

STANDARD TWINNING PROJECT FICHE

1. Basic Information

1.1 Publication notice reference: EuropeAid/ 137-147/IH/ACT/MK

1.2 Programme:

Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) Operational Programme Human Resources Development (OPHRD), 2013, (Indirect Management mode)

1.3 Twinning Number: MK 13 IB SO 02

1.4 Title

Further improvement of the system for development and implementation of the National Qualification Framework

1.5 Sector:

Education/ social sector

Multi – Annual Operational Programme HRD 2007- 2013

Priority Axis 2 Education and training, Measure 2.1: Enhancing synergies and links between education and labour market

1.6 Beneficiary country:

Beneficiary country¹

2. Objectives

2.1 Overall Objective(s):

The overall objective of this project is to support the process of further improvement of the system for development and implementation of the National Qualification Framework in alignment with the EQF.

2.2 Project purpose:

The purpose of this twinning project aims for strengthening of the national capacities for effective and efficient functioning of the system for National Qualification Framework.

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

This twinning project contributes to the efforts of the country to implementation of: main priority of the Government is to promote sustainable economic growth and competition, higher employment rate, increasing living standard and quality of life. This priority is in line with the

¹As per Amendments to the Financing Agreement concerning the Multi-Annual Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” for Community Assistance from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance under the Human Resources Development Component – CCI 2007 MK 05 IPO 001, entered into force on 19 December 2012

overall objective of OPHRD (2007-2013). The overall strategic objective of the Operational Programme is to foster the development of human resources, in particular by improving the quantity and quality of human capital, leading to more and better jobs, higher growth and development and the increased national competitiveness at international level.

The European Council of December 2005 granted the candidate status to the Country. In February 2008 the EU Council adopted the Accession Partnership, which encompassed the key reform priorities for the country.

The Framework Agreement between the Government of the Beneficiary Country and the Commission of the European Communities on the Rules for Co-Operation Concerning EC - Financial Assistance to the Beneficiary Country in the Framework of the Implementation of the Assistance under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) was ratified and published in the "Official Gazette" No 18/2008 dated as of 5 February 2008. As of 1 January 2007, the Beneficiary Country is eligible for all 5 components of the Instrument for Pre - Accession Assistance².

- National Strategy for the Development of Education 2005 – 2015³ – Ministry of Education and Science, 2006; The National Strategy for the Development of Education covers the 2005-2015 period and addresses numerous issues of inclusion, including: non-discrimination; improved physical access to schools through provision of transport; increasing participation in education through awareness-raising in ethnic communities; expanding coverage of pre-school education; and extending compulsory primary education from eight to nine years.

Implementation of the strategy is now underway and some elements of inclusion foreseen in the legislation are coming on-line, such as: financial support for families receiving social benefits who keep their children in school; the provision of transport for students from outlying areas; and compulsory secondary education. The Programme of the Government for 2006-2010 goes a step further, demanding compulsory secondary education and provision of textbooks. Meanwhile, the issues of inclusion and equity (including democracy, non-discrimination, and respect for individual differences, cultural diversity and the integration of pupils with special needs) are addressed in a separate chapter of the 2007 Concept of Nine-year Primary Education. At the secondary level, the Ministry of Education has made provision for elective activities on the themes of Civic Culture (in grammar schools/gymnasiums) and A Culture of Protection, Peace, and Tolerance (in both grammar and vocational schools).

- **Strategy for Vocational Education and Training in the context of Lifelong learning 2013-2020**, Vocational education and training is a system that is under pressure to modernize over the last decades in the country. Besides globalization processes in the economic and political sphere , technological innovations have caused rapid change in the types of jobs and content of the work in the national economy , with permanent changes in the demand for new

² IPA Council Regulation (EC) No. 1085/2006, adopted on 17 July 2006. January 10, 2010.
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_210/l_21020060731en00820093.pdf

³ National Strategy for the Development of Education 2005 – 2015 , Ministry of Education and Science, Skopje, 2004

skills and qualifications; open market cause enlargement of the possibility of working as an individual ranking the national and international level and complexity of the demand for new skills in the labor market dramatically determine the structure, organization and content of vocational education and training. Education and VET qualifications to be acquired through: training, vocational education for 3 and 4 years post - secondary vocational education and higher vocational education (public and private High schools and vocational college programs that are not part of the academic programs).

- **Strategy for Adult Education and Action Plan 2010-2015**, the mission of the Center is to establish a functional, modern and EU-compatible system of adult education in the context of lifelong learning that will offer high quality education and opportunities for gaining qualifications in accordance with the needs of the population, increasing employability and entrepreneurship needs labour market and contribute to the economic, social and personal development.

