

STANDARD PROJECT FICHE

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1. Basic Information

1.1 CRIS Number (Year 1): **BG 2006/018-343.02.02**

1.2 Title: **Establishment of Consultant Centres Network within the System of the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts**

1.3 Sector: Economic and Social Cohesion /Competitiveness

1.4 Location: Republic of Bulgaria

1.5 Duration: 14 months

2. Objectives

2.1 Overall Objective:

Raising the competitiveness of Bulgarian crafts enterprises.

2.2 Project purpose:

Strengthening and developing the capacity of the Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts (RCSC) and The National Chamber of Skilled Crafts (NCSC) to provide consultancy services.

2.3 Accession Partnership (AP) and NPAA priority

The objective and purpose of the present project correspond to the Priorities under Chapter 16 “Small and Medium-sized Enterprises” of the National Plan for the Adoption of the Acquis for the year 2005.

The project is in compliance with the purposes of the State measures envisaged in point 413 and 414¹ adopted on the basis of the following recommendations from the Monitoring Report of the European Commission of the year 2004:

“Attention should be given to efficient involvement of the business community and to effective policy implementation, including business services provision, at local and regional level.”

“Attention has to be paid to increasing the capacity of the different bodies involved, including regional and local level bodies, such as the new Agency for Promotion of SMEs. Implementation of SME policy will be a major challenge for these institutions,

¹ National Plan for the Adoption of the Acquis for the year 2005.

including, amongst others, the crucial role of coordination and facilitating the coherent provision of SME support services across the country”²

The project is also in compliance with the following recommendation, formulated by the European Commission in the context of the above remarks:

“Equally, NGOs representing SMEs at national and regional levels (Chambers, Branch Associations, Regional Development Agencies) should be encouraged to make their cooperation and coordination of service provision to companies more professional.”³

2.4 Contribution to National Development Plan

- The project addresses the following strategic medium-term goals stipulated in the National Economic Development Plan (NEDP) 2000-2006:
 - To achieve sustainable and balanced growth based on improved competitiveness at both sector and firm level as well as of human resources;
 - To reduce regional and social disparities in terms of employment, income and infrastructure quality.
- The project objective and purpose is in compliance with three key national development priorities of NEDP 2000-2006:
 - Improvement of competitiveness of the national economy;
 - Human resources development;
 - Balanced and sustainable regional development.

The creation of CC network will contribute to improving the competitiveness of the enterprises in the crafts sector. The consultant services provided by highly qualified experts will boost awareness and knowledge of the target group of entrepreneurs and craftsmen, therefore enhancing the potential of the human resources. The regional dimension of the project, laying the emphasis on a equilibrated distribution of the consultancy centres in 25 municipalities throughout the country will help overcome regional disparities in the crafts sector with regard to access to information and to highly qualified expert assistance.

The purpose of the present project is in full compliance both with the Bulgarian governmental policy for the SME sector⁴ and with the objectives set by the EU. The establishment of consultancy centers for the benefit of the member enterprises of NCSC will be an important contribution to raising awareness of the entrepreneurs of the national and European legislation in the crucial fields concerning their business.

² Regular Report on the Progress of Bulgaria towards Accession 2004, Brussels, 6.10.2004p SEC(2004) 1199, p.98

³ Regular Report on the Progress of Bulgaria towards Accession 2004, Brussels, 6.10.2004p SEC(2004) 1199, p.98

⁴ Annual Report on the State and Development of SME in Bulgaria 2004, prepared by the Ministry of Economy and Energy of Bulgaria, Sofia 2005, p.120

The importance of consulting services for the development of SME sector has been recognized by the state authorities in Bulgaria on a number of occasions. The National Strategy on Promotion of the Development of SME for the period 2000-2006 recognized the fact that SME in certain underdeveloped regions have disproportionately poor access to information and consulting services. In this respect the above document also acknowledged the necessity to better coordinate the process of provision of information and consultation services to SME⁵. The National Strategy for the Development of Bulgaria in the period 2000-2006 states as a primary priority raising the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy. In the light of this objective one of the weaknesses referred to in the SWOT analysis is the insufficiently developed SME sector. As a considerable disadvantages of the SME sector is recognized the poor access to business services and information. In this context, one of the recommendations in the SWOT analysis of the Annual Report on SME in 2004 of the Executive SME Promotion Agency is to develop information and consultation services in support of SME. In the Report on the economic challenges for Bulgaria until 2010⁶, elaborated by the administration of the Bulgarian President, SME in Bulgaria still face significant difficulties in processing and analyzing information. The information on the tendencies of the relevant market is limited and main sources of knowledge are personal contacts and impressions.

- Compliance with the Bulgarian National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013⁷ (NSRF)

The project is in compliance with the Strategic Vision and objectives of the NSRF. The implementation of the project and its impact will be a contribution to the strategic medium-term goals under the NSRF.

Raising competitiveness of crafts SMEs will be a contribution to attaining and maintaining high economic growth in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. The training of 25 consultancy teams and the subsequent provision of high-level consultancy services to entrepreneurs in the crafts sector will be a contribution to improving the quality of human capital and employment rate in the crafts sector.

The project impact will produce a positive effect in three of the thematic areas set out as priorities in the NSRF:

- Development of competitive enterprises and improving the business environment – by improving entrepreneurial skills and behavior of crafts enterprises;
- Human capital – by training consultancy teams in 25 consultancy centers around the country and by improving business knowledge and skills of crafts entrepreneurs;

⁵ National Strategy on Promotion of the Development of SME for the period 2000-2006, p.2

⁶ Bulgaria 2010: economic challenges, Report Commissioned by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Sofia 2005, p.71

⁷ Draft Version of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 of the Republic of Bulgaria for the Programming Period 2007-2013, Draft Version of 14/04/2006

- Regional development – by establishing a comprehensive network of 25 consultancy centers across the country, thereby overcoming regional disparities.
- Compliance with the Operational Programme “Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy 2007-2013”⁸ (OP “Competitiveness”)

The project is in line with the Strategy of the OP “Competitiveness”, aiming at increasing the efficiency of enterprises. One of the problems identified is the poor spread of business-oriented services. It is recognized that the sector of information and consultancy business services in Bulgaria is fragmented and uncoordinated. Another problem is the weak or missing representation in the small towns, the weak connection between the real needs of enterprises and offered services. In this context it is considered a priority to improve the general operating conditions of enterprises and their knowledge through access to consultancy services.

In compliance with the strategy of the OP, the CC network established under the present project will support the development of management skills, widen the knowledge and improve the entrepreneurial behavior of the crafts enterprises. The network comprising 25 CCs will provide access to a unified package of services in big and small towns, thereby ensuring equal competitive positions to enterprises in all parts of the country. Possible overlap with the activities to be financed under the OP “Competitiveness” will be avoided.

2.5 Cross Border Impact

Not applicable

3. Description

3.1 Background and justification:

The present proposal for the establishment of a network of 26 Consultancy Centres (CC) within the structures of the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts (NCSC) has been designed upon the following background.

A major characteristic of the SME sector in Bulgaria is the overwhelming number of micro enterprises (90,2%) and small enterprises (8%)⁹. The majority of these companies can be qualified as crafts enterprises in view of their activity or nature. The average staff number at crafts enterprises is 8 persons. As opposed to large companies, crafts enterprises have insufficient capacity to manage various technical, organizational and economic problems, because of the lack of resources to employ experts in law, management, standardisation, certification, quality management etc. Therefore most SME do not have staff members able to tackle specific problems and develop sophisticated strategies in these specialised spheres. These circumstances

⁸ Draft Version of the Operational Programme “Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy 2007-2013”, April 2006

⁹ Annual Report on the State and Development of SME in Bulgaria 2004, prepared by the Ministry of Economy and Energy of Bulgaria, Sofia 2005, p. 22

have a direct impact on the enterprises' performance and result in poor competitiveness in relation to large companies. Studies of NCSC indicate that the prevailing number of crafts SME are still mainly concerned with retaining their place on the market in stead of expanding and modernizing their business. There are considerable omissions_in management due to unsatisfactory knowledge of the market, unrealistic business planning, insecure financial investments, insufficient knowledge and skills, investment mistakes, excessive economies, or hasty debt repayment. The majority of crafts enterprises haven't undertaken the steps necessary with view to the forthcoming EU accession because of insufficient awareness and lacking consultancy support. The prevailing attitude is characterized by anxiety about not having the capacity to implement various EU legislative requirements. In this respect crafts enterprises are excessively susceptible to the competitive pressure and market forces of the Internal Market. At the same time crafts enterprises are often unable to take adequate decisions when resorting to consultant services. They face difficulties in selecting the appropriate consultancy services out of the growing number of options available at local, regional and national level, while each of the various crafts requires specific consulting, information and approach.

The above stated facts provide the reasons for NCSC to propose the establishment of a network of 26 consultancy centers. The present proposal provides support for the establishment of a network of 26 consultancy centers within the structures of the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts. Regional consultancy centers (RCC) will be established at all 25 Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts (RCSC), that are members of the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts (NCSC). One National Consultancy Center (NCC) will be established at the NCSC in order to ensure the co-ordination between the network of the 25 RCC. The consultancy centers (CC) network will produce a unified package of services to crafts enterprises across the whole country. The establishment of RCC in some smaller towns that have been in a disadvantageous position compared to regional economic centers will ensure equal competitive positions to crafts enterprises throughout the country. Initially the range of services provided by the centers will be limited to several key fields in which consultancy services are mostly needed: law; accounting and finance; business management; standardisation, certification and quality management; environment. Subsequently this service package will be extended and enhanced based on the needs of enterprises and the market requirements. The comprehensive training programme under the project will ensure that teams of consultants at all 26 CCs are adequately trained and prepared to adopt a harmonized approach in services provision across the whole country. The information system developed under the project will support the harmonized functioning of the CC network and facilitate the communication between them. Entrepreneurs from the crafts sector will be able to take advantage of the services provided by the CCs in order to acquire new skills and implement more efficient methods of identification, analysis, management and prevention of problems. They will be better acquainted with EU standards related to production activities, quality management, energy efficiency and environment friendly production technologies. The establishment of the CC network will provide crucial support for crafts enterprises at all stages of their development: from the initial phase of starting up to becoming well established competitive companies.

The present project proposal is fully in compliance with the NCSC responsibilities and priorities. The project is a logical continuation of a number of initiatives NCSC has undertaken to enhance competitiveness of its member enterprises.

According to the Bulgarian Crafts Act, since December 2002 the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts represents the interests of crafts enterprises from 129 crafts, classified in 9 groups. NCSC comprises a network of 25 Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts in the country. NCSC is responsible for conducting a policy in support of the development of the crafts sector in Bulgaria. NCSC and its RCSCs are also responsible of the maintenance of public registers of crafts enterprises, masters and apprentices across the country. As a member of the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UEAPME), NCSC is committed to conduct policy in support of craft SME in compliance with the EU standards. The fulfilment of this goal is in accordance with the purposes and priorities of the present project. It is also in compliance with the National policy in support of SME and boosting competitiveness through enhanced viability of SMEs, as well as with the international obligations assumed by Bulgaria. The project is elaborated based on the strategic goals stipulated in the National Development Plan for the period 2007-2013; the Program of the Bulgarian Government, based on the priorities of European integration (more specifically the part related to the Accession Treaty and obligations), economic growth and enhanced competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy; the National strategy for SME promotion for the period 2002-2006 and the related working programme.

A number of initiatives in support of the crafts enterprises' competitiveness have been organized and successfully implemented by NCSC in partnership with UEAPME, UNIZO Belgium, the Chambers of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz and Munich and Upper-Bavaria, ZDH (Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks) and other partner organizations. NCSC participated in three multilateral projects under PHARE managed by UEAPME and in a number of bilateral projects financed by the German Federal Government, Bulgarian-Bavarian joint committee, the Flemish Government, the Swiss Program SIPPO and other institutions. In the framework of thematic forums, such as consultations and working meetings, workshops, seminars, conferences and training sessions, the NCSC and RCSC staff and member enterprises have become acquainted with EU legislation and the requirements Bulgaria has to meet in specific sectors in view of its EU accession. The Regional Chambers in the structure of NCSC have acquired certain experience in organisation of consultant activities in the framework of joint initiatives under international programs and projects. By becoming involved in the projects of NCSC under various forms the Regional Chambers strengthened their institutional capacity. In the course of their development they have been gaining economic and political influence at local, regional and national level. In parallel the Regional Chambers have been working on developing their services potential in order to meet the needs of their member enterprises. However, no integrated system for provision of a unified package of services to crafts enterprises across the country has been established yet. The National and Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts therefore recognize the need to develop a comprehensive package of expert consultant services in addressing the needs of their member enterprises.

By extending the administrative capacity and modernizing the structures of NCSC and the RCSC they will benefit from a wide range of potential advantages. This will

boost the image of NCSC as an organization providing wide-range support to craftsmen and better answer the needs of its member enterprises. The strengthened capacity of NCSC will enhance its prestige in the business community and among consumers. It will also solidify its position and ability to defend its stance before governmental institutions and local partners. By providing effective and reliable services to non-members NCSC will also increase the chances for attracting new members. With boosted financial resources NCSC will be able to better meet the needs of its enterprises. The provision of tailor-made consultant services to artisan entrepreneurs will enable the Bulgarian SME community to improve its stance and image in the framework of the Internal Market. These measures will enable NCSC and its structures to better fulfil the responsibilities of promoting entrepreneurship and competitiveness in the crafts sector, entrusted to them by the Bulgarian Crafts Act.

The implementation of the activities envisaged under the project will contribute to the harmonisation of services for crafts enterprises across the country and therefore boost their competitiveness at a regional level. These measures will help overcome regional disparities, while creating favourable conditions for sustainable development of a competitive SME sector. The impact of joining the Internal Market will be mitigated, while facilitating the access to international markets by helping SME raise their innovative capacity and awareness of international standards.

3.2 Sectoral rationale

Not applicable

3.3 Results

A) Technical Assistance Component

❖ Consultancy teams at the NCSC and all RCSC established

The consultancy teams will be established in the event of a personnel selection in which consultants for the National and the 25 Regional Consultancy Centers will be recruited. The consultants will be Bulgarian experts with higher education and over 3 years of practical experience in their respective field of competence: 1) law, 2) finance and accounting, 3) start-up businesses and business management; 4) quality management, standardisation and certification; 5) environmental management

❖ NCC and RCC consultancy teams trained in target areas

In the framework of a comprehensive Training programme the technical assistants will train the CC consultants on the methodology of rendering services at business CCs. The technical assistants will also introduce key EU legislation in the following fields: law; finance and accounting; start-up businesses and business management; standardisation, certification and quality management; environment. The technical assistants will support and supervise the practical work of the Bulgarian CC consultants during the Consultant Days.

The introduction and implementation of EU good practices and know-how will be laid in the foundation of consulting at CCs. On the basis of the training received under the project the CC consultants will have become aware of major aspects of and practices in consultancy within the EU. The CC consultants, being aware of EU standards will be encouraged to maintain the level in their future work. An added value of the consultancy services rendered by the trained consultants will be the focus on the specific needs of crafts enterprises. Since the consultant teams will specialize in providing assistance to RCSC's member crafts enterprises they will be able to precisely identify and meet the specific needs of entrepreneurs from the crafts sector.

❖ Network of 26 specