

TWINNING PROJECT FICHE

Further strengthening of AFSARD and preparing the Agency for the programming period 2014-2020
Project Fiche No. MK11/IB/AG/01

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFSARD	Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development
BC	Beneficiary Country
CAP	Common Agriculture Policy
CFCD	Central Financing and Contracting Department
EARDF	European Agricultural and Rural Development Fund
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union
GPS	Global Positioning System
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
IPARD	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for Rural Development
IPA TAIB	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance Transition Assistance and Institution Building
MAFWE	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
MS	Member State
NPAA	National Programme for the Adoption of the EU <i>acquis</i>
PRAG	Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions
PAO	Programme Authorising Officer
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RTA	Resident Twinning Advisor
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SAPARD	Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
SPO	Senior Programme Officer
STE	Short Term Experts

STANDARD TWINNING PROJECT FICHE

1. Basic information

- 1.1 EuropeAid/ 137-072/IH/ACT/MK
- 1.2 **Programme:** National Programme for 2011 for Transition Assistance and Institutional Building Component of IPA.
- 1.3 **Twining Number:** MK 11 IB AG 01
- 1.4 **Title:** Further strengthening of AFSARD and preparing the Agency for the programming period 2014-2020
- 1.5 **Sector:** Agriculture and Rural Development
- 1.6 **Beneficiary country:** The Beneficiary country¹

2. Objectives

2.1 Overall Objective

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD).

2.2 Project purpose

The purpose of the project is to increase the capacity of the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development (AFSARD) in the implementation of the accredited IPARD measures and of the measures to be accredited as well as to support AFSARD in the preparation of accreditation of new measures.

2.3 Contribution to National Development Plan/Cooperation Agreement/Association Agreement/Action Plan

The project will contribute towards the implementation of the **Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA)** Articles 1 and 68 on approximation of legislation to that of the Community, and Article 100 (Agriculture, and the agro-industrial sector) on modernization and restructuring of agriculture, the agro-industrial sector and rural development.

The project will contribute to address the following **Accession Partnership 2009** short term priority: "Continue preparations to establish effective and financially sound paying bodies for the management and control of agricultural funds, in line with EU requirements and international auditing standards". In addition, the program will reflect on the medium-term priority: "to upgrade the capacity of the agricultural administration and complete preparations for enforcement and practical application of the management mechanisms of the common agricultural policy". These priorities have been accordingly translated into the National Programme for the Adoption of the EU *acquis* (NPPA) 2014.

The project is also closely related to the Progress Report 2014 where it is stated that "the inefficient implementation of the pre-accession rural development programme is an area of serious concern".

Finally, the project directly links to the following key strategies and action plans in the sector:

- National Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development 2014-2020;

¹ As per Financing Agreement concerning the National Programme Transition Assistance and Institution Building – TAIB 2011 from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance under the Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component – entered into force on 18st November 2012.

- Operational programme under the EU instrument for pre-accession for rural development (IPARD) 2007-2013 and 2014-2020.

3 Description

3.1 Background and justification

Intuitional set-up

The Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development (AFSARD) was established on 11 June 2007 on the basis of the Law on Establishing an Agency for Financial Support in Agriculture and Rural Development (OG No. 72/2007 and No. 05/2009). AFSARD operates as the sole Paying Agency in the Beneficiary country responsible for the payment of both EU and national funds and it handles direct aids, market support measures, and state aid.

Currently, AFSARD is responsible for implementation of the following programmes financed from National budget: programme for financial support of agriculture (direct payments and market measures – roughly 100 M€ a year paid to 80,000 farmers), programme for financial support of rural development (roughly 16 M€ paid in 2014 and 1100 applications contracted). Programme for financial support of agriculture is implemented by Sector for direct payments in agriculture and the programme for financial support of rural development is implemented by Sector for project approval and Sector for authorization of payments.

Additionally, since 2009, AFSARD has been implementing IPARD (1800 applications, 530 contracts, 200 paid contracts for roughly 4 M€ of cumulated payments). Sectors for project approval, authorization of payments, on the spot control, financial issues (Units for execution of payments and for accounting), general and legal affairs (Units for legal affairs, for public procurement and for general and archive affairs), internal audit, information and communication technology (Unit for referent price database) and, Unit for human resource development are involved in the implementation of IPARD.

Legislation

The Law on Agriculture and Rural Development (Official Gazette no. 49/10;49/10;53/11;126/12;15/13;69/13 and 106/13) was enacted and all aspects relevant for the implementation of this twinning project are regulated within the Law on Establishment of Agency for Financial Support of Agricultural and Rural Development, 2007 (Official Gazette - No72/07;5/09 and 43/14).

