

# Draft

# Technical Assistance Plan for the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme

Ministry of Industry and Trade



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ANKARA

*Technical Assistance (TA) Plan has been prepared by the Regional Competitiveness Programme Coordination and Implementation Centre (RCP-CIC) of the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT) which is the Operating Structure (OS) of the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme (RCOP).*

*This TA Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Technical Assistance priority of the RCOP to ensure a clear and measurable road map for relevant parties.*

*The main objectives of the TA Plan are to ensure the effective implementation of the RCOP in accordance with the relevant regulations and to improve the administrative capacity of the Operating Structure and the other central, regional and local institutions involved in the implementation of the RCOP by supporting the management, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, control and publicity of the RCOP.*

*In order to reach these objectives the TA Plan consists of four main pillars including capacity building activities for the Operating Structure and beneficiaries, establishment of an IT based monitoring information system and a Finance and Contracts Unit within the RCP – CIC after the transition period, and publicity of the RCOP. The implementation calendar of the foreseen activities and budget are mentioned in details in the plan.*

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## 1. Goals and Objectives of Technical Assistance

In 2006, European Union has introduced a new financial instrument called as IPA – Instrument for Pre Accession Assistance with a view to support candidate and potential candidate countries in their preparations for EU accession, including (for candidate countries) for the future management and control of the Structural and Cohesion Funds Programmes. As a candidate country Turkey will prepare itself for the implementation of Structural and Cohesion funds programmes, which require strong institutional capacity and qualified human resources through the experience gained in the implementation of IPA.

Within the framework of IPA, multi-annual Operational Programmes have been prepared by the relevant line-Ministries acting as Operating Structure. In this respect, as one of the Operating Structures Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT) has prepared the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme (RCOP) with the active participation of the stakeholders and it was officially approved by the European Commission on the 29th November of 2007.<sup>1</sup>

One of the priority axes of the RCOP is Technical Assistance designed to ensure effective implementation of the programme and effective use of the IPA resources. Under the Technical Assistance priority of the RCOP there are two measures namely, “Support to the OP Preparation, Management, Implementation, Monitoring, Control and Evaluation” and “Publicity, Information and Promotion of the OP Measures”.

The main aims of the Technical Assistance priority and its measures are to ensure the sound and efficient implementation of the RCOP in accordance with IPA Implementing Regulation and to improve the administrative capacity of the Operating Structure and the other institutions involved in the implementation of the RCOP by supporting the preparation, management, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, control, publicity and communication of the RCOP as well as to prepare sector studies and a project pipeline necessary for planning interventions and future OPs.

Specific objectives of the Technical Assistance priority and its measures are also given below:

- Provision of technical assistance in the preparation, management, implementation, monitoring, control and evaluation of the RCOP,
- Preparation of a project pipeline both to be implemented under the present RCOP and the preparation of OPs for the next programming period,
- Creating capacity of the Operating Structure and beneficiaries to manage and implement the RCOP,
- Providing IT infrastructure necessary for the management, implementation, monitoring and controlling of the RCOP,
- implementation of the obligations arising from Articles 62 and 63 of IPA Implementing Regulation concerning the promotion of the RCOP and its operations and informing

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<sup>1</sup> Commission Decision of 29/11/2007 adopting the multi-annual operational programme “Regional Competitiveness” for Community assistance from the Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance for the Regional Development component in Turkey

entities interested in receiving support from the RCOP, as well as the general public, about the opportunities provided by the assistance and its outcomes.

Based on the Technical Assistance priority and measures of the RCOP, the TA Plan has been prepared by the RCP – CIC. TA Plan will be the main instrument for the implementation of the activities and realisation of the objectives foreseen in the Technical Assistance priority of the RCOP.

In this respect, the main objective of the TA Plan is to increase administrative and human resources capacity of the MoIT along with the central, regional and local stakeholders of the RCOP thus contribute to the preparation process of Turkey to the implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy.