- **Lifelong Learning** is one of the concepts underpinning the National Strategy for the Development of Education 2005 – 2015⁴ and it is also the key instrument needed to raise the level of education among young and adult people which is a major challenge for the Beneficiary country society.⁵

- **The EC Progress Report 2012** On 10th of October 2012 the European commission published the 2012 progress report covering the period from October 2011 to September 2012. Bellow is the part covering the progress that has been done in the area of qualifications:

4.26. Chapter 26: Education and culture

..... „As regards European standards on education, training and youth, laws on primary, Secondary and higher education were amended. Strategies were developed to minimize the ‘brain drain’ of the highly educated and to reduce school violence. An action plan for introducing new kindergartens in rural areas was prepared, as access to pre-school education has remained limited to urban areas. A strategy for vocational education 2013-2020 was adopted. Adult education activities continued with new training programmes. A Council for higher education reforms was created to ensure that the university curricula reflect the needs of the labour market. The national qualifications framework remains to be developed. A programme for the development of sports until 2017 was adopted,,.....⁶

- **National Programme for Adoption of Acquis - NPAA 2013⁷ – Part 3.26 Education and culture⁸**. The foreseen activities are further harmonization of the National legislation for NQF and strengthening the administrative capacities in the relevant institutions, and

⁴ National Strategy for the Development of Education 2005 – 2015 , Ministry of Education and Science, Skopje, 2004

⁵ National Programme for the Development of Education with accompanying Programme Documents 2005 2015, Ministry of Education and Science, Skopje 2005

⁶ **EC progress report 2013**

http://www.sep.gov.mk/content/Dokumenti/EN/mk_rapport_2013_en_rev.pdf

⁷ <http://www.sep.gov.mk/data/file/NPAA/NPAA2013NarativenDel.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.sep.gov.mk/data/file/NPAA/NPAA2013NarativenDel.pdf>

- **Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA)** signed with the EU in 2001. By doing so, and according to the Article 52 of the Agreement, the country undertook the obligation of undertaking the necessary steps for establishing national qualifications framework.

3. Description

3.1 Background and justification:

This operation aims to develop a comprehensive National Qualification Framework (NQF) in the country aligned with the European Qualification Framework (EQF). The National Qualification Framework aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystem and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society. It will further contribute for establishment of institutional wide network for implementation of the NQF. European Qualifications Framework (EQF)⁹ describes a national qualification framework as part of a national qualifications system which serves as an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved. Agreed upon by the European institutions in 2008, the EQF is being put in practice across Europe. It encourages countries to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF so that all new qualifications issued from 2012 carry a reference to an appropriate EQF level. It has two principal aims: to promote citizens' mobility between countries and to facilitate their lifelong learning.

Ministry of Education and Science is actively participating in the process for development and implementation of NQF and so far Working group was established under its responsibility with an aim to ensure efficient donor coordination and to avoid possible overlapping and alignment with the national priorities, which can be further enhanced. The NQF Working Group was established in order to support the development and implementation of the National Qualification Framework through the involvement of key stakeholders in education and training including ministries and public institutions, providers and the social partners. The Group has prepared a draft document "*Macedonian Qualifications Framework-Starting points*" which was crucial base for the preparation of the Law on National Qualifications Framework¹⁰.

Regarding the EQF-National coordination Point, there is an official nomination signed from the Minister of Education and sent to the European Commission. The EQF National Coordination Point representative regularly and actively participates to the EQF Advisory Group meetings.

The Law on National Qualifications Framework regulates the National Qualifications Framework, levels and sub-levels of qualifications, types of qualifications, scope of qualifications, competent bodies for proposing, adopting and classification of qualifications, competent institutions that shall comply with this Law, and connects the National Framework of qualifications with the European Qualifications Framework and the qualification framework for European area of higher education¹¹. In addition, the Law encourages and promotes lifelong learning, indicates clear links between different parts of the education system, enables international comparability of qualifications, promotes the importance of core and professional competencies, ensures the mobility of participants in the process of education and training, and

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/home_en.htm

¹⁰ "Official Gazette" br.137/2013

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher_education/doc_1290_ek.htm

inclusion in the labour market at national and international level.

This Law shall enter into force on the day of publication in the "Official Gazette", and will be applied as of 30 September 2015. Taking in consideration that the law was prepared in 2012/2013 when the beneficiary country still lacked experience and knowledge in this area, certain omissions were identified during the preparatory activities for establishing the NQF under the provisions of the Law. Indeed, revision of the Law is needed especially in specific areas such as responsibilities of the bodies foreseen within the Law for NQF and also for development of all bylaws etc.

The main responsible body for the overall establishment and implementation of NQF system, validation of qualifications, accreditation and monitoring of institutions, developing new qualifications and decision making, will be the National Board for "*Macedonian Qualifications Framework*". The National Board is consisted of members representing all relevant stakeholders: ministries, social partners and universities. The Board is not yet established. According to the Law, it will be fully operational in 2016 after the Law is applicable.

The qualifications included in the NQF will come from all the areas of education and training whether they are achieved by formal, non-formal or informal learning, with the aim for ensuring quality in the process of accreditation and certification. In addition, implementation of the NQF should take account of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQAVET), the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area developed by the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning and Euro pass documentation.

The NQF system consists of the NQF Unit, NQF Higher education focal point, NQF working group, EQF Referencing Group and the Representatives in the meetings of the EQF advisory group. The Ministry of Education and Science established a Unit specialized for development of NQF, which will be responsible for development and implementation of the NQF. 13 working positions are foreseen within the Unit for NQF within the Rulebook for systematisation of working positions in MES, the indicative timing for recruitment of these employees is March 2015.

The project will result in change of the institutional framework by strengthening the capacities of the Unit for National Qualification Framework and the National Council for NQF within the Ministry. **The responsibilities of the Unit for National Qualification Framework will be developed, but not limited to the following areas:**

- Defining the roles and tasks of the employee in the Unit as part of the working responsibilities;
- Planning, developing, implementing and monitoring of the national system for NQF and action plans;
- Cooperation with the Employment Service Agency, State Statistical Office, VET, Bureau for Development of Education and institutions, that are source of information for analysis and assessment of qualifications, labour relation issues, social dialogue etc.;
- Setting qualitative and quantitative indicators, data collecting, processing and analysis;

- Setting up a database of qualifications; managing the database in coordination with other institutions; assessing (evaluating) the effects of the adopted programmes; assessing and investigating the means to link the database to the European Portal on Learning Opportunities and Qualifications and, thereafter establishing this link.
- Statistical research; periodical reporting upon progress in the implementation of National Qualification system and plans.

3.2 Linked activities (other international and national initiatives):

3.2.1 Linked projects supported by other donor assistance:

1. Title: PHARE project Vocational Education and Training Programme - second phase
Donor: EU Programme – PHARE 1.189.300,00 EUR
Duration: 05.05.2002- 06.03.2004
Description: Project objective is to assist in completion and dissemination of the process of modernization of Secondary Vocational Education and Training (VET) system started under the Phare1997 VET programme. Measures include: curriculum modernization and adaptation in pilot VET schools; integration of initial and continuing VET within a life-long learning perspective; optimize the structure of the VET system through setting up of a national qualifications framework and preparation of the technical specifications for procurement of equipment.
2. Title: Technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and Science for “Lifelong Learning”
Donor: EU Programme - CARDS 1.268.250,00 EUR
Duration: 13.02.2008- 31.05.2010
Description: The overall project objective is to further improve the quality and effectiveness of the education and training system in the Beneficiary country through a modern system of adult learning in line with the new labour market. The project purposes are to support the development of a lifelong learning system in line with the EU policies in education and training through the creation of a policy framework for an efficient adult learning system, to foster the development and modernization of training providers and courses including a basic skills programme for low-qualified adults, and to increase public awareness of the need for continuous learning so as to ensure a higher level of participation in adult learning in the mid-term. The scope of the work is focused upon policy development, modernization of the adult training system and awareness rising. The project target groups are MoES, BDE, VET Centre, State Education Inspectorate, policy-makers, administrators, researchers, experts, programme authors, teachers, trainers and participants in adult learning, in particular low-skilled adults.
3. Title: “Design and Implementation of NQF” in the area of higher education
Donor: EU Programme - TEMPUS 531.974,00 EUR
Duration: 15.01.2009 –14.01.2012
Description: The overall project goal is focused upon supporting the development of the model of national qualification frame and harmonizing the higher education in the former

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with the European Area of University education.

4. **Title:** Support to the Ministry of Education and Science of the former Yugoslav Republic of for preparation of the Action plan for implementation of the National Qualification Framework.

Donor: British council 17.000 £

Duration: April 2014 to March 2015

Description: The main objective of the project is to Support the Ministry of Education and Science for preparation of the Action plan for implementation of the National Qualification Framework.

5. **Title:** Referencing of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Donor: European Training Foundation

Duration: 15 May 2014- 31 May 2015

Description: The objective is institutional building and preparation towards referencing to EQF after the adoption of the Law on the National Qualifications Framework in 2013. The involvement of relevant stakeholders and partners from the government, the social partners' community, providers of education and training, experts and international organizations is a first premise to gather the necessary dynamics for a promising start.

The main objective of the ETF support is to build capacity and guide the country in preparing a good quality EQF referencing report, based on a participative process, owned and led by the national institutions and complying with EQF referencing criteria and procedures.

6. **Title:** Skills Development and Innovation Support

Donor: World Bank project

Duration: 2014- 2019

Description: Considering the fact that the economic growth, employment and competitiveness depend largely on the existence of a properly trained workforce, through the project "Support to skills and competences development", the activities will contribute to better connectivity of the vocational and higher education to the labor market needs.

7. **Title:** Supply contact for further improvement of the system for development and implementation of NQF

Donor: EU - OPHRD

Duration: Date of contract start 12/2015 – Date of contract end 06/2017 (6 months + 12 months warranty period) 200.000 €

Description: Supply of equipment for developing data-base/register of qualifications and for creation of NQF web-page in order to provide relevant information, publicity of the NQF activities and networking of the relevant stakeholders in the process of development and implementation of the NQF.

3.2 Results:

The following mandatory results will directly support the achievement of the project's purpose:

Mandatory result 1: Relevant legislation regarding the NQF improved

To achieve the aforementioned result the following intermediary results will be achieved:

1. Analysis report from the screening of the existing legislation regarding NQF, including compliance recommendation;
2. Proposals for update of the existing legislation for harmonization of the NQF with the EQF, including bylaws;
3. Update and/or development of rulebooks and protocols relevant for the NQF system,¹²
4. Public awareness raised concerning NQF.

Key indicators of achievement are the following:

1. Analysis report of the existing legislation regarding NQF including compliance recommendation, submitted;
2. Recommendations and draft legal acts for update of the existing legislation for harmonization of the NQF with the EQF, including bylaws;
3. Developed at least two protocols and at least one rulebook relevant for the NQF system;
4. At least two organized events for promotional activities/raising public awareness.

Mandatory result 2: Institutional capacities for introduction of the NQF strengthened

To achieve the aforementioned result the following intermediary results will be achieved:

1. Piloting and testing of the produced materials such as revised rulebooks, protocols and bylaws relevant for NQF system;
2. Analysis on the existing national system for development and implementation of the NQF on structural and system level (institutional and administrative set-up);
3. Development of mechanisms for networking and cooperation between all included bodies from the NQF system and all relevant stakeholders;
4. Enhanced institutional capacities working on the NQF system;
5. Support concerning the functioning of the NQF Management information system.

Key indicators of achievement are the following:

1. Produced and piloted/tested materials such as revised rulebooks, protocols and by laws, improved methodologies relevant for NQF system;
2. Written recommendations on the improvement of the organisational set-up on NQF;

¹² The rulebooks and protocols will be defined and agreed between the Twinning partners according the Recommendations from the screening and analysis of the NQF legislation as a result of the ongoing British council project - Support to the MOES of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for preparation of the Action plan for implementation of the National Qualification Framework, in the process of creation of the working plan

3. Prepared and tested mechanisms for networking and cooperation between all included bodies from the NQF system and all relevant stakeholders;
4. Developed Manuals of procedures for management of the NQF system, for the NQF Unit;
5. Developed analysis, training programme, training materials and staff trained concerning the new system, mechanisms and processes for NQF;
6. Written recommendations on improvement of the functioning of the NQF Management and information system.

Mandatory result 3: Process of development of qualifications for the NQF enhanced

To achieve the aforementioned result the following intermediary results will be achieved:

1. Identification report of the existing qualifications considering all levels of the NQF, and appropriate distribution;
2. Developed/updated and tested Methodology for development of new qualifications for NQF based on the labour market needs;
3. Piloting and testing of two¹³ proposed priority sectors of existing qualifications for NQF;
4. Developed and tested new qualifications for two pilot priority sectors;¹⁴
5. Guidelines of procedures for quality assurance of NQF prepared;
6. Support in preparation of the NQF to EQF Referencing process and report for 2016.

Key indicators of achievement are the following:

1. Identification report of the existing qualifications considering all levels of the NQF prepared and appropriately distributed;
2. Updated and tested Methodology for development of new qualifications for NQF based on the labour market needs;
3. Number of staff trained on the updated and tested methodology for development of new qualifications for NQF based on the labour market needs;
4. Defined structure, content and scope of the sixteen priority sectors of qualifications for NQF;
5. Manual for preparation of descriptors for qualifications prepared;
6. Piloted and tested of two¹⁵ proposed priority sectors of existing qualifications for NQF;
7. Number of developed and tested new qualifications for two pilot priority sectors (depending of the sectors);
8. At least one developed Guideline of procedures for quality assurance of NQF.

3.3 Activities

The Twinning project aims to introduce and share EU wide best practices in connection with EU legislation and specific needs of the Beneficiary Country in the field of NQF. The Twinning project will be implemented by close co-operation between the partners aiming to achieve the mandatory results in sustainable manner.

¹³ The two sectors will be chosen and agreed between the Twinning partners,

¹⁴ The sectors will be defined in the process of creation of the working plan

¹⁵ The two sectors will be chosen and agreed between the Twinning partners,

The proposal made by the MS should include the activities they proposed to achieve the results listed in the fiche. Without listing necessarily all the possible activities, the proposal should be detailed enough to respond adequately to the Twinning Project Fiche.

The set of proposed activities will be further developed with the Twinning partners when drafting the Twinning work plan, keeping in mind that the final list of activities will be decided in cooperation with the Twinning partner. The components are closely interlinked and need to be sequenced accordingly.

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

a) Advice and coaching sessions: Coaching and advice activities will be the predominant type of activity. They will help for drafting of new legal acts and/or amendments to the existing national legislation (laws and implementing secondary legislation) which regulates the area of NQF on the basis of the mentioned relevant EU legislation in force, further development of procedures, implementing provisions and control mechanisms.

b) Tailor made training programme: This project will include the development and implementation of a tailor-made training programme. The programme will be based on a training needs assessment of the target groups. The training programme will focus on all aspects of improving the capacities of the BC in the areas outlined above. The Beneficiary institution prefers on-the-job training, where applicable, in particularly comprehensive training programme and training toolkit (methodology, materials for education and distribution.

c) Analysis: The Twinning partner should propose a system for analysing administrative capacity for implementation of the NQF and concerning social impact on the society from the new developed legislation in regard to NQF in line with EU best practice. Analysis should also be done of the current IT resources for support of NQF activities. This task will be done in close cooperation and consultation with Beneficiaries.

d) Development: The Twinning partner will propose and provide assistance and guidance in the development of an improved system for NQF, as well as assist in improving institutional, administrative and IT capacities and competences to successfully implement the new legislation. This will be done in the course of establishing and introducing new procedures, providing support to establishing sound training support and providing trainings to the beneficiaries of the project. This task will be done in close cooperation and consultation with the beneficiaries. In addition, the Twinning partner is expected to provide written recommendations for improvement of the system in accordance with their experience and best practices, based on which some adaptations shall be made.

e) Study visit: Study visit will be organised for selected representatives of the newly established NQF Unit in the Ministry of Education and Science and members of the Working group and selected civil servants which are responsible for implementation of legislation for exchange of good practices and experience. The study visit will be useful for ensuring networking with the representatives of the national institutions of the Twinning partners, building mutual trust among the administrations as well as to see how the established systems, procedures and processes work in practice.

d) Seminars and workshops: The Twinning project will involve the organisation of several seminars and workshops for vertical transfer of knowledge from the central to the local level, using and sharing the expertise of MS experts and the experience of the BC administration.

f) *Public awareness raising events/conferences* will be organized in order to promote the NQF system, legislative solutions and web page as point for information and contacts. At least two promotional events will be organized in close cooperation with beneficiaries.

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. Details of implementation shall be agreed during the preparation of the Work Plan.

The implementation of the project requires one Project Leader responsible for the overall coordination of project activities, one Resident Twinning Adviser responsible for management and implementation of project activities foreseen and a pool of Short-Term Experts (number to be proposed by the Member State 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 institution shall include in its proposal the CVs of the designated Project Leader and the Resident Twinning Adviser.

3.4.1 Profile and tasks of the Project Leader

The Project Leader from the Member State must be a high-ranking public servant or equivalent staff of a Member State administration, but preferably the Head of a Department engaged in issues concerning the European Qualification Framework 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 outputs. 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 mobilise the necessary staff in support of the efficient implementation of the project. In addition, he/she should coordinate, on the Member State 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.

Qualifications:

The Project Leader will:

- be a high ranking official as public servant or equivalent staff in an EU Member State;
- Have at least a University degree¹⁶ preferably in Law, Human resources, Education or any other related field;
- have at least 5 years of working experience in the field of European qualification framework;
- Excellent command of English.

¹⁶ For reference on equivalent qualification see: EPSO website-Annex 1 (http://europa.eu.int/epso/on-line-applications/pdf/guide-1242-171104_en.doc)

Tasks:

- To 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;
- Co-chairing the regular Project Steering Committee meeting with the Beneficiary Country Project Leader;
- Guarantee the successful implementation of the Project's Work Plan;
- Preparation and drafting of 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 RTA

One Resident Twinning Adviser will be appointed.

The Resident Twinning Adviser will be located in the Ministry of Education and Science.

The secondment of the Resident Twinning Adviser will last 18 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 the Short-Term Experts.

Qualifications and skills:

- be a national of a Member State of the European Union;
- be a civil servant or equivalent staff seconded to work within departments/units of the institution in charge of EQF issues in a Member State;
- Have at least a University degree¹⁷ in Human resources, Education or any other discipline relevant for the position;
- have at least 3 years of professional experience in the management of the European Qualification Framework within a managing authority or a delegated managing authority;
- have experience in capacity building;

¹⁷ For reference on equivalent qualification see: EPSO website-Annex 1 (http://europa.eu.int/epso/online-applications/pdf/guide-1242-171104_en.doc)

- be fluent in written and spoken English.

Experience in the delegation of management powers to Specific Bodies will be considered as an asset.

Tasks:

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:

- to carry out the day-to-day implementation of the Twinning project and to coordinate all project activities and experts' inputs in the Beneficiary Country;
- to provide technical advice, support and assist the beneficiary in the context of a predetermined work plan;
- To coordinate and organize the capacity building activities;
- to guarantee smooth implementation of the different activities delivered;
- to ensure the coherence and the continuity of the successive inputs and the on-going progress as well as smooth correlation between the activities, deadlines and the envisaged results in the Work Plan;
- to assess continuously the Twinning-project in all stages and to compare it with the specified benchmarks and time-frame;
- to prepare the material for regular monitoring and reporting;
- to prepare operative side letters;
- to take corrective actions, if necessary, inside the terms of the signed contract.

3.4.3 Profile and tasks of the short-term experts

Within the expertise required for the implementation of the project the following profiles will be playing a key role:

Other 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 expert input shall be established when drawing up the twinning work-plan.

Qualifications and skills of short-term experts:

STEs will:

- Have at least University degree¹⁸;
- be civil servants or equivalent staff seconded to work within departments/units related to EQF/ NQF;
- Have at least 3 years of professional experience in specific issues related to the purpose of the mission foreseen;
- Have experience in developing training programmes and implementation of training sessions;
- Excellent command of English.

¹⁸ For reference on equivalent qualification see: EPSO website-Annex 1 (http://europa.eu.int/epso/on-line-applications/pdf/guide-1242-171104_en.doc)

Tasks:

More specifically, STEs will:

- Provide practical expertise / advices to relevant staff for the execution of different tasks related to the project;
- Prepare and implement specific tasks based mainly on practical cases and their experience in compliance with their mission descriptions;
- Suggest establishment/ improvement of relevant procedures/systems;
- Contribute to the project reporting, contribute to the draft notes and other documents and report on their missions;
- Address cross-cutting issues.

The pool of Short-Term Experts should encompass amongst others, the following expertise:

- Legislation, regulations and law enforcement, approximation of legislation,
- Institutional capacity development,
- Training and research,
- National (or regional) Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs),
- Awareness-raising, publicity (incl. information and communication).

BC RTA Counterpart

RTA Counterpart will be assigned by the Ministry of Education and Science.

3.4.4. Profile and tasks of RTA Assistants

3.4.4.1 RTA Assistant:

The RTA will be provided with full-time **RTA assistant** acting as assistant for technical and organizational support. The assistant will be contracted according to the 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 assistants will be responsible for organisation of meetings, seminars etc. and their logistics, as well as translation/interpretation.

3.4.4.2. Full-time translator / interpreter:

A full-time translator / interpreter will be selected through an open call and 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.

4.1 Beneficiary institution(s)

Main beneficiary and coordinator of the project will be the Ministry of Education and Science responsible for the development and implementation of the National Qualification Framework. Accordingly, the technical implementation of the project, which means day-to-day co-ordination and implementation of the project activities will be a responsibility of the NQF Unit and NQF Working Group

The Ministry of Education and Science will be directly responsible for co-ordination and management of the project from the beneficiary side and will support the Twinning project team in organizational and technical matters. Coordination will be ensured among all institutions relevant to the implementation of the project.

Structure of the Ministry of Education and Science

The **Ministry of Education and Science** is the main state authority in charge of education policies. Some of the relevant responsible Department related to this project are:

- **Department of Primary and Secondary Education**, through the **Bureau for Development of Education** coordinates all activities related to development of general qualifications.
- **Department of Higher Education**, Unit for equivalence and recognition of foreign qualifications, coordinates all activities related to the compliance European area of higher education.
- **National Focal Point** connects the National Framework of qualifications with the European Qualifications Framework and the qualification framework for **European area of higher education**¹⁹.
- **EU Department, Unit for negotiation and community integration, coordination of projects and grants in education and science**, is in charge of coordination of the process of alignment with EU requirements. It also coordinates programming and implementation of EU and other donor assistance in the field of education and in other areas, which are under competences of the Ministry of education and science.
- **Vocational and education training centre**, coordinates all activities related to development of qualifications which are coming from educational and vocational policy, and
- **Centre for Adult Education** coordinates all activities related to development of qualifications which are coming from non-formal education.
- **Bureau for Development of Education.**

Other relevant institutions which will be involved during the implementation of the contract:

- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- Employment Service Agency
- State Statistical Office
- Participation of stakeholders, especially social partners
- State Examination Centre;
- Board for Accreditation and Evaluation of Higher Education;
- Employers and Chambers of Commerce;
- Education and training providers;

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher_education/doc_1290_ek.htm

- Other relevant stakeholders

4.2 Co-ordination mechanisms between institutions

A project Steering Committee (SC) will be established at the beginning of the project comprising senior representatives of the Beneficiary Institutions, the Delegation of the European Union and the Central Financing and Contracting Department within the Ministry of Finance.

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.

4.3 Reporting requirements as per Article 6.4 of the Twinning Manual

The Twinning Partners shall submit reports according to the requirements detailed in Article 6.4 of Twinning Manual.

Reports will follow the templates of Annex C4 of the Common Twinning Manual. In addition to these 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 English language in electronic and hard copy. These reports shall be signed by both Project Leaders. Each report must be presented in electronic format at least one week prior to the Steering Committee meetings and in two hard copies to the following address:

Ministry of Finance

Central Financing and Contracting Department
 Programme Monitoring Unit
 Address: st. Dame Gruev no. 12, 1000 Skopje

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

5. Budget

The project will be implemented through a Twinning Contract estimated at a maximum of EUR 2,300,000 (out of which 85% IPA funds and 15% National co-financing).

Twinning Contract	Total (EUR)	IPA Community contribution		National Public contribution	
	2.250.000	EUR	%	EUR	%
		1.912.500	85	337.500	15

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

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, for the purpose of covering costs not covered under the project budget as per Twinning manual, point 5.13, as follows:

- Direct and indirect cost of the Beneficiary administration, civil servants and other national private experts working for the project;
- Travel by the beneficiary officials from their capitals to a MS or between MS;
- Organisation of seminars/ workshops/ trainings (including hall rental, printing 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; and access to information.

The following expenses are also to be covered with the project funds:

- Visibility Cost;
- Audit certificate cost.

The project will be located in the premises of the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry will ensure appropriate facilities and basic equipment for the work of the experts.

6. Implementation Arrangements

6.1 Contracting Authority

The Central Financing and Contracting Department of the Ministry of Finance will be the Contracting Authority and shall be responsible for tendering, contracting, payments, accounting and financial reporting. CFCD shall have overall responsibility and supervision of contract's implementation.

Contact person:

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6.2 Main counterpart in the BC

IPA Coordinator:

Ms. Nadica Kostoska

Deputy Head of EU Department

IPA Coordinator

Ministry of Education and Science

Project Leader Counterpart:

Ms. Natasha Janevska
State Adviser for education
Ministry of Education and Science

RTA counterpart:

Ms. Nada Stoimenova
Adviser for Primary and Secondary Education
Ministry of Education and Science

6.3 Contracts

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

7. Implementation Schedule (indicative)**7.1 Launching of the call for proposals (Date)**

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

7.2 Start of project activities (Date)

The estimated date for start of project activities is: November 2015

7.3 Project completion (Date)

The project implementation period (duration of the work plan) is 18 months after the Commencement date of the Project.

7.4 Duration of the execution period

The overall execution period of the Twinning project is 21 months with an implementation period of 18 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 achievements of a Twinning project (mandatory results) shall be maintained as a permanent asset to the Beneficiary administration even after the end of the Twinning project implementation. This presupposes inter alia that effective mechanisms are put in place by the Beneficiary administration to disseminate and consolidate the results of the project.

In accordance with the purpose of this twinning which is strengthening of the national capacities for effective and efficient functioning of the system for National Qualification Framework, the beneficiary country should be ready for effective implementation of NQF. The strengthening of capacity of the NQF Unit, as a key for sustainability of all activity's outcomes included in the Twinning project supports closer integration of the work of senior staff and departments, in order to work towards more coherent strategic goals and provide a greater measure of self-sustainability.

Information and management system for National qualification framework will be established and will be fully operational in order to provide sustainability.

9. Crosscutting 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.

Civil society

In compliance with the provisions of the IPA Implementing Regulation, the civil society will be involved through the mainstreaming mechanism developed to integrate it to the implementation of IPA, in accordance with the principle of wide stakeholder representation and partnership of all interested and affected parties.

Equal opportunities

Equal opportunity for men and women to participate in the project will be guaranteed in accordance with EU standard and the Law on Equal Opportunities on Women and Men of the country.

All other forms of discrimination will be banned in accordance with National and EU legislation and standards.

The twinning partner is expected to provide specific advice and training on the way to set up, manage, monitor and evaluate the equal opportunities mainstreaming within IPA. Specific inputs and outputs are expected in this field as in the field of other potential discriminations (e.g. people origin, ethnicity, etc).

Environmental considerations

Any ecological friendly initiative which can be taken will have to be implemented.

Good governance

All relevant requirements to insure a sound financial management of the project will be fulfilled in accordance with the principle of good governance.

The fight against corruption is a horizontal theme in the Operational programme and necessary provisions will be taken in accordance of Article 19 of R.(EC) N. 718/2007:

“[The] beneficiary countries shall take any appropriate measure to prevent and counter any active or passive corruption practices at any stage of the procurement procedure or grant award procedure or during the implementation of [the] contract.”

Communication and publicity

All requirements to ensure the visibility of EU financing will be fulfilled in accordance with R. (EC). N. 718/2007²⁰.

²⁰ See. Article 62 and 63. of R. (EC). N. 718/2007

10. Conditionality and sequencing

10.1 Conditionality

The Twinning project requires full commitment and involvement on behalf of senior level officials of the Ministry of Education and Science. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Science commits to provide adequate staff and support to the Twinning partner.

To achieve this objective, a special attention has to be given to the following issues:

- The Law on the National Qualifications Framework shall come into force on September 2015;
- Full commitment of the relevant stakeholders to fulfil all necessary preconditions for ensuring all technical and administrative provisions;
- Provision of key institution concerning the sustainability and future maintaining of the monitoring and evaluation system;
- Sufficient managerial and technical human resources available for the purposes of project implementation and sustainability of the results.
- Timely formalization of the working group, with appointment of members and their tasks and responsibilities.
- The Ministry of Education and Science is obliged to perform regular attendance at the meetings of the EU advisory group on NQF and commits fully to the obligation as a member of the EU advisory group on NQF.

10.2 Sequencing

Keys milestones will be:

- Approval of the Twinning project fiche;
- Circulation of the Twinning Project Fiche to Member State National Contact Points;
- Completion of the selection of the twinning partner Successful completion of a Twinning partner search;
- Signature of the Twinning contract, including the Twinning Work Plan;
- Commencement of the twinning partnership (inter alia, the arrival in the country of the Resident Twinning Adviser);
- End of the implementation period;
- Submission of the final report.

ANNEX 1: Logical framework matrix in standard format

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX	Further improvement of the system for development and implementation of the National Qualification Framework		
		Total budget: 2 250 000 €	IPA budget: € 1 912 500

	Intervention Logic	Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective	The overall objective of this project is to support the process of further improvement of the system for development and implementation of the National Qualification Framework referencing to and with the EQF.	Developed and implemented National Qualification Framework	Certificate of Assurance Final Report	N/A
Project purpose	<p>The purpose of this twinning project aims for strengthening of the national capacities for effective and efficient functioning of the system for National Qualification Framework.</p> <p>Within this project, the following five specific and complementary purposes will be achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepared and aligned legislation regarding development and implementation of the NQF - To strengthen the capacities to support of the NQF - Established NQF Unit in the Ministry for Education and Science - Established and functional NQF national system - Established and operational NQF information and management system 	<p>Adopted legislation regarding development and implementation of the NQF</p> <p>Established and functional NQF Unit in the Ministry of Education and Science</p> <p>90% of the participants in the training activities successfully completing the training.</p> <p>80% Established and functional NQF national system</p>	<p>Interim and Quarterly reports;</p> <p>Evaluation form responses;</p> <p>Final Project report;</p> <p>Annual implementation report;</p>	<p>The Beneficiary Country partners continuously support the RTA in the implementation of the project activities;</p> <p>The beneficiary administration appoints the Project Leader and the RTA counterpart and makes available the staff that will be involved during the Twinning project implementation;</p> <p>There is a full co-ordination and transparency in the work of all key players involved;</p> <p>The Twinning partner is provided with adequate resources to operate effectively and in the most efficient and relevant way;</p> <p>Good cooperation and commitment of other stakeholders for participating to the project.</p>

