



NORTHERN PERIPHERY PROGRAMME

DATASHEET 9: Co-ordinating Interreg and Tacis

Please note that the European Commission has recently made several changes to the funding available for external countries, such as Russia. Please contact the Joint Programme Secretariat for further details.

In 1997, the European Commission launched the Tacis Cross Border Co-operation Small Project Facility – an initiative aimed at promoting co-operation between local and regional authorities in Northwest Russia, Western Belarus and parts of Ukraine and Moldova. For the time being, this facility will be the most suitable for funding Interreg IIIB Northern Periphery Programme project partners from the Northwest Russian region. The Tacis CBC Small Project facility is implemented according to Tacis regulations – these differ substantially from Interreg practice based on Structural Funds regulations. Still, steps are being undertaken to harmonise procedures at practical level.

The Tacis CBC Programme

Tacis comprises both national and multi-country programmes. Cross-border cooperation (CBC) is one of the multi-country programmes. It covers four partner States: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. The allocation for the year 2001 was 23 million EUR. The Tacis regulation defines the purpose of cross-border co-operation as:

- assisting border regions in overcoming their specific developmental problems;
- encouraging the linking of networks on both sides of the border, e.g. border crossing facilities;
- accelerating the transformation process in the partner States through their cooperation with border regions in the European Union or Central and Eastern Europe; and
- reducing trans-boundary environmental risks and pollution.

The Tacis CBC Indicative Programme for 2000-2003 provides funding for three main areas of co-operation and for a small project facility as follows:

- 40–50% for development of infrastructure networks (border crossings);
- 15–25% for promotion of environmental protection and the management of natural resources;
- 15–25% for support to the private sector and assistance for economic development;
- 10–25% for small projects.

Type of projects under Tacis

The small projects facility

The small project facility offers scope for regional and local authorities to participate directly in cross-border co-operation. The projects are usually worth between EUR 50,000 and EUR 200,000 and they are organised on a call for proposals basis. Local and regional authorities are the main groups concerned. Project proposals are submitted

directly to the EuropeAid service of the European Commission, which then selects the best projects once a year.

Small projects offer opportunities for linking with Interreg projects. They can be organised at regional or local level, the funding size ensures that they are manageable, and the range of subjects that can be supported is wider than for cross-border large-scale projects. In general, the Small Project Facility, which supports small cross-border projects, assists projects that address a common problem or help to develop the partners' competencies in the areas of administrative reforms, local economic development, social affairs, environment and energy efficiency.

Although the Tacis CBC programme is the Tacis programme which can most obviously benefit from improved co-ordination with Interreg, it is not the only one. Local authorities should take into account the possibilities of co-ordination through other programmes described below bearing in mind that all these programmes have their own application procedures.

The **Tacis national programme for Russia** supports projects across Russia, some of which can be located in border areas.

In addition, there is a **Baltic Special Facility** which has a separate budget line. It is jointly managed by PHARE and Tacis according to CBC rules. The Tacis component will focus on border crossings and on health care.

Another relevant Tacis programme is the **Institution Building Partnership Programme (IBPP)**, which is part of each Tacis national programme. In the field of assistance for institution building based on partnerships, Tacis has supported government services co-operation (e.g. with the Customs programme) as well as local and regional initiatives and grass-roots organisations (such as LIEN which encourages nongovernmental organisations to work together, and City Twinning). The close involvement of the actors in the definition of the project objectives, which enhances their sense of ownership, has been a key success factor.

The Commission underlines that, although the improvements it is putting in place will improve the possibilities of co-ordination between Interreg and Tacis, the actual co-ordination itself must come from project applicants. They must take steps to link up projects and to ensure the quality of the proposals that they present. The Commission can set up a framework and encourage co-operation – only the authorities and organisations on the ground can actually ensure that the co-ordination leads to concrete results.