The goals and objectives of the TA Plan are;

- ✓ to improve the capacity of the Operating Structure in the management, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and control of the RCOP,
- ✓ to develop a project pipeline with a view to increase the absorption capacity of the funds available under the RCOP,
- ✓ to provide assistance, in particular to the regional / local stakeholders, for preparation of full tender dossiers,
- ✓ to improve the operation development and management capacity of the central, regional and local stakeholders,
- ✓ to provide IT infrastructure and establish a MIS necessary for the management, implementation, monitoring and controlling of the RCOP,
- ✓ to establish a Finance and Contracts Unit within the Operating Structure after the transition period,
- ✓ to raise awareness of the potential beneficiaries about the funding opportunities under the RCOP.

The TA Plan will also aim to improve the human resources capacity of the Operating Structure and the central, regional and local stakeholders in terms of programming, programme/project management and implementation through trainings, seminars, workshops, study visits and internships etc.

## **2. Anticipated Outputs of Technical Assistance**

The activities to be developed under the TA Plan will contribute to the smooth implementation of the RCOP through ensuring effective management, proper monitoring and control, efficient run of evaluation and comprehensive promotion of the current programming period.

As a result of the implementation of the activities foreseen in the Plan the knowledge and skills of the staff of the RCP – CIC on programme design, management, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, control and audit will increase. Furthermore, the capacity of the beneficiaries on project formulation, management and implementation will be improved.

On the other hand, office equipment required for management, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and control of the RCOP will be purchased, an IT based reporting and information

system for monitoring of the RCOP will be established, administrators and the users of the system will be trained on the system functioning.

In order to establish a Finance and Contracts Unit after the transition period necessary assistance will be provided to the RCP – CIC under the TA Plan and all staff to be assigned to the Unit will be trained on the tendering and contracting procedures.

Besides through the publicity activities carried out under the TA Plan potential beneficiaries will be informed about the funding opportunities offered by the RCOP. Therefore, absorption and project management capacity of the targeted regions under the RCOP will be increased.

### **3. Activities of Technical Assistance**

Under the TA Plan which covers 2008 – 2012 period four main activities, which are fully in line with the eligible actions identified under the Technical Assistance Measures of the RCOP will be carried out aiming to improve the capacity of the Operating Structure and beneficiaries, to support the establishment of the Monitoring Information System (MIS) and the Finance and Contracts Unit and to publicise the RCOP.

Activities foreseen under the TA Plan will be performed through several procurement contracts including service, IT development and equipment supplies in compliance with the Multi-Annual Work Plan for the RCOP. In this respect, training and publicity activities foreseen under the TA Plan will be performed through service contracts, while IT development and equipment supplies activities will be carried out under supply contract. Furthermore, the costs of the activities carried out by the Sectoral Monitoring Committee and the Project Selection Sub-Committees and the costs related to the evaluations carried out by external evaluators will be covered under services Framework Contracts.

On the other hand, framework contracts can be also used so as to meet the unforeseen needs of the RCP – CIC and central and regional stakeholders. Therefore, a certain amount of TA funds will be reserved for this purpose.

Service tender(s) for training and publicity activities foreseen in the TA Plan will be launched under the suspension clause facility. The TA Plan will also support the implementation of the activities foreseen in the Work Plan.

Dates for technical assistance services and activities and the indicative budget foreseen for these activities are given in the *Annex 1* (See Table on Time Schedule and Budget of the TA Activities).

Furthermore, training activities that will be carried out under this Plan have been identified according to the results of the Training Needs Questionnaire (TNQ) which was sent to the staff of the RCP – CIC, Directorate Generals of the MoIT, members of the Sectoral Monitoring Committee and other central, regional and local stakeholders of the RCOP. In order to facilitate the regional and local consultation process 43 Governorships covered by 12 NUTS II regions were used for the dissemination of the forms to the all relevant parties such as Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Universities, Organised Industrial Zones, Small Scale Industrial Estates, Technology Development Regions and Centres, Business Development Centres etc. in the provinces.

