



Capacity Development Facility to support the implementation of sector programmes under the ENPI Annual Action Programmes for Belarus (CDFB)

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MISSION REPORT

ON PARTICIPATION IN THE SEMINAR ON

How to Select and Develop a Convincing Project Strategy for |EU 2020 Funding: *Do's and Don'ts for Local and Regional Actors* under

European Institute of Public Administration

Barcelona 20-22 October, 2014

<p>1. Name of the participants, institution</p>	<p>Dina Goncharova – Executive Director of the National Coordinating Unit for the EU TACIS Programme in the Republic of Belarus; Irina Bolotina – National expert of the National Coordinating Unit for the EU TACIS Programme in the Republic of Belarus; Kanstantsin Chorny – Deputy Chief of the Economy Department of Vitebsk regional Executive Committee; Anastasiya Hlina – Chief Specialist of the Division for Education, Sports and Tourism of Grodno City Executive Committee; Vadim Pakhomchik – Counselor of the Department for Common European Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus; Alena Vauraniuk – Specialist of the Foreign Economic Relations Department of Brest Regional Executive Committee.</p>
<p>2. Destination, dates and schedule</p>	<p>Barcelona, Spain 20-22 October, 2014</p>
<p>3. Logistics</p>	<p>All the Logistics was arranged by the CDFB Project staff:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They made registration of the participants for the Seminar 2. Booked round tickets (from Minsk to Barcelona and from Barcelona to Minsk) 3. Arranged transfer from and to the airport in Minsk 4. Arranged transfer from and to the airport in Spain (from Barcelona airport to hotel and from hotel to Barcelona airport) 5. Booked the Hotel in Barcelona for the whole period of stay (4 nights) 6. Provided the participants with necessary materials on their participation in the Seminar and stay in Barcelona 7. Arranged meetings on the discussion of all the organization issues 8. Conducted final meeting upon arrival in Minsk to discuss the results of the participations follow-up activities
<p>4. Purpose of visit</p>	<p>The seminar was addressed to all levels of public administrations (and their agencies), and particularly sub-state authorities or bodies in charge of or involved in the design, development and implementation of projects subject to compliance with European funds. The main aim of the seminar was to prepare participants to compete in the ever0changing arena of EU funding. Each programme or initiative has its own objectives or specific characteristics; but as far as the 'key rules of the game' are concerned, elements and success criteria continue to converge and show a harmonised pattern. The seminar allowed the participants to increase the success rate in the EU funding 'jungle' as well as the absorption capacity.</p>

5. Agenda	MONDAY 20 October 2014
	09.15 Opening and welcome: introduction to the programme, objectives, methodology and political embedding of the seminar
	09.30 “Tour de Table”: participants’ presentation to endorse networking
	09.45 A quick overview of the 2020 financial instruments: features and priorities, re-grouping of funds, new supportive actions
	11.00 Coffee break
	11.30 From a project idea to a sound proposal and concept to apply for funding
	13.00 Lunch
	14.30 Call for Tender vs. Call for Proposal: clarification of the differences
	15.00 How to draft and calculate eligible and beneficial budgets for the applicants
	17.00 Wrapping up
	17.00 End of the first day
	TUESDAY 21 October 2014
	09.30 Interactive workshop: How to work together from a distance and across cultural “frontiers”
	11.00 Coffee break
10.15 Continuation of exercise and debriefing on Consortium building, partnership composition, etc.	
13.30 Lunch	
15.00 Work plan, road maps, deliverables, timetable and many more critical aspects	
16.30 Practical workshop: introduction and division of participants into working groups	
16.45 End of the second day	
WEDNESDAY 22 October 2014	
09.00 Commencement of the exercise: discussion, in groups, of a pre-set project idea (guidelines) from different supportive actions and converting them into an EU funding application	
11.00 Coffee break	
11.30 Continuation	
13.00 Lunch	
14.00 Final evaluation panel: presentation of the project proposal/application per group and simulation of a European evaluation panel	
16.00 Closure and issuing of EIPA seminar certificates to participants	
6. Description of the discussed	<u>Day 1</u>

issues

1. A quick overview of the 2020 financial instruments: features and priorities, re-grouping of funds, new supportive actions

It was mentioned that EU-2020 strategy is a successor of Lisbon strategy. In order to be implemented successfully projects need political support and resources (human, financial, etc.).