The Agency for Financial Support in Agriculture and Rural Development was given a mandate with the Law on establishing the Agency which came into force on 02.06.2007.

IPA II Regulations:

IPA II Framework Council Regulation 211/2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II); Common Implementing Regulation_ 236/2014 establishing common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for external action; Commission Implementing Regulation 447/2014 on the specific rules for implementing the IPA II Regulation.

Framework Agreement (IPA II)

Sectoral Agreement (IPARD II)

Justification

As a candidate country, the Beneficiary Country has access to all five IPA components as according to the IPA Framework Regulation No. 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). Concerning IPA Component V (IPARD), the first IPARD Programme

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was adopted by the Commission on 28 February 2008, and the IPARD II Programme on 13 February 2015 by Commission Decision C(2015) 760. IPARD I programme should run until 2017 and IPARD

II from 2017. IPARD II may start earlier but with a limited scope, focusing on the implementation of new accredited measures.

The overall objective of the IPARD Programme is to enable the beneficiary country to get ready for effective implementation of structural funds under EARDF upon accession, as well as to improve the competitiveness of agricultural holdings and food industry, bringing them into compliance with Community standards, while ensuring sustainable environment and socio-economic development of rural areas through increased economic activities and employment opportunities.

Three measures are currently being implemented under IPARD I:

Under Priority Axis 1, Measure 101 "Investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings" and Measure 103 "Investments in physical assets concerning processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products", with focus on the fruit and vegetable (fresh and processing), grapes and wine, milk and dairy and meat and meat products sub-sectors;

Under Priority Axis 3, Measure 302 "Farm diversification and business development" targeting the assistance towards support for establishment of micro-enterprises and crafts in rural areas and support to rural tourism development.

Up to this point, ASFARD is accredited for these three measures, and accreditation of Measure 501 "Technical assistance" is in final stage (conferral mission took place in November 2014).

Additional support in the implementation of IPARD is needed in order to increase the absorption capacity for of IPARD funds. The results achieved so far are rather disappointing in large de-commitment of funds have happened: 60% of the allocation for 2010 and more than 90% of 2011 allocation (in total around 35 M€ of de-committed funds).

The main difficulties faced during the implementation of the programme are: i) lack of resources of potential beneficiaries for pre-financing projects, ii) lack of support to potential beneficiaries at the application stage, iii) complexity of the application file (high number of programme criteria), iv) huge number of controls and time needed to approve applications, v) limited scope of the measures included in the programme, vi) insufficient targeted promotion of the programme, vii) insufficient administrative capacity in AFSARD and, viii) in general, the weak popularity of the programme.

In the framework of the implementation of IPARD II, the beneficiary country decided to include new measures in the programme and to start preparation for accreditation:

- Measure 301 "Investments in rural public infrastructure". The accreditation package is currently being supported by a twinning light project (Assistance to IPARD Agency for Preparing of Accreditation of "Investments in Rural Infrastructure", December 2014- June 2015);
- Measure 304 "Advisory Services" and Measure 202 "Implementation of Local Development Strategies - LEADER approach". The accreditation package is currently being supported by the service contract "Preparation of new IPARD Measures (LEADER and Advisory Services) to be implemented under IPARD II", February 2015- June 2016;
- Measure 201 "Agri-environment measure and organic farming". The preparation of this Measure was supported through the project "Development and implementation of Agri-environment measures", November 2010 – May 2012. It is also planned to request the accreditation of this Measure but already prepared document would have to be revised against IPARD II rules.

Existing Measures (101, 103 and 302), in addition to Measures 501 and 301, are already part of adopted IPARD II Programme, but other new Measures would have to be included in IPARD II Programme.

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Even though the accreditation packages for these new measures should be finalized by ongoing projects, it is likely that accreditation Authorities will further request changes and improvements. Re-accreditation (against IPARD II) of already accredited measures will have to be carried out and AFSARD may need additional support in this area.

There is therefore a need for technical support in the following areas:

- Strengthening of administrative capacities of AFSARD;
- Support to the re-accreditation process of existing IPARD measures as well to the accreditation of new IPARD measures.

Linked activities

The below listed projects are complementing and not overlapping with the activities programmed under this twinning fiche:

Project title: National-wide establishing of the LPIS.

Donor: IPA TAIB 2008.

Duration: 30.08.2010 - 30.11.2011.

Description: Capacity building in establishing LPIS.

Project title: Development and implementation of Agri-environment Measure.

Donor: Project funded by the European Union - IPA-TAIB 2008.

Duration: November 2010 – May 2012.