Approximately 400 completed TNQ have been received from all these stakeholders. The prioritised training needs of the staff of the RCP – CIC and MoIT alongwith the central, regional and local stakeholders of the RCOP have been defined based on the outputs of these TNQ. These completed TNQ also gave an idea on the appropriate timetable for the training activities. According to the results of the TNQ the most frequently requested training topics were “Project Management”, “IPA and the RCOP”, “Project Selection and Evaluation”, and “PCM”. All these training topics were prioritised in the TA Plan. Template of the TNQ is provided in the *Annex 2*.

### **3.1. Capacity Building Activities for the Operating Structure and Beneficiaries**

#### **Objective**

The main objective of this TA pillar is to increase the administrative capacity of the RCP – CIC for efficient and effective implementation of the RCOP during the 2007-2009 programming period and preparation to the next programming period and the future structural funds interventions as well as to increase the administrative, technical and human resources capacity of the beneficiaries especially in the field of project generation and management.

Specific objectives of this pillar are also given below:

- ✓ to increase knowledge and skills of the staff of the RCP – CIC on the programming, management, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and control of the RCOP,
- ✓ to increase knowledge and skills of the staff of the Internal Audit Unit of the MoIT on audit of the EU Funds,
- ✓ to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the process of management, monitoring, evaluation and control of the RCOP,
- ✓ to ensure efficient handling of the work of the Sectoral Monitoring Committee and Project Selection Committees,
- ✓ to purchase and installation of hardware, software and other office equipment required for management, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and control of the RCOP,
- ✓ to increase knowledge and skills of the beneficiaries on the project formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation,
- ✓ to support the beneficiaries in the preparation of the ToR, technical specifications, tender documentation etc.

#### **Activities**

The budget allocated to the Technical Assistance Priority of the RCOP shall not be used until the conferral of management by the Commission to Turkish authorities and the signature of the Framework and Financing Agreements between Turkish Government and the Commission. Therefore, the currently available EU programmes such as SEI (Support to European Integration Programme) will be used in order to meet the short term training needs of the potential beneficiaries.

In this respect, in order to train the potential beneficiaries on the IPA system and the programme, logic and tools of project preparation, preparation of OIS, TORs and additional documents necessary for project application two Terms of References have been prepared and

submitted to the SPO to be financed under SEI framework contracts. Under this project, 13 training seminars will be organised in the target region of the RCOP between July - December 2008.

After the Commission decision on conferral of decentralized management the budget allocated to the Technical Assistance Priority of the RCOP will be released. This budget will also be used to improve the institutional and human resources capacity of the RCP – CIC and other institutions involved in the implementation of the RCOP.

In this respect, below given activities will be carried out through the Technical Assistance funds of the RCOP:

- ✓ Organisation of a training programme for the staff of the RCP – CIC and the Members of the Project Selection Sub-Committees on the project appraisal and selection (September 2008).<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Organisation of training programmes for the staff of the RCP – CIC in the below listed fields prioritised in the Training Needs Analysis (March–April 2009):
  - Programme and project implementation including on the spot checks and verifications,
  - Programme financial management and control,
  - Programme monitoring and evaluation,
  - Programme design and management.
- ✓ Organisation of 2 training programmes for the staff of the RCP – CIC and the Members of the SMC on the monitoring system and tools under the IPA (April 2009),
- ✓ Organisation of a training programme for the staff of the RCP – CIC and the Internal Audit Unit of the MoIT and Audit Authority on the audit of the EU funds (May 2009),
- ✓ Organisation of a series of training programmes for the staff of the RCP – CIC, MoIT and central stakeholders in the below listed fields prioritised in the Training Needs Analysis (May 2009 – July 2009):
  - IPA and the RCOP
  - Project Cycle Management (PCM)
  - Project Development and Management
  - Project Fiches Development
  - Preparation of ToR
  - Preparation of Technical Specifications
  - Preparation and implementation of the infrastructure projects including on the spot checks
  - Project Monitoring and Evaluation
  - Tendering Process and Financial Management of EU-funded Projects
  - Irregularity reporting and management

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<sup>2</sup> This activity will be carried out under SEI financing.