In order to be able to compete within the call for proposals the beneficiary needs:

- Good idea
- Time to study (background knowledge)
- Team with the leader
- Time-management (mid-term or long-term perspective)
- Money to participate

The following structure of EU budget 2014-2020 was presented during the seminar:

Economic, social and territorial cohesion	33.9%
Competitiveness for growth and jobs	13.1%
Sustainable growth: natural resources	38.9%
Compensations	0%
Administration	6.4%
Security and Citizenship	1.6%
Global Europe	6.1%

It was mentioned that for the first time EU budget for 2014-2020 is less than for the previous period 2007-2013 (the indicative budget for the coming period is 959.988 mln. Euro in comparison to 994.176 mln. Euro for the previous period).

It was shown that if to compare different EU funds from the point of view of funding the following can be seen:

1. Most of the funds are allocated for ESI funds (National, regional and local programmes) which are managed at national, regional and local levels and competition is there on national level
2. Part of the funds is allocated for ERDF (ENI and ETC)
3. The smallest part is allocated for Programmes and Budget lines (EU Internal programs) that are managed directly from Brussels.

EU cohesion policy promotes job creation, competitiveness, economic growth, improved quality of life and sustainable development. These investments support the delivery of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Three categories of regions are distinguished in the new strategy:

- Less developed regions with GDP per capita less than 75% of EU average
- Transition regions with GDP per capita between 75% and 90% of EU
- More developed regions with GDP per capita more than 90% of EU average

Below are presented the priorities of the Cohesion policy (ESI funds):

- a) R&D and innovation
- b) ICTs
- c) SMEs competitiveness
- d) Low-carbon economy
- e) Climate change adaptation and risk prevention
- f) Environment and resource efficiency
- g) Sustainable transport
- h) Employment and labour mobility
- i) Social inclusion and poverty
- j) Education, skills and lifelong learning
- k) Capacity building and efficient public administration

The European Commission asked the most developed regions to spend the most of the money (up to 90%) on first four of these priorities.

Moreover, new trends for European programmes in the new period 2014-2020 were outlined:

- There will be less programmes than in the previous period in order to concentrate more on the quality, but not on the quantity
- The following priorities were chosen to be reinforced:
 - Energy issues and climate change
 - Innovation
 - Mobility and employment
 - Support to young people
 - SMEs
- Simplification of procedures

- The programmes will be more focused in results – there will be impact indicators in each programme
- More participation of private sector will be required in both responsibilities and financial aspects
- Decentralization of the programmes management (by using special agencies) and enhancement of the executive agencies
- Audit and control will be reinforced.

2. From a project idea to a sound proposal and concept to apply for funding

Main challenge when preparing a project is to be different from the competitors. Visualization of the project proposal is very important in order to help explaining concepts to others and provide with an easy access.

Difference between efficiency and effectiveness was explained at the seminar:

<p>Efficiency</p> <p>The fact that the results were obtained at reasonable cost, i.e. how well means and activities were converted into results and the quality of the results achieved</p> <p>To do the things right</p> <p>Comes after</p>	<p>Effectiveness</p> <p>The contribution made by the project's results to the achievement of the project purpose</p> <p>To do the right things</p> <p>Always comes first</p>
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It was outlined that when carrying out stakeholder analysis the beneficiary should take into account not only those groups which have a positive impact, but also those which have a negative impact (as their negative impact will be decreased in the result of project implementation).

A new approach to carrying out SWOT analysis was presented:

\	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Success factors	Weakness to Strengths
Threats	Threats to Strengths	Possible Crisis

Such 8-SWOT analysis concentrates on activities to be provided by the project.

5 criteria of the EC to evaluate the success of projects and programmes were discussed, namely:

- Relevance (to what extent are the objectives relevant to the evolving needs and priorities at regional, national and EU level?)
- Efficiency (how well the resources (inputs) could turn into outputs and results?)
- Effectiveness (how far could reasonably the project contribute to achieving its envisaged specific and global objectives?)
- Impact (could and to which extent will a project have an impact on the target groups in relation to their needs?)
- Sustainability (to what extent can the changes or benefits be expected to last after the programme has been completed?)

3. Call for Tender vs. Call for Proposal: clarification of the differences

EU projects should be part of or in coherence with:

- National and sector policies
- EC development policy and country strategies
- Government programmes
- Priorities and programmes of non-state actors

Funding principles ruling an EU-funded project were pointed out:

- Normally co-financing (only part of the costs is covered by EU)
- Sharing responsibilities

- Stakeholder involvement
 - Partnership building (private-public)
 - (not only) reimbursement is based on invoice
- 4 phases were enumerated within project management:
- a) Project identification
 - b) Formulation – planning
 - c) Project implementation
 - d) Closure and assessment of the project

Difference between calls for tenders and calls for proposals can be presented as follows:

Calls for tenders		Calls for proposals	
PROCUREMENTS		GRANTS	
Purchase of services/supplies/works	OBJECT	Action proposed by a potential beneficiary, intended to achieve an EU-policy objective	
Contracting authority	OWNER OF RESULTS	Grant beneficiary	
100%	FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION	Co-financing – % of total eligible costs Reimbursement of the actual eligible cost incurred	
Tenders	PROCEDURE	Calls for proposal	
PROFIT		NO PROFIT ALLOWED	

4. How to draft and calculate eligible and beneficial budgets for the applicants

The body responsible for approval of Financial Regulation is the European Parliament. In accordance with the Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union) all projects have to contribute to EU policy.