Description: Preparation of Agri-environment Measure. The project concerns strengthening of the capacity within the MAFWE to carry out the programming and monitoring and evaluation of such Measure as well as establishment of appropriate systems for implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation within AFSARD.

Project title: Organic Agricultural Production and Quality Protection of Agricultural Products.

Donor: Project funded by the European Union - IPA-TAIB 2009.

Duration: 21.04.2013– 20.11.2014.

Description: The project has provided assistance in strengthening of the administrative capacity of the MAFWE in Quality Protection Policy and Organic Agricultural Production.

Project title: Further upgrade of the Land Parcel Identification System within the Integrated Administration and Control System.

Donor: Project funded by the European Union - IPA-TAIB 2009.

Duration: 15.01.2013 – 15.04. 2014.

Description: The project has provided assistance to MAFWE and AFSARD in further development and strengthening of capacities for the management and implementation of LPIS.

Project title: Gradual introduction of Cross Compliance into direct payment scheme.

Donor: Project funded by the European Union - IPA-TAIB 2009.

Duration: 19.09.2013 – ongoing.

Description: Capacity building of MAFWE and AFSARD in the area of Gradual introduction of Cross-compliance into the direct payments scheme.

Project title: Twinning light project Assistance to IPARD Agency for Preparing of Accreditation of “Investments in rural infrastructure”.

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Donor: Project funded by the European Union - IPA-TAIB 2010.

Duration: 12 December 2014 – 12 June 2015.

Description: The purpose of the project is to strengthen the capacity of AFSARD related to the preparation and implementation of Measure 301 "Investments in rural infrastructure".

Project title: Introduction of new IPARD Measures (Advisory Services and LEADER Approach) to be implemented under IPARD II.

Donor: Project funded by the European Union – IPA-TAIB 2010.

Duration: 02 February 2015 – ongoing.

Description: Capacity building of beneficiary institutions and relevant stakeholders for the future implementation of the LEADER approach and Advisory service Measure in line with IPARD II requirements; To support the establishment of the National Rural Network to enhance the stakeholders' role in the programming and implementation of IPARD and to acts as platform for exchange of experience in projects preparation and implementation; To strengthen the institutions providing advisory services to farmers and micro and small enterprises.

3.2 Results

The following mandatory results, which should be jointly achieved by the MS and BC Twinning Partners, will directly support the achievement of the project's purpose:

Result 1: The administrative capacity of AFSARD is increased.

To achieve the afore-mentioned mandatory result, the following intermediary results will be achieved:

Result 1.1: An audit of the administrative capacities of AFSARD including staff, equipment, IT equipment, and working procedures against existing tasks and future tasks of the agency, is conducted.

The audit methodology and the exact audit scope is to be agreed between twinning partners at the beginning of the project.

Result 1.2: Based on audit findings, recommendations to strengthen administrative capacities of AFSARD are formulated.

Result 1.3: In agreement with AFSARD, key recommendations (mainly but not limited to staff training staff and improvement of working procedures) are implemented.

Agreed activities to strengthen administrative capacities will be incorporated into the work plan.

The measurable indicator for result 1 are: Number of staff trained – Number of audit recommendations successfully implemented.

Result2: Re-accreditation process of existing IPARD measures (101,103, 302 and 501) is supported in light of IPARD II programme.

At the beginning of the project, twinning partners will assess the work already performed in this area and will agree on the activities to be performed in order to achieve this result.

The measurable indicator is: Existing IPARD Measures (101, 103, 302, and 501) are re-accredited against IPARD II.

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Result 3: The process of accreditation of new IPARD measures (Advisory Services; LEADER Approach, Agri-environment and, Rural Infrastructure) is supported in light of the new IPARD II programme.

At the beginning of the project, twinning partners will assess the work already performed in this area and will agree on the activities to be performed in order to achieve this result.

The measurable indicator is: New IPARD Measures "Advisory Services; LEADER Approach, Agri-environment and, Rural Infrastructure" are accredited against IPARD II.

3.3 Activities

The Twinning project should not be a one-way technical assistance from a Member State to a Beneficiary Country. It must help to introduce and share EU wide best practices in connection with Community legislation and specific needs of the Beneficiary Country in the field of further strengthening administrative capacity of AFSARD.

The twinning fiche is designed in order to provide large flexibility to twinning partners in selecting the most relevant activities that could contribute to strengthen AFSARD administrative capacity.

This logic is reflected in the choice to start with an audit of AFSARD administrative capacity which will allow identifying the major bottlenecks and weaknesses in the implementation of the different programmes. It is therefore recommended to give to the audit the largest scope possible as many of AFSARD staff is multi-tasks, working on different programmes. The activities to strengthen administrative capacities will then be selected, further developed and will be part of the work plan. The strengthening of AFSARD capacity will focus in priority on IPARD implementation.

