

SECTORAL MONITORING COMMITTEE FOR THE REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

Meeting on the 10th of June 2009 at 14:00h, at the EUSG premises

MINUTES

The fourth *Sectoral Monitoring Committee for the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme (SMC RCOP)* was held in Ankara, on 10th of June 2009, between 14:00-17:00 pm, at the premises of the Secretariat General for European Union Affairs.

All participants (*Representatives of the European Commission (EC), Delegation of the European Commission to Turkey (ECD), Secretariat General for European Union Affairs (EUSG), Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT), Undersecretary of State Planning Organization (SPO), National Authorizing Officer (NAO), National Fund (NF), Audit Authority, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, CFCU, Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade, KOSGEB, TÜBİTAK, TOBB, TTGV, MPM, TESK, TÜRK-İŞ, TİSK, GAP-RDA, East Anatolia Exporters Union, Central Anatolia Exporters Union, Erciyes University, Cumhuriyet University, Gaziantep University, Dicle University, Kahramanmaraş Governorship, Samsun Governorship, Elazığ Governorship, Malatya Governorship, Şanlıurfa Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Erzurum Chamber of Industry, Van Chamber of Industry and Commerce*) are listed in the *Annex 1*.

1. Opening Statements

At the beginning of the meeting, **Co-chairperson, the representative of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Deputy Undersecretary and Head of Operating Structure Niyazi İLTER** opened the meeting by welcoming the members. He firstly informed himself as he was recently appointed to be the Head of Operating Structure. Then he gave brief information about the decisions taken during the third meeting held on 22nd January 2009 summarizing the issues discussed in the meeting. On this point the Committee members were reminded to sign and sent the Declaration of Impartiality.

Co-chairperson, the representative of the European Commission (Directorate General for Regional Policy), Head of Unit, Mr. Erich UNTERWURZACHER, also welcomed Committee members. Then he underlined the achievements on the conferral of management process, also on the strategic projects and technical assistance project. About the actual implementation, he highlighted that in order to meet the expenditure targets in 2011, the timing for the studies on the preparation of tender documents, launching tenders and launching operations should be accelerated. He concluded that as there had been significant progress over the last 6-12 months, but challenges will continue for the following period.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Last Meeting

With regards to the minutes of the last meeting, **Mr. Niyazi İLTER** mentioned that the minutes had been sent to the members of the SMC in order to take their opinions into account and after getting the comments of the members, the final version of the minutes was signed by Mr. UNTERWURZACHER and the previous co-chair Mr. CABBAR and this signed version of the minutes was also uploaded into the web site of the Ministry.

He presented the minutes of the SMC meeting held on 22nd January 2009 for the approval of the Committee members. As there was no objection, the minutes of the last meeting were approved by the members of the SMC.

3. Approval of the Agenda of the Sectoral Monitoring Committee

Mr. Niyazi İLTER presented the draft agenda to the approval of the Monitoring Committee with a revision request of changing of the agenda item 8 as “Discussion on the state of play of the Communication Action Plan” as the so-called plan hasn’t been concluded yet.

It was decided to revise the agenda according to this proposal, approved it as it is provided in Annex-2

4. Information on the pending steps for IPA legal set-up (Financing Agreement and Conferral of Management powers)

On the issue of the conferral of management powers, **Mr. İbrahim SEPİCİ**, the representative of NF, explained that the application for the verification audit has been done and the verification audit had been concluded. He mentioned that the action plan for the first 3 months according to the first draft of the audit report had been prepared and submitted to the Commission and it was added that the final audit report was expected.

According to the Financing Agreement, **Ms. Beyza TURAN**, the representative of NIPAC office, mentioned that the last comments of the Turkish side on the Financing Agreements of IPA Components 3 and 4 were submitted to the Commission on 27th of May, 2009, and she added that the formal reply was expected. By explaining the content of the mentioned comments, she underlined the issue of the probability on the ratification of the financing agreements by the Parliament. She highlighted that if the articles 3, 4 and 5 of the financing agreements were adopted as it was proposed on the letter of 27th of May, there would be no need for the ratification process.

Mr. Erich UNTERWURZACHER mentioned that the final audit report for the conferral of management would be sent to NAO in a couple of days. He underlined that there wouldn’t be new findings and the remaining findings were not blocking. He also informed the Committee Members that the formal decision for the conferral of management would be launched in early July, and the Commission would sign the Financing Agreement in July.

Mr. Antonio GONCALVES, the representative of the European Commission, referring to the comments about the financing agreements that had been sent by NIPAC, underlined that

as it was the final stage, most of the proposed modifications other than the ones for the Article 3, 4 and 5, were not acceptable.

Mr. Niyazi İLTER concluded the subject by mentioning that the all parties would perform their duties in order to finalize those pending steps for the legal set-up.

5. Discussion on the Annual Audit Activity Report

Under this agenda item, **Mr. Ali ACU**, representative of the Audit Authority, informed the Committee members that, as it was foreseen the conferral of management hadn't been completed, they hadn't plan any audit activity for 2008. He also added that they prepared a light audit activity plan. He stressed that after the conferral of management, there would be some findings from the audit activities to be discussed for the following year.

Mr Unterwurzacher indicated that the SMC should be informed periodically of the audit activity, to be aware of the risks of implementation of the programme.

It was decided that the Annual Audit Activity Report would be included to the agenda of the next meeting.

6. Information on state of play in the first package of strategic projects and measure 1.2 (financial engineering)

Ms. İzlem KÜLLÜK, the representative of the Regional Competitiveness Program Coordination and Implementation Centre (RCOP-CIC), made a brief explanation about the last situation about the first Package of strategic projects. Outlines of her presentation are as follows;

- It was mentioned that the following projects had been approved by The Commission on 22nd of April, 2009; “Establishment of 3 Business Incubators and Development of a Network among Incubators in Turkey” by KOSGEB, “Erciyes Technopark Regional Innovation Centre” by Ministry of Industry and Trade, Directorate General for Research and Development, “Development of the Research & Technological Infrastructure of Gaziantep Technopark” by Ministry of Industry and Trade, Directorate General for Research and Development, “FIRASET (Firat Rainbow Surrounding Enterprise Taskforce)” by Ministry of Industry and Trade, Directorate General for Research and Development, “Enlargement of the European Turkish Business Centers Network, Phase I” by TOBB, “Empowering SMEs for networking and inter-regional cooperation” by UoFT.
- It was mentioned that the “Technical Assistance Project for the Implementation of RCOP” also had been approved by the Commission.
- The estimated actual payments for 2009 under the framework contracts of the technical assistance project were presented.
- It was stated that the studies on the improvement of the project documents including feasibility report, cost-benefit analysis and environmental impact assessment of the project called “Development of Winter Tourism Corridor in Erzurum, Erzincan and Kars” by Ministry of Culture and Tourism, was going on.
- As for the 10th of June 2009; 7 service terms of references (ToRs), 6 supply technical specifications (TS), 3 work TS, drawings and bill of quantities, 3

supervision ToRs, 3 framework contract ToRs documents for the mentioned approved projects, have been sent to the CFCU.

- Tender forecast notices have been published for 1 work, 1 supervision, 6 service and 6 supply contracts.
- Regarding the project called “Establishment of Innovation Centre For Food-Innofood Center”, it was mentioned that the major project application form will be submitted to Commission by the end of 2009.
- Indicative disbursement plan for 2007-2009 programming, covering first and second project packages, major project of TUBİTAK and the projects under the financial engineering measure, was presented. According to the plan, it was mentioned that the n+3 requirement would be met by the end of 2013.

Mr. Erich UNTERWURZACHER stated that the major project application form should be complete and comprehensive in order to catch the timing envisaged for the approval and the launching of the mentioned project by TUBİTAK.

Mr. Antonio GONCALVES mentioned that a sufficient amount of expenditure in order to absorb the 2007 commitments was ensured for the first project package projects and stressed on three critical points; the financial engineering projects, the availability of the first contracts to be signed during the first semester of 2010 and monitoring of all stages on the mentioned processes. Regarding the individual projects, he underlined that the project proposal of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism couldn't be approved as presented and it has to be improved. About the major project proposal of TUBİTAK, he recommended to work with the Ministry of Environment before the submission of the application as they have experience on the major projects. He concluded that if the project submitted in a reasonable completed stage, 5 months for the Commission decision would be reasonable.