- ✓ Organisation of a series of training programmes in the Growth Centres for the regional and local stakeholders in the below listed fields prioritised in the Training Needs Analysis (September 2009 – May 2010):
  - IPA and the RCOP
  - Project Cycle Management (PCM)
  - Project Development and Management
  - Project Fiches Development
  - Preparation of ToR
  - Preparation of Technical Specifications
  - Preparation and implementation of the infrastructure projects
- ✓ 6 study visits for the staff of the RCP – CIC and Strategic Coordinator on managing, monitoring, evaluation and control process of the RCOP (September – October 2009 / March – May 2010),
- ✓ 5 internship for the staff of the RCP – CIC in the European Commission and the selected EU MS (October 2009 for the staff of the Programming Department, November 2009 for the staff of the Monitoring&Evaluation Department, March - April 2010 for the staff of the Technical Implementation Department, May 2010 for the staff of the Quality Assurance&Control Department, May – July 2010 for the staff of the Finance and Contracts Department),
- ✓ Covering the costs of the activities carried out by the Sectoral Monitoring Committee (SMC) including administrative costs, organisation of meetings and other costs related to the Committee activities, including experts services as may be required (April / October 2009, April / October 2010),
- ✓ Covering the costs related to the evaluations carried out by external evaluators under a services Framework Contract (November 2009 - February 2010),
- ✓ Covering the costs of the monitoring visits and on-site checks (March 2009 – December 2012),
- ✓ Refurbishment of the office of the RCP – CIC including purchase of required office equipment (March – April 2009),
- ✓ Carrying out researches, studies, surveys etc. with link to the strategic priorities of the RCOP to support the implementation process of the RCOP. (March 2009 – December 2012),
- ✓ Providing technical support to the projects' beneficiaries for the preparation of ToRs, Technical Specifications, tender documentation (dossier) etc. (March 2009 – December 2012).<sup>3</sup>

### **Final beneficiaries**

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<sup>3</sup> ToRs, Technical Specifications, tender dossiers etc. of the first package of projects will be prepared under SEI funds.

- RCOP Operating Structure,
- RCOP Monitoring Committee,
- Project Selection Committees,
- MoIT including the Internal Audit Unit,
- Project beneficiaries,
- Other institutions involved in the implementation of the RCOP
- Public Institutions,
- Universities,
- Local and regional authorities,
- Chambers of Commerce and Industry,
- OIZs, SSIEs, TDZs, TDCs etc.,
- NGOs,
- Sectoral Associations,
- SMEs.

### **3.2. Establishment of the IT Based System for Monitoring and Financial Control**

#### **Objective**

MoIT has to establish, maintain and update an IT based reporting and information system for monitoring of the RCOP. All relevant data will be entered into the Management Information System (MIS). Both the Operating Structures and other bodies involved in control and implementation of the Programme shall if possible have access to this system.

Main tasks of the MIS will include:

- ✓ Provision of proper, efficient and transparent management of the IPA funds and national resources,
- ✓ Provision of the Operating Structure with the necessary IT tools that will enable:
  - to monitor and manage the implementation of operations and projects, from project selection to tendering and call for proposal, contracts, monitoring and audit, until to the final closure of the RCOP, in particular results whenever feasible and outputs,
  - to carry out and monitor financial transactions,
  - to ensure required reporting to the European Commission on implementation of the RCOP.

Under the project of the State Planning Organisation (SPO) named “*Support to State Planning Organization to Build Capacity at Central, Regional and Local Level to Implement Economic and Social Cohesion Measures in line with the pNDP*”, a common MIS will be designed for the Strategic Coherence Framework and the Operational Programmes under the third and fourth components of the IPA. Within the framework of the project, strategy paper defining the requirements and indicators for the each Operational Programmes and Operating Structures will be finalised. Based upon this paper a common MIS will be established for the Strategic Coherence Framework and the Operational Programmes under third and fourth components of the IPA by the SPO through national resources. Hence, the system to be developed at the level of the RCOP will be part of the larger system to be established by the SPO.

The system will also be designed and established flexible allowing either its further development or confinement according to the future needs.

Within this respect, the objectives of this activity are to ensure smooth operation and organisational and functional development of the system as well as to provide trainings to its administrators and the users on the system functioning so as to allow prompt access to data in all institutions involved in the process of the RCOP.