The Twinning assistance will be provided in the form of know-how transfer, and will be delivered through:

- Providing advices, coaching sessions, and Sharing of experience;
- Implementing tailor made training programmes based on a training needs assessments;
- Organizing seminars, workshops and conferences;
- Supporting the development of manuals, procedures, guidelines, check-lists, etc.
- Organizing study visits: Study visits will be organized for representatives of the relevant Sectors of AFSARD (Sector for Project Approval, Sector for Authorization of Payments, Sector for On the Spot Control and Sector for Internal Audit) to a Member State for exchange of best practices and experience. Study visits will have to be focused and with specified objectives in order to be efficient. The comparative qualitative and economic advantage of a study visit, compared to the activity taking place in the Beneficiary Country, is crucial for its eligibility.
- Performing assessment, developing lessons to be learned: Every activity under the training project shall be assessed and evaluated through specific tools. The results will be compiled as well as lessons to be learned and presented to the Steering Committee, and integrated in the quarterly reports.

3.4 Means/ Input from the MS Partner Administration

The project will be implemented in the form of a Twinning contract between the Beneficiary country and an EU Member State. The implementation of the project requires one Project Leader with

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responsibility for the overall coordination of project activities, one Resident Twinning Adviser to manage project activities, and a pool of short-term Experts within the limits of the budget. It is essential that the team has sufficiently broad expertise to cover all the areas included in the project description.

The interested Member State institutions shall include in its proposal the CVs of the designated Project Leader and Resident Twinning Adviser. The details of implementation of the Twinning Project will be agreed upon during the preparation of the work plan.

3.4.1 Profile and tasks of the Project Leader

The Project Leader from the Member State must be a high-ranking public servant of a Member State administration or equivalent, but preferably engaged in issues of international cooperation and/or EU related issues within the Ministry of Agriculture/Paying Agency of the Member State, with relevant working experience of at least 5 years.

The MS Project Leader will continue to work at his/her Member State administration but will devote some of his/her time to conceive, supervise and co-ordinate the overall thrust of the Twinning project, and ensure the attainment of the projected results. The Project Leader is fully responsible for co-ordination of the work of the experts.

The MS Project Leader will manage the implementation of the project with the Project Leader from the Beneficiary Country and is expected to devote a minimum of 3 days per month to the project in his/her home administration with an on-site visit at least every 3 months. The Project Leader's seniority will ensure his/her ability to mobilize the necessary staff in support of the efficient implementation of the project. In addition, he/she should coordinate, on the Member State's side, the Project Steering Committee (PSC), which will meet in Skopje at least every three months.

He/she will be supported by his/her Member State administration for logistic, accounting and administrative affairs.

Qualification and skills

- The Project Leader from the Member State must be a high-ranking public servant of a Member State administration or equivalent, preferably engaged in issues of international cooperation and/or EU related issues within the Ministry of Agriculture/Paying Agency of the Member State;
- At least a University degree preferably in the field of Administration, Economics, Agriculture or similar discipline relevant to the project;
- At least 5 years of relevant experience in the field of management/implementation of EU CAP, preferably in Paying Agency;
- Previous experience in the management of international projects will be considered as an asset;
- Fluent knowledge of spoken and written English.

Tasks:

- Conceive, supervise and coordinate the overall preparation of the project;
- Coordinate and monitor the overall implementation of the project including coordination and direction of the MS TW partner;
- Co-ordinate MS experts' work and availability;
- Communicate with the beneficiary, CFCD and EUD;
- Ensure the backstopping functions and financial management;
- Guarantee the successful implementation of the Project's Work Plan;

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- Co-chairing the regular Project Steering Committee meeting with the Beneficiary Country Project Leader;
- Prepare and draft interim, quarterly and final report.

Beneficiary Country Project Leader (BC PL)

The BC Project Leader will act as the counterpart of the MS PL and will ensure close cooperation in the overall steering, co-ordination and management of the project from the beneficiary side. He/she will support the Twinning project team in organizational and technical matters and will also coordinate the Project Steering Committee (PSC) on behalf of the BC. The role of the BC PL and the MS PL are complementary.

3.4.2 Profile and tasks of the Resident Twinning Adviser

One Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA) will be appointed, and he/she will be located in the premises of AFSARD in the Beneficiary country.

The secondment of the Resident Twinning Adviser will last 21 months, during which he/she will be responsible for the direct implementation of the project under the overall supervision of the MS Project Leader.

He/she will come from an EU Member State to work on a full time and day-to-day basis with the beneficiary administration. The Resident Twinning Adviser will have a key role in the coordination of the inputs required for the successful implementation of the project activities. He/she shall be supported by short-term experts.