Mr. Niyazi İLTER mentioned that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism was working with UNDP in order to improve the project proposal to an admissibility level. Regarding the major project application process, he expressed that the experience of the Ministry of Environment would be used and all the risks would be taken into account during the process.

After the discussions on the first project package, **Mr. Veysel PEKUZ**, the representative of the Regional Competitiveness Program Coordination and Implementation Centre (RCOP-CIC), made a brief explanation about the last situation of the project studies under the measure 1.2. of the OP (Creation And Development Of Financial Instruments). Outlines of his presentation are as follows;

- The objectives of the measure were stated as; to enhance the financial environment through supporting credit guarantee funds, micro loan funds and equity finance mechanism, to increase accessing to financial resources and to increase utilization of financial mechanism.
- It was mentioned that there have been two project proposals under discussion. One is the proposal of KOSGEB, IVCI and EIF called “Southeastern Anatolia Venture Capital Fund” with a budget of 15 million Euros. The second one is the proposal of DG for Internal Trade of the MoIT, EIF and EIB called “Greater Anatolia Guarantee Facility” with a budget of 33 million Euros.

Regarding the financing engineering projects, **Mr. Antonio GONCALVES** underlined the importance of the involvement of the EIB and EIF in those two projects as they could bring their experience gained in the member states, to Turkey. He also highlighted that those two projects could generate sufficient amount of expenditure to cover the requirements for the first commitment year.

Under the same subject, **Mr. Niyazi İLTER** stressed that especially in the time of crisis, the effect of the financing engineering projects would be greater than the usage of those funds.

Regarding the question of the representative of Şanlıurfa Chamber of Industry and Trade about the justification of the laboratory that was planned to be established in Şanlıurfa under the project proposal of TUBİTAK, **Mr. Mehmet BAHAR**, representative of TUBİTAK, explained that the content of the project proposal was discussed with the Chamber of Industry and Trade and the University of Harran as local partners.

Regarding the proposal of the representative of TÜRK-İŞ, concerning the extension of the scope of the project of Ministry of Culture and Tourism, **Mr. Niyazi İLTER** stated that the project was not at the stage of discussion of the scope.

7. Discussion and endorsement of Technical Assistance Plan

Under this agenda item, **Ms. Özlem SEVER**, representative of RCOP-CIC, made a brief presentation on the objectives and activities of the revised Technical Assistance Plan, as it was decided to revise the version presented at the previous meeting of the Committee. She stated that the plan was revised after a need assessment study done by RCOP-CIC. The main issues that were given during the presentation are as follows;

- It was underlined that the main objectives are; to ensure the effective implementation of RCOP and to improve the administrative, technical and human resources capacity of OS and relevant central, regional and local beneficiaries.
- Revised TA Plan consists of 7 main components; Capacity Building Activities, Establishment of Finance and Contract Department (FCD) within RCP-CIC, Establishment of Management Information System (MIS), Supply Contracts, Support for programme and operations monitoring and implementation, Framework contracts, Publicity Activities.
- 2 service contracts, 1 technical specification and 5 Framework Contracts were sent to the CFCU and forecast notices of service and supply contracts published on 4th June 2009.

Mr. Antonio GONCALVES firstly thanked to the Ministry for the study carried out in preparation of the technical assistance plan. He stated that the Commission formally approved the OIS document of the project regarding the first part of the Plan. Then he underlined the importance of the plan for the success of the implementation of the program in order to built capacity in the Ministry and the partner organizations. At this point he stressed that the tender documents submitted to CFCU, should be approved and the tender should be launched as quickly as possible in order to ensure the implementation to be started in the middle of 2010.

Mr. Niyazi İLTER highlighted the importance of the CFCU on the implementation of the processes, and thanked to them for their cooperative works with the Ministry.

The Technical Assistance Plan was endorsed by the SMC members.