<p>Expected results</p>	<p>Mandatory result 1: Relevant legislation regarding the NQF improved</p> <p>To achieve the aforementioned result the following intermediary results will be achieved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Analysis report from the screening of the existing legislation regarding NQF, including compliance recommendation 6. Proposals for update of the existing legislation for referencing of the NQF with the EQF, including bylaws 7. Update and/or development of rulebooks and protocols relevant for the NQF system,²¹ 8. Public awareness raised concerning NQF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis report of the existing legislation regarding NQF including compliance recommendation, submitted - Recommendations and draft legal acts for update of the existing legislation for referencing of the NQF with the EQF, including bylaws - Developed at least two protocols and at least one rulebook relevant for the NQF system - At least two organized event for promotional activities/raising public awareness 	<p>Project documents;</p> <p>Interim, quarterly and final project reports;</p> <p>Attendance sheets for training events;</p> <p>Evaluation of trainings;</p> <p>Certificate of participation;</p> <p>List of participants;</p> <p>Training and teaching materials;</p> <p>Evaluation forms;</p> <p>Developed Programmes;</p> <p>Reports (annual, quarterly, monthly).</p>	<p>There is a good cooperation between institutions, in particular in relation to the sharing of information;</p> <p>Commitments from responsible persons in key institutions;</p> <p>Sufficient number of relevant data gathered.</p>
	<p>Mandatory result 2: institutional capacities for introduction of the NQF strengthened</p> <p>To achieve the aforementioned result the following intermediary results will be achieved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Piloting and testing of the produced materials such as revised rulebooks, protocols and bylaws relevant for NQF system 2. Analysis on the existing national system for development and implementation of the NQF on structural and system level (institutional and administrative set-up) 3. Development of mechanisms for networking and cooperation between all included bodies from the NQF system and all relevant stakeholders 4. Enhanced institutional capacities working on the NQF system 5. Support concerning the functioning of the NQF Management information system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produced and piloted/tested materials such as revised rulebooks, protocols and by laws, improved methodologies relevant for NQF system - Written recommendations on the improvement of the organisational set-up on NQF - Prepared and tested mechanisms for networking and cooperation between all included bodies from the NQF system and all relevant stakeholders - Developed Manuals of procedures for management of the NQF system, for the NQF Unit - Developed analysis, training programme, training materials and staff trained concerning the new system, mechanisms and processes for NQF - Written recommendations on improvement of the functioning of the NQF Management and information system 		
	<p>Mandatory result 3: Process of development of</p>	<p>5. Identification report of the existing</p>		

²¹ The rulebooks and protocols will be defined and agreed between the Twinning partners according the Recommendations from the screening and analysis of the NQF legislation as a result of the ongoing British council project - Support to the MOES of Republic of Macedonia for preparation of the Action plan for implementation of the National Qualification Framework, in the process of creation of the working plan

	<p>qualifications for the NQF enhanced To achieve the aforementioned result the following intermediary results will be achieved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification report of the existing qualifications considering all levels of the NQF, and appropriate distribution; 2. Developed/Updated and tested Methodology for development of new qualifications for NQF based on the labour market needs; 3. Piloting and testing of two²² proposed priority sectors of existing qualifications for NQF. 4. Developed and tested new qualifications for two pilot priority sectors;²³ 5. Guidelines of procedures for quality assurance of NQF prepared; 6. Support in preparation of the NQF to EQF Referencing process and report for 2016 	<p>qualifications considering all levels of the NQF prepared and appropriately distributed;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Updated and tested Methodology for development of new qualifications for NQF based on the labour market needs; 7. Number of staff trained on the updated and tested methodology for development of new qualifications for NQF based on the labour market needs; 8. Defined structure, content and scope of the sixteen priority sectors of qualifications for NQF; 9. Manual for preparation of descriptors for qualifications prepared; 10. Piloted and tested of two²⁴ proposed priority sectors of existing qualifications for NQF. 11. Number of developed and tested new qualifications for two pilot priority sectors (depending of the sectors); 12. At least 1 one developed Guideline of procedures for quality assurance of NQF 		
Activities	<p>Advice and coaching sessions; Tailor made training programme; Seminars, workshops and conference; Study tour(s) (up to 2)</p>	<p>One Twinning contract; One Member State Project Leader; One Member State Resident Twinning Adviser; Up to 12 short-term experts</p>	<p>IPA € 1. 912 .500 or 85%; National co-financing 337.500 € or 15 %; Total 2 250 000 €.</p>	
<p>Preconditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Key staff in beneficiary institution appointed to support the implementation of the Twinning project. 14. Sufficient number of adults (target groups), adult learning providers, trainers, ect. are willing to participate in implementation of the new programmes. 				

²² The two sectors will be chosen and agreed between the Twinning partners,

²³ The sectors will be defined in the process of creation of the working plan

²⁴ The two sectors will be chosen and agreed between the Twinning partners,