Qualifications and skills of the Resident Twinning Adviser

- be a national of a Member State of the European Union;
- be a civil servant or equivalent staff seconded to work within departments/units related to implementation of CAP (preferably "investment measures") in a Member State;
- have University degree in Administration, Economics, Agriculture, or similar discipline relevant to the project;
- have minimum 5 years of professional experience in Paying Agency in the field related to management / implementation of EU CAP;
- Previous experience in the management of international projects will be considered as an asset;
- be fluent in written and spoken English.

Tasks of the Resident Twinning Adviser

As to the general responsibility of the day-to-day implementation of the Twinning project in the Beneficiary Country, the Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA) tasks will include:

- Coordination of all project activities and experts' inputs in the country;
- To provide technical advice, support and assist the beneficiary institution in the context of a predetermined work plan;
- Make recommendations on the organizational structure optimization;
- Ensuring day-to-day implementation of the Twinning project in the BC;
- Ensuring smooth correlation between the activities, deadlines and the envisaged results in the Work Plan;
- Ensuring smooth implementation of the different activities delivered;
- To coordinate and organize training activities;

- To provide advice and assistance in drafting legal, application acts, instructions, manuals etc. for implementation of the new legislation and supporting documents;
- Assess continuously the Twinning Project in all stages and provide link to compare it with the specified benchmarks/results and time-frame;
- Prepare the material for regular monitoring and reporting;
- Preparation of operative side letters;
- Taking corrective actions, if necessary, inside the terms of the signed contract.

RTA Counterpart

An RTA Counterpart will be assigned by AFSARD.

3.4.3 Profile and tasks of the short-term experts

Specialized staff will be made available by the Twinning Partner to support the implementation of activities. Specific and technical matters not directly covered by the Resident Twinning Adviser can be taken over by a pool of short-term Experts within the limits of the budget. The detailed input of experts shall be established when drawing up the twinning work-plan.

Qualifications and skills:

Short-term Experts will:

- have a University degree in Administration, Agriculture, Economics, or similar discipline relevant to the project;
- be civil servants or equivalent staff seconded to work within departments/units of a Paying Agency in charge of the implementation of agriculture and rural development programmes in a Member State;
- have at least 3 years relevant professional experience in the implementation of EU CAP; Related to result 1.1, 3 years of experience in audit in the context of EU CAP is at least required.
- be fluent in English, both oral and written.

Tasks:

More specifically, the Short-Term experts will:

- Prepare and implement specific tasks based mainly on practical cases and experience in compliance with their mission description and in accordance with project activities;
- Provide practical expertise/advice to relevant staff for execution of different tasks related to the project;

3.4.4 Profile and tasks of the RTA assistants

3.5.4.1 RTA Assistant:

The RTA will be provided with a full-time **RTA assistant** acting as an assistant for technical and organizational support. The assistant will be contracted according to Twinning rules and paid from the Twinning budget. The assistant will be selected through an open call. The role of RTA Assistant is to support the RTA in the project management. In addition, the assistant will be responsible for organization of meetings, seminars etc. and their logistics. The RTA assistant will also act as translator/interpreter, when necessary.

3.5.4.2 Full-time translator / interpreter:

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A full-time translator / interpreter will be selected through an open call and will be contracted according to the Twinning rules and paid from the Twinning budget. The full-time translator / interpreter will be involved in all necessary project activities (training sessions, translation of project documents/reports and materials, organizational activities, etc.). The role of the translator / interpreter will be to provide translation and editing as well as interpretation services to the Twinning project in general.

4. Institutional framework

The Contracting Authority for this Twinning project is Central Financing and Contracting Department within the Ministry of Finance.

Main beneficiary and coordinator of the project will be AFSARD.

A project Steering Committee (SC) will be established at the beginning of the project comprising senior representatives of the Beneficiary Institution, the Delegation of the European Union, the Secretariat for European affairs and the Central Financing and Contracting Department within the Ministry of Finance, and will be co-chaired by the MS PL and BC PL.

The SC will monitor, supervise and co-ordinate the overall progress and implementation of the project. The SC will provide guidance for the different components of the project, will define priorities, approve and monitor budgets and approve the results.

Reports will follow the templates of Annex C4 of the Common Twinning Manual. In addition to formal reporting stages, the twinning partners are obliged to inform in writing the Contracting Authority as well as the final beneficiary of the action of any critical aspects or conditions of project implementation, or any amendments/modifications necessary within the budget.

All reports must be produced in the English in electronic and hard copy. These reports shall be signed by both Project Leaders. Each report must be presented in electronic format one week prior to the Steering Committee meetings and in two hard copies to the following addresses:

Central Financing and Contracting Department

Ministry of Finance

Dame Gruev 12, 1000 Skopje

The final versions should incorporate any comments and discussions during the Steering Committee meetings and be approved by the Steering Committee.

5. Budget

The project will be implemented through a Twinning Contract estimated at a maximum of EUR 1.550.000 EUR (out of which 95% IPA funds and 5% National co-financing).

Twinning Contract	Total (EUR)	IPA Community contribution		National Public contribution	
	1.550,000	EUR	%	EUR	%
		1.472.500	95	77.500	5

The co-financing requirement foreseen under IPA will be considered fulfilled according to the provision of the relevant Financing Agreement.

The budget for the project is based on 21 months twinning partnership.

In addition to the IPA and National co-financing as part of the Twinning Contract amount, as a rule, all twinning contracts must provide additional co-financing on the side of the Beneficiary Institution (AFSARD), for the purpose of covering costs not covered under the project budget as per Twinning manual, point 5.13, as follows:

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- Direct and indirect cost of the Beneficiary administration, civil servants and national private experts working for the project;
- Travel by the beneficiary officials from their capitals to a MS or between MS;
- Organization of seminars/ workshops/ trainings (incl. hall rental, printing seminar materials and other logistical support).
- Facilities for the Member State experts: adequately equipped office space; telephone; e-mail services; fax; photocopiers; computer; internet access; secretarial support; access to information.

The following expenses shall be covered with the project funds:

- Visibility Cost;
- Audit certificate cost;

The project will be located in the premises of AFSARD. The Agency will ensure appropriate facilities and basic equipment for the work of the experts. This includes administrative support, office space, telephone and fax and other necessary facilities. This contribution should also include logistical support for various training activities, including selection of trainees (in consultation with the Member State experts), as well as providing the Member State experts with the documents necessary for project implementation.

The twinning partner (project beneficiary) shall provide all available assistance to solve unforeseen problems that the Member State twinning partner(s) might face.

6. Implementation arrangements

6.1 Implementing Agency responsible for tendering, contracting and accounting

The Central Financing and Contracting Department (CFCD) of the Ministry of Finance will be responsible for tendering, contracting, payments, accounting and overall supervision of the implementation of the project. The Central Financing and Contracting Department (CFCD) of the Ministry of Finance will be the Contracting Authority and will be responsible for all administrative and procedural aspects of the tendering process, contracting matters and financial management including payment of project activities. The Head of CFCD will act as the Programme Authorising Officer (PAO) of the project:

Mrs. Radica Koceva (PAO)
 Head of Central Financing and Contracting Department
 Ministry of Finance
 Tel: +389-2-3255 374
 Fax: +389-2- 3255 723
 E-mail: radica.koceva@finance.gov.mk

6.2 Main counterpart in the Beneficiary Country including contact person and contact details

The Head of Department for European Union and Senior Programme Officer (SPO) within MAFWE will act as beneficiary contact person:

Ms. Maja Lazareska (SPO)
 Head of Department for European Union, MAFWE

BC Project Leader
 Mrs. Maja Brajovik
 Head of Internal Audit Department, AFSARD

The following persons will be counterparts of the key personnel of the MS Partner Administration:

RTA counterpart:

Mrs. Biljana Vukovic

Head of Department for Project Approval, AFSARD

6.3 Contract

One (1) Twinning contract is foreseen for the implementation of the above mentioned activities.

7. Implementation schedule (indicative)

The estimated date for the launching of the call for proposals is: April 2015

The estimated date for start of project activities is November 2015

The project implementation period (duration of the work plan) is 21 months after the commencement date of the Project.

The overall execution period of this Twinning contract is 24 months, with an implementation period of the Action of 21 months (The execution period of the contract shall enter into force upon the date of notification by the Contracting Authority of the contract signed by all parties, whereas it shall end 3 months after the implementation period of the Action).

8. Sustainability

The Beneficiary administration is fully committed to ensuring a long term impact of the activities of this Twinning Project. The expected combined impact of the components of this project will bring about significant improvement in the administrative capacities of AFSARD. The project will have impact on improving skills, procedures, practices. An ongoing review of key issues impacting on sustainability will start from the beginning of project implementation, based on the results and outcomes that should be achieved over time. The objective of this review is to facilitate the sustainable impact of outcomes beyond the end of the project.

The Member State Twinning partners shall transfer their best practices and know-how necessary to achieve the mandatory results to the Beneficiary administration. Staff benefiting from trainings shall transfer knowledge through subsequent training to their colleagues. Moreover and at the end of the implementation period a lesson learnt seminar will be held to disseminate the results and the best practices acquired and to foresee future relevant activities.

9. Cross-cutting issues

Cross-cutting issues have to be systematically addressed during the project lifetime.

The mainstreaming of the cross cutting issues is regarded on two different levels:

- Ensuring that the internal policies, structure or operating procedures of the beneficiary agency will conform to and promote the relevant principles outlined per section below;
- Ensuring that the products, outputs produced by the beneficiaries (e.g. laws, regulations, policies, and strategies) will conform to and promote the relevant principles outlined per section below.

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9.1 Civil Society development and dialogue

Civil society issues will be taken into consideration if such issues where relevant and appropriate in the project.

9.2 Environmental considerations

Any ecological friendly initiative which can be taken must be implemented.

9.3 Equal Opportunity and non-discrimination

This principle will have to be reflected in the training activities provided by the project.

9.4 Minority and vulnerable groups

Where the main reference is the Ohrid Framework Agreement, in an EU context, the training activities will be take in consideration.

9.5 Good governance, with particular attention to fight against corruption

Specific action instruments for the *good governance*, with particular attention to *fight against corruption*, will be incorporated on a horizontal basis, as part of the training activities. Also, working procedures within AFSARD, shall include mechanisms to detect and fight against corruption. This principle is particularly sensitive in AFSARD where the staff can be confronted to "corruption opportunities" in the implementation of the different programmes.

9.6 Communication and publicity

All requirements to ensure the visibility of EU financing will be fulfilled in accordance with Regulation (EC). N. 718/2007².

10. Conditionality and sequencing

10.1 Conditionality

The project includes the following conditionalities:

- Endorsement by all key stakeholders of the Twinning fiche;
- Strengthened and ensured administrative capacities (staffing) of the beneficiaries at the start of the project activities as foreseen in accordance with the National Plan for the Adoption of the EU *acquis* - NPAA (Annex 3), assuring the appropriate absorption capacity for the foreseen activities and developments and their future implementation;
- Appointment of counterpart personnel by the beneficiaries before the launch of the tender process;
- Allocation of working space and facilities by the beneficiaries for technical assistance before the launch of the tender process;
- Participation by the beneficiaries in the tender process as per EU regulations;
- Organisation, selection and appointment of members of working groups, steering and coordination committees, seminars by the beneficiaries as per work plan of the project;
- Appointing the relevant staff by the beneficiaries to participate in training activities as per work plan.

² See Article 62 and 63 of Regulation(EC) N. 718/2007

10.2 Sequencing

Keys milestones will be:

- 1) Approval of the Twinning project fiche;
- 2) Circulation of the Twinning Project Fiche to Member State National Contact Points;
- 3) Completion of the selection of the twinning partner;
- 4) Signature of the Twinning contract, including the Twinning Work Plan;
- 5) Commencement of the implementation of the twinning (inter alia, the arrival in the country of the Resident Twinning Adviser);
- 6) End of the implementation period;
- 7) Submission of the final report.

