation of external operations, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

All programme estimates must respect the procedures and standard documents laid down by the Commission, in force at the time of the adoption of the programme estimates in question.

#### **4.4 Performance monitoring**

The project will be monitored according to standard procedures.

Project monitoring and evaluation will be based on periodic assessment of progress on delivery of specified project results and towards achievement of project objectives.