### **Activities**

Below mentioned activities will be funded under the TA Plan:

- ✓ Coordination with horizontal IPA bodies, SPO and other ministries responsible for components III and IV OPs,
- ✓ Design of the system (February– March 2009),
- ✓ Establishment of the system (March - May 2009),
- ✓ Purchase of equipment required by MIS administrators and users (March - May 2009),
- ✓ Preparation of training materials including user handbooks and guides (April 2009),
- ✓ Training of MIS users and persons involved in its administration (May 2009),
- ✓ Informative activities such as organising on-line help and training, information publications, possible direct contact, web information services, etc. (May 2009 – December 2012),
- ✓ Extension of the system to other bodies (CFCU, NF, NAO, AA) and final beneficiaries (June – August 2009),
- ✓ Ensuring its smooth operation and daily maintenance to ensure effective communication between all institutions and access to all essential data (March 2009 – December 2012),
- ✓ Continuous development and improvement of the system (March 2009 – December 2012).

### **Final beneficiaries**

MoIT as the system administrator (operator) and other authorities that use the system (NIPAC, SC, NF, CFCU and projects' beneficiaries)

### **3.3. Support to the Establishment of Finance and Contracts Unit within the RCP - CIC**

#### **Objective**

According to the IPA Implementing Regulation, Operating Structures are also responsible for arranging tendering procedures, grant award procedures, the ensuing contracting, and making payments to, and recovery from, the final beneficiary. Nevertheless, for a transition period till 2010 at the latest, the MoIT have delegated these tasks to the Central Finance and Contracts Unit (CFCU) as Implementing Agency.

Within this framework, a Cooperation Agreement has been concluded between the Operating Structure and the CFCU in order to clearly define the functions to be carried out by both sides during the transition period (2007-2010).

After the transition period, a Finance and Contracts Unit will be established in the Operating Structure and tendering, contracting, accounting and payment functions will be carried out by this Unit. In this respect, a Shadow Finance and Contracts Unit (FCU) has been established for the transition period with a view to prepare the Operating Structure to the execution of these tasks. In order to properly implement these functions, the utmost importance should be given to the establishment of required institutional capacity and development of skilled human resources.

### **Activities**

Below mentioned activities will be carried out:

- ✓ Organisation of series of specialist trainings and workshops, including one month placements (December 2009 – May 2010),
- ✓ Preparation of necessary documents (implementation manuals, guidelines etc.) for the operation of the FCU (March – June 2010),
- ✓ Providing expert assistance and consultancy services to the staff of the shadow FCU (2010 – 2012),
- ✓ Refurbishment of the office of the shadow FCU including purchase of office equipment (June - July 2010).

### **Final beneficiaries**

RCP - CIC, particularly the shadow FCU.

## **3.4. Publicity Activities**

### **Objective**

In order to make the public more aware about the assistance given under the RCOP, information about the Programme should be disseminated to the all interested parties and an effective information distribution channels should be established by the Operating Structure.

Under this activity, potential and final beneficiaries of the RCOP operations will be informed about the content, selection criteria and eligibility rules of the assistance offered by the RCOP through the information events (such as conferences, seminars, fairs and exhibitions), publications (such as booklets, leaflets and newsletters), electronic means (websites, databases for potential beneficiaries) and/or audio-visual materials.

### **Activities**

The budget allocated to the Technical Assistance Priority of the RCOP shall not be used until the conferral of management by the Commission to Turkish authorities and the signature of the Framework and Financing Agreements between Turkish Government and the Commission. Therefore, the currently available EU programmes such as SEI (Support to

European Integration Programme) will be used in order to meet the short term publicity needs of the potential beneficiaries.

In this respect, two framework contracts have been prepared and submitted to the SPO to inform the target region of the RCOP on the IPA system and the programme before the actual implementation of the RCOP. Under this project, 13 publicity and training seminars will be organised in the target region of the RCOP between July - December 2008. During these seminars information listed below will be given to the potential beneficiaries of the RCOP:

- ✓ the general presentation of IPA structure and specifically the context of the RCOP,
- ✓ logic and tools of project preparation,
- ✓ general information on project cycle management,
- ✓ instructions for the filling out of operation identification sheets,
- ✓ Preparation of ToR by using standard templates,
- ✓ Preparation of additional documents necessary for project application such as feasibility studies, cost and benefit analysis, environmental impact assessment etc.

Following these publicity and training seminars, “help desks” - consisting sectoral experts and officials from the RCP - CIC - will be established in the same 13 provinces, where the training seminars were organised, with a view to evaluate projects that have been prepared during the training seminars and developed till the time up to the establishment of help desks. As a complementary activity, booklets / brochures about the RCOP and training guidelines on project preparation and management will be published and disseminated.

Furthermore, in order to use the budget allocated to the Technical Assistance Priority of the RCOP the activities foreseen in the Measure 3.2 of the RCOP on “Publicity, Information and Promotion of the OP Measures” and in the Communication Action Plan will be carried out within the framework of the TA Plan:

- ✓ Providing professional PR assistance for the execution of the publicity activities, where necessary (February 2009 – December 2010),
- ✓ Designing a website (a web portal) for an on-going information about OP implementation, the changes made and reallocations (March 2009 – May 2009),
- ✓ Setting up an information exchange system (through the Internet, media, brochures, folders, CD etc.) for potential beneficiaries, economic, commercial, professional and other institutions on the contents of the assistance and accessibility of the IPA funds for implementation of specific projects (March 2009 – December 2012),
- ✓ Ensuring ongoing web site operation (maintenance, information updates, page modifications, promotion etc) (May 2009 - December 2012),
- ✓ Creation of a logo for use on all the RCOP publicity and communication material and a motto for the RCOP (March 2009),
- ✓ Preparation, publication and distribution of promotional materials on the RCOP (publications, brochures, folders, CDs and other possible formats) (March 2009 – December 2010),
- ✓ Organising conferences, training and workshops (such as press conferences, regional conferences, information meetings and media workshops) (April 2009 – December 2010),
- ✓ Establishment of help desks in the Growth Centres upon the launch of call for project proposals (March – April 2009).

Each activity to be carried out for the promotion of the RCOP will be detailed in the Communication Action Plan in terms of their implementation schedule and concrete budget.

### **Final Beneficiaries**

- RCOP Operating Structure,
- Other institutions involved in the RCOP implementation,
- Public and private institutions,
- Local and Regional Authorities,
- Universities,
- OIZs, SSIEs, TDZs, TDC, etc.
- Chambers of Commerce and Industry,
- Exporters Unions
- Sectoral Associations,
- NGOs,
- SMEs
- Media,
- General public etc.

### **4. Monitoring of Technical Assistance Services and Outcomes**

Technical Assistance activities foreseen in the TA Plan will be carried out by the Technical Assistance Provider under the supervision of the Technical Assistance Division of the Programming Department established within the RCP-CIC.

In this respect, monitoring of the implementation of the TA Plan will be done by the Technical Assistance Division. In order to monitor the implementation of the activities foreseen in the TA Plan, Technical Assistance Division will organise weekly meetings with the TA provider and TA provider will also monthly report to the Technical Assistance Division on the physical and financial progress achieved in the implementation of the Plan.

Furthermore, the Sectoral Monitoring Committee (SMC) for the RCOP will be also periodically informed about the progress in the achievement of specific objectives set out in the TA Plan.

### **5. Time Schedule and Budget of the Activities**

In order to define the implementation period of the TA activities it is assumed that the RCOP shall start to the implementation in the last quarter of 2008 at the earliest. The activities defined under the TA Plan will be implemented from the last quarter of 2008 to the end of 2012 in accordance with the time schedule set out in the Multi-Annual Work Plan for spending the funds allocated to the RCOP.

On the other hand, it should be bear in mind that any delay in the accreditation process and/or signature of the Framework and Financing Agreements will directly shift the time schedule of all the TA activities.

Nevertheless, indicative time schedule and budget of the TA activities to be implemented under this Plan are provided in ***Annex I***.