Principles of sound financial management were outlined:

- Economy (the resources used by the institution in the pursuit of its activities shall be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price)
- Efficiency (concerns the nest relationship between the resources employed and the results achieved)
- Effectiveness (concerns the attainment of the specific objectives set and the achievement of the intended results)

Difference between irregularity and fraud was explained:

- Irregularity (ineligible expenditure) – any infringement of a provision of a contract or regulation resulting from an act or omission which causes or might cause a loss to the Union budget
- Fraud – intentional deception made for personal gain or to damage another individual.

New approach for grants in the mentioned Financial Regulation was discussed:

- a) More detailed definition of the specific conditions applicable to grants in order to contribute to maximizing its impact
- b) Grant rules adjusted so as to facilitate access to Union funding and management of grants by applicants and beneficiaries having decided to work together in partnership
- c) Alleviation of administrative burden and the costs borne by the beneficiary specifically for the purpose of financial reporting

Main eligibility rules applicable to grants were explained in accordance with the Financial Regulation.

Main components of expenditures were discussed, such as:

- Human resources
- Travel and subsistence costs
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Subcontracted services
- Indirect costs

It was mentioned that in several EU financial instruments it is possible to obtain profit in order to cover co-financing.

Day 2

1. Debriefing on Consortium building, partnership composition, etc.

Partnership is a collaborative agreement – voluntary and/or mandatory and/or needed between two or more parties in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific tasks and to share risks, responsibilities, resources, competences and benefits. In order to find partners the organization-beneficiary should:

- Define and clarify project idea
- Assess own capacity
- Identify the gaps to be filled in either in terms of experience or networking
- Start the research

It is very important that the chosen partners are relevant to the chosen thematic area and to the project itself.

Functions of the project leader include the following:

- Coordinating the project
- Being responsible in front of the Contracting authority
- Managing the partnership
- Ensuring fulfillment of tasks (time and budget)
- Managing the budget
- Managing the communication and dissemination plan

At the same time a partner is accountable for:

- Providing his inputs on a competence/activities basis
- Being regularly in touch with the project leader
- Managing his budget

Difference between forms of partnership was explained:

Simple partnership	Strategic alliance	Corporate integration
- No permanent organizational commitments	- Ongoing commitments to continue joint work	- Commitment to permanent corporate changes
- Decision-making remains with individual organizations	- Decision-making is shared and agreement-driven	- Involves legal and structural changes to corporate control

Public-private partnership is an institutional cooperation on voluntary basis between public and private for the community development benefit. It is public administration that establishes the environment for sharing and cooperating, but it is the private which implements the project and achieves the objectives.

Basics of public-private partnership were as well discussed:

- Common objectives
- Innovation
- Multi-sectorial approach
- Agreement on costs and benefits
- Transparency and accountability principles
- Definition of key performance indicators

2. Work plan, road maps, deliverables, timetable and many more critical aspects

Two models of the two-step application procedure in the new programming period were described:

- Concept note model – the beneficiaries submit only certain parts of the full application form in the first step. If selected, the beneficiary will then submit the entire project proposal
- Expression of interest model – the beneficiaries submit an expression of interest, which is usually a shorter version of the application form.

Principles of projects assessment include the following:

- Objectivity: Separation of responsibilities between information activities and assessment is ensured. Each evaluator has to be free of any conflict of interest;
- Equal treatment: All received applications shall be dealt in compliance with procedures agreed upon for the respective programme taking into account information presented in the application only;
- Transparency: The potential applicants have to be informed of conditions and assessment processes in the programme. The reasons for recommending a project for rejection or approval