Preparing Interreg and Tacis projects

How to prepare and submit an Interreg project

The first step in preparing an Interreg project is to **contact the Interreg secretariat** for the programme which covers the location of the project. The secretariat is the contact point for the programme. It deals with the practical arrangements of the programme, such as receiving and assessing projects. They can also provide useful advice to people preparing projects. The contact details for the Interreg secretariats are given in DATASHEET 2.

A project proposal is made by **completing a project application form**, which is available for each programme. In the application, the project proposers have to justify their project, identify all the organisations taking part in the project, identify how it meets the objectives of the programme, and give targets that the project will achieve. In the case of Interreg-Tacis co-ordination, project proposals will have to describe the links they have with a parallel Tacis project.

The most suitable project proposals will be **selected by the Programme Monitoring Committee**, which consists of representatives of the national, regional and local authorities and other organisations. The European Commission sits as an observer on the Committee. Projects can normally be selected for approval, given conditional approval (because some information was missing, for example), recommended for revision or rejected. Conditional approval could also be used where a project's parallel application under Tacis had not yet been approved.

A selected project will normally receive a **grant letter**, which will set out the terms and conditions for the use of the grant. These will include providing regular reports about progress, monitoring results and keeping well-organised files and accurate accounts.

How to prepare and submit a project under the Tacis Small Project Facility

The Commission organises a **call for proposals** every year for the small project facility. This will set out the subjects to be covered by projects, who can submit projects, and, particularly important, the closing date for project submission. The Tacis CBC Small Project Facility call for proposals are advertised on the Tacis website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/tacis_cbc_spf/index_en.htm

Applicants must complete **the project application form** and submit it directly to the Commission. The Tacis application should be completed in parallel with the Interreg application described in the previous section. In this way, there should be coherence between the two forms. The Tacis application will have to provide details of the parallel Interreg application to ensure priority consideration in the selection process. The application should specify the status of the Interreg application – e.g. approved, conditionally approved or submitted. The Tacis Local Support Offices (see below) can provide assistance to applicants.

The Commission will then organise an **internal evaluation committee** to select the best projects for funding. Projects can normally be selected for approval, given conditional approval (because some information was missing, for example), recommended for revision or rejected. Conditional approval could also be used where a project's parallel application under Interreg had not yet been approved.

After approval of the (revised) application, the applicant will sign a contract with the Commission for the use of the grant. The contract fulfils the same role as the grant letter for an Interreg project. The Commission will expect to see a significant degree of co-ordination between linked Interreg and Tacis CBC projects. Co-ordination should include frequent contacts between all project partners, regular meetings, and the preparation of reports which both fulfil the contract/grant letter requirements for the respective instrument and identify the added value provided by the linking of the projects.

The **Tacis CBC Micro Project Facility** operates with an open deadline, meaning that applications can be submitted at any time.

Management of integrated projects

Integrated projects, i.e. projects co-financed by different EU-programmes, need separate administration and monitoring even if the project per definition is designed as one joint operation. The administrative procedures of the different Tacis and Interreg programmes might differ individually and should therefore be carefully considered by the project partners when budgeting the project as well as introducing administrative procedures for reporting.

Administration and reporting

Even if objectives and actions of the partners from the Member States and Norway, Greenland and Faroe Islands included in the Interreg IIIB Northern Periphery Programme are consistent to the actions carried out by partners getting their actions co-financed by the Tacis programme, the different parts of the project have to be administered and reported separately. This means on the one hand that the actions budgeted and co-financed by the Interreg IIIB Northern Periphery Programme have to be reported to the Northern Periphery Programme Secretariat according to stipulated reporting regulations, and on the other hand that the parts of the project being co-financed by Tacis have to be monitored by the Tacis programme secretariats. Despite this administrative splitting up of the project serious efforts of joint actions and consistent goal fulfilment is crucial in order to achieve the central objectives as well as the long term effects that are strived for in both the Interreg IIIB Northern Periphery Programme and Tacis programme.

Tacis Contact Points

For detailed information on the application and implementation conditions regarding the Tacis CBC Small Project Facility, please contact the persons listed below and/or consult the TACIS website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/tacis/intro/index.htm

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