Annexes to the Twinning fiche

ANNEX 1: Logical framework matrix in standard format

ANNEX 2: Organogram PA

Annex 1 – Logical framework matrix in standard format

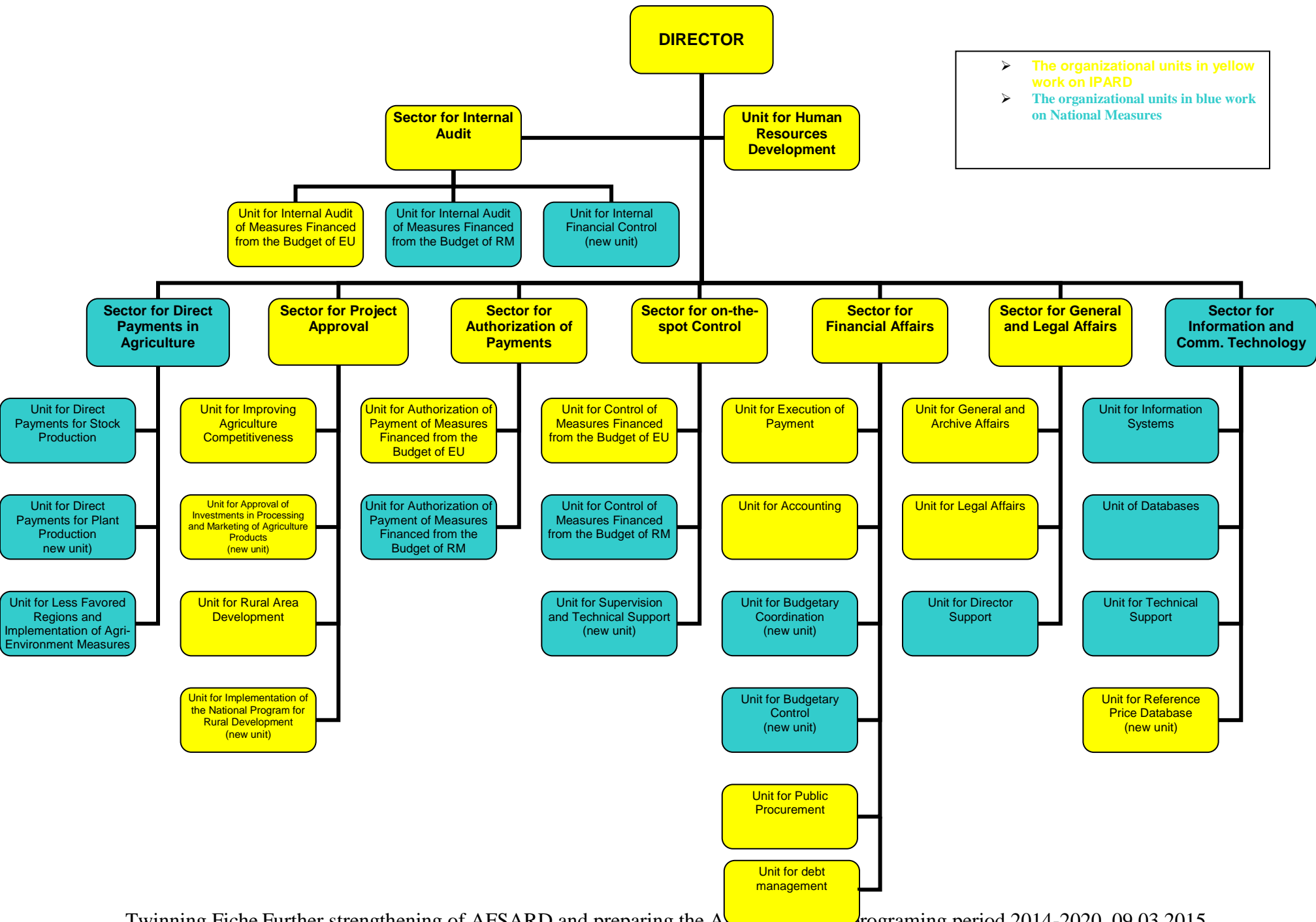
LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX	Further strengthening of AFSARD and preparing the Agency for new programming period 2014-2020		
		Total budget: EUR 1.550.000	IPA budget: EUR 1.472.500

Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of verification
The overall objective of the project is to contribute to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD)	Strengthened capacities at administrative level for implementing agricultural acquis	Final Report EC Reports

Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of verification	Assumptions
The purpose of the project is to increase the capacity of the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development (AFSARD) in the implementation of the accredited IPARD measures and of the measures to be accredited as well as to support AFSARD in the preparation for accreditation of new measures	- time necessary for processing IPARD applications and payment applications (old measures) decreased by 20% . - calls are published for new measures.	IPARD monitoring data	- Level of staff in the Agency –against workload – does not decrease. - Staff turn-over does not deteriorate.

<p>At the beginning of the project, twinning partners will assess the work already performed in this area and will agree on the activities to be performed in order to achieve this result.</p> <p>Result 3: The process of accreditation of new IPARD measures (Advisory Services; LEADER Approach, Agri-environment and, Rural Infrastructure) is supported in light of the new IPARD II programme.</p> <p>At the beginning of the project, twinning partners will assess the work already performed in this area and will agree on the activities to be performed in order to achieve this result.</p>	<p>- New IPARD Measures "Advisory Services; LEADER Approach, Agri-environment and, Rural Infrastructure" are accredited against IPARD II.</p>		
<p>Activities</p>	<p>Means</p>	<p>Specification of costs</p>	<p>Assumptions</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and coaching sessions; • Tailor made training programme, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Twinning contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA € 1.472.500or 95%; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AFSARD mobilized all necessary staff during the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminars workshops and conferences; • Manuals, procedures and check lists; • Study visit • Sharing of experience • Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Member State Project Leader; • One Member State Resident Twinning Adviser; • Short-term experts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National co-financing € 77.500 or 5 %; • Total € 1.550.000. 	<p>implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MS mobilized adequate technical expertise to perform the activities foreseen in the project. - Strong cooperation between twinning partners to agree on priorities
<p>Preconditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened administrative capacities at the start of project activities. • Key staff in beneficiary institutions appointed. 			



> The organizational units in yellow work on IPARD
 > The organizational units in blue work on National Measures