	<p>should be clear and justified.</p> <p>General hints were given in the following spheres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Style tips; - Identifying objectives and purposes; - Drawing work-plans; - Writing proposals; - Reporting. <p>Reports will be analysed based in given indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outputs are products of the activities funded, e.g. number of reports written, number of seminars held – what has actually been produced for the money given to the project; - Results are the immediate advantages of carrying out these advantages, e.g. number of regional policy changes, number of members of target group given additional training – they tell us about the benefit of funding the outputs; - Impacts are the sustainable long-term benefits of an activity, e.g. improved regional situation because of more effective policies, fall in number of long-term unemployed, increase in biodiversity, increased regional GDP; - Outcomes are used to describe the combination of project outputs, results and impacts. <p>Different types of control were discussed, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring – an implementing tool for a systematic on-going analysis of the project implementation to check the progress in order to take remedial action and update work-plans. It is usually on-going – day-by-day – analysis of project implementation. It represents systematic and continuous collection, analysis and use of management information to verify the project implementation. - Evaluation – an assessment of on-going and completed projects, programmes and policies, as regards their design, implementation and results. Usually evaluation is carried out either before a programme begins (ex-ante), or in mid-cycle before renewal or cancellation (mid-term), or at the end when impact can be measured (ex-post). The following can be the objectives of evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To judge the results of actions in order to check their conformity with set objectives; • To improve management, in particular by taking into account the lessons of past actions; • To achieve better transparency and accountability; • To improve present and future EC external policies and actions. - Audit – as assessment of legality and regularity of project expenditures (and income) whether project funds have been used efficiently and economically – “sound financial management”. Audit primarily has a financial management focus. <p><u>Day 3</u></p> <p>1. Commencement of the exercise: discussion, in groups, of a pre-set project idea (guidelines) from different supportive actions and converting them into an EU funding application</p> <p>All participants were divided into three groups. The task was to choose one of the three proposed EU internal programmes and to make a project proposal together with budget.</p> <p>The proposed internal programmes were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - INTERREG EUROPE - Erasmus + - Europe for Citizens <p>The groups had to make a project proposal that will be suitable within the framework of thematic objectives of the programme, partnership, duration, eligible budget, sources of co-financing.</p>
<p>7. New contacts</p>	<p>Mr Alexander Heichlinger – EIPA expert & manager EPSA, EIPA Barcelona (E-mail: a.heichlinger@eipa.eu)</p> <p>Ms Julia Bosse – Research Assistant, EIPA Barcelona</p> <p>Mr Gian Luca Bombarda – CEO, JCPsrl, Reggio Emilia, Italy (E-mail: glbombarda@jcpsrl.eu)</p> <p>Ms Iwona Karwot – Senior lecturer, EIPA Barcelona</p> <p>Mr Albert Sorrosal – Director, CNS Consultores (E-mail: albert@cnsconsultores.com)</p> <p>Mr Xavier Tiana – Expert in EU funding and EU projects, Spain (E-mail: xtiana@amb.cat)</p> <p>Mr Martin Wyrwich – Director, Tendersmith Consultancy, Germany</p> <p>Ms Dimova-Klassanova Nina – Senior expert, National Institute of Justice, Bulgaria (E-mail: r.ivanova@nij.bg)</p> <p>Ms Georgieva Kalina – Court administrator, District Court Tarnovo (E-mail: v.tourmakov@nij.bg)</p> <p>Ms Geraskova Plamena – State expert, Structural Funds and International Programmes General Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria (E-mail: p.geraskova@mon.bg)</p> <p>Ms Ignatova Ludmila – Senior expert, National Institute of Justice, Bulgaria</p> <p>Mr Keremidchiev Stanimir – Programme coordinator, National Institute of Justice, Bulgaria</p>

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<p>8. Conclusions</p>	<p>Visit to Barcelona allowed participants to apply in practice the knowledge gained before. The seminar addressed several new aspects when developing added-value projects, convincing proposals or bids for EU funds and their territory. The seminar enabled the participants to quickly grasp the most relevant guiding principles and rules when it comes to preparing a bid for EU funding. Each participant was provided with a specific new glossary of the main EU supportive actions and financial instruments (2014-2020) screened for local and regional actors, as well as related web-links.</p>
<p>9. Relevance to Belarus</p>	<p>Belarus is a beneficiary of ENPI funds in terms of various programmes within the programming period 2007-2013 and a new programming period 2014-2020 in terms of ENI instrument, therefore the participation in this Seminar was extremely relevant for the country. All the obtained information and contacts will be used by the participants for further development of aid coordination system in the Republic of Belarus. The experience gained in Barcelona will be implemented in programming within the ENI 2014-2020 and in coordination of external assistance as well. Participation of the representatives of the regions of Belarus was very important as it will contribute to more active participation of Belarusian regions in making and implementing ITA projects in the new programming period.</p>
<p>10. Subsequent actions</p>	<p>The seminar gave the possibility to implement the gained experience, knowledge and skills by the participants in their line Ministries for the benefits of the development of international technical assistance programmes in Belarus and further participation in the events in terms of CDFB Project.</p>

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