8. Discussion on the state of play of the Communication Action Plan

Ms. Pinar İRDEM, the representative of RCOP-CIC made a presentation on the contents and the activities of the Communication Action Plan (CAP). She underlined that the CAP was under revision and would be submitted to the European Commission within four months after the signature date of the Financing Agreement.

It was decided to revise the CAP according to a need assessment study and the comments of the Commission, and to present it at the next Committee meeting for endorsement.

9. Information about the Monitoring Report and Monitoring Sheets

Ms. Pelin AĞI, representative of RCOP-CIC, gave brief explanation about the monitoring report and monitoring sheets that have such information like, examination of the results of the implementation, achievement of the targets set for each priority axis and measures and financial progress. She stated that as the implementation hadn't started yet, the prepared monitoring report mostly consists of the preparation studies of the first package of projects and the studies for the call for project proposals. She highlighted that the importance of the annexes of the report, composed of monitoring sheets for operations and added that those tables were prepared for the 6 projects which had been approved on the 22nd April, 2009. She stated that the mentioned tables would have more information regarding implementation, to be presented for the following committee meetings.

Mr. Erich UNTERWURZACHER underlined the importance of the operational agreements which would be signed between the Ministry as Operating Structure and the Beneficiaries.

10. Discussion and endorsement of the Annual Implementation Report

Ms. Pelin AĞI, representative of RCOP-CIC, made a brief presentation about the Annual Implementation Report. It was stated that the report would be submitted to the Commission formally by the end of June.

The Annual Implementation Report was endorsed by the SMC members.

11. Information on state of play in Call for Project Proposals and the second project package

Under this agenda item, **Mr. Mehmet Ali YILMAZ**, representative of RCOP-CIC, gave brief explanation about the process of the evaluation of the project proposals submitted to the Ministry under the first call for Project Proposals. Firstly he warned the committee members not to believe in the information about the results of the call gained other than the website of

the Ministry. He stated that a demand of 17 times of the budget of the call was created, and 67 project proposals were eliminated from the total of 465.

Then he informed about the evaluation process took place between 25th of February- 27th of April 2009 by the 100 evaluators from 24 different institutions. He added that all the proposals were evaluated by two evaluators, and according to the scores of those the 100 project proposals were re-evaluated by a third evaluator as the score difference of the two evaluators are extremely high. He mentioned that the re-evaluation process was concluded on the 5th of June 2009. He stated that a main and a reserve list would be prepared taking into account the scores, budget, the geographical concentration and those lists would be published on the website of the Ministry.

Mr. Niyazi İLTER underlined that the evaluation process was managed in an objective way by Ministry.

The representative of the **Van Chamber Commerce and Trade**, requested from the Ministry to publish the explanations about the process of the evaluation in the meantime in order to inform the region.

According to the question of the representative of KOSGEB regarding the reason for the imbalance between the scores, **Mr. Mehmet Ali YILMAZ** stated that the main reason was the viewpoint of the evaluators and also the language of the proposals. He added that in order to ensure the balance in the evaluation process, the number of proposals were sent to the third evaluators.

Regarding the concern of **Mr. Ömer BİLEN**, the representative of SPO about the regional balance, **Mr. Niyazi İLTER** informed the Committee members that, the discussions between the Ministry and the Commission on the preparation of the main and reserve lists with a balanced distribution, were going on.

Mr. Antonio GONCALVES underlined that the projects from the call were reflecting the expectations and needs of the region. He added that the large number of proposals was an indicator of the success of the call. Then he highlighted that the analysis carried out by the Ministry and the EU Delegation of Turkey were going on carefully in order to ensure the reliable results that could be defended by both the Ministry and the Delegation. He also stressed the importance of the accurate results in order to explain and justify the decisions during the audit missions that would be taken place in the implementation period.

12. Information about the revision of the Program

Under this agenda item, **Mr. Ömer BİLEN**, the representative of SPO gave brief explanation on the performance evaluation study done by SPO as a strategic coordinator with the Operating Structures under the Regional Development Component. He stated that 8 criteria were used during this study which are;

- the availability of the project pool
- the adequacy of the capacity of the staff
- the adequacy of the implementation capacity of the beneficiaries
- the adequacy of the coordination with the related institutions
- the contribution of the structure of the projects on implementation

- the eligibility of the projects in the scope of n+3 rule
- not having co-financing problem
- not having external risk factors

He mentioned that during the study, interviews with the representatives of ECD, CFCU, NAO, NF, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Transport were performed. He concluded that the study was finalized, and the approval of the new appointed Undersecretary of SPO as a Strategic Coordinator was waited.

Mr. Erich UNTERWURZACHER drawing attention to the concerns of the Commission about the performance under the Transport OP, he underlined that the assessment of the performance of the different OPs should be done taking into account the overall allocation stated in the Multi Annual Indicative Planning Document. He also reminded that as soon as a coordinated proposal for the modification was reached, it should be sent formally to the Commission. He highlighted that any proposal should be the subject of the examination of the SMC according to the financing agreement, rules of procedures and IPA Implementation Regulation. For this aim it was reminded that the written procedure could be used, other than waiting for the next committee meeting.

13. Indicative date for the next Sectoral Monitoring Committee

The indicative date for the next Sectoral Monitoring Committee was approved that it would be in second half of November 2009.

14. AOB

Under this agenda item;

- **Ms. Görgül GÜNER**, The Representative of TESK, proposed the Ministry to present the results of the call for project proposal to the related institutions for their comments before the announcement.

- **Mr. Mehmet Ali YILMAZ**, representative of RCOP-CIC, thanked the project evaluators who are also the committee members, for their efforts and studies.

- **Mr. Mehmet AYDIN**, the Head of RCOP-CIC, explained the last situation of the formal position of the co-financing issue, according to the request of the representative of the Commission, Mr. Antonio Goncalves.

15. Conclusions/Decisions

- Annual Audit Activity Report will be included to the agenda of the next meeting.
- It was agreed that the members of the SMC which didn't send the impartiality declarations will sign and send those to the Ministry as soon as possible.
- Revised Technical Assistance Plan was endorsed by the SMC members.
- It was decided to revise the CAP according to a need assessment study and the comments of the Commission, and to present it at the next Committee meeting for endorsement.
- Annual Implementation Report was endorsed by the SMC members.
- It was decided that the next meeting of the SMC will be held in June 2009.

Niyazi İLTER

Head of

Operating Structure

Ministry of Industry and Trade

Erich UNTERWURZACHER

Head of Unit

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAO	Competent Authorizing Officer
CFCU	Central Finance and Contracts Unit
EC	European Commission
ECD	European Commission Delegation
EUSG	Secretariat General for European Union Affairs
HOS	Head of Operating Structure
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
KOSGEB	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Development Organization
MoIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
NAO	National Authorizing Officer
OP	Operational Programme
RCOP	Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme
RCP-CIC	Regional Competitiveness Programme Coordination and Implementation Center
SEI	Support to European Integration
SF	Structural Funds
SMC	Sectoral Monitoring Committee
SPO	State Planning Organization
ToR	Terms of Reference
TÜBİTAK	The Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey

Annex 1
List of Participants

List of Participants							
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Agenda
For the Fourth Sectoral Monitoring Committee Meeting
For the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme in Turkey
(10 June 2009, 14:00, EUSG)

1. Opening statements – by the Head of the Operating Structure, and by the Commission (HOS + EC)
2. Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting (HOS + EC)
3. Approval of the agenda of the Sectoral Monitoring Committee Meeting (HOS + EC)
4. Information on the pending steps for IPA legal set-up (Financing Agreement, Conferral of Management powers) (EC + NAO)
5. Discussion on the Annual Audit Activity Report (Audit Authority)
6. Information on state of play in the first package of strategic projects and measure 1.2 (financial engineering) (OS)
7. Discussion and endorsement of the revised Technical Assistance Plan (OS)
8. Discussion on the state of play of the Communication Action Plan (OS)
9. Information about the Monitoring Report and Monitoring Sheets (OS)
10. Discussion and endorsement of the Annual Implementation Report (OS)
11. Information on state of play in Call for Project Proposals and the second project package. (OS)
12. Information about the revision of the Program (EC+ HOS+ Strategic Coordinator)
13. Indicative date for the next Sectoral Monitoring Committee (HOS + EC)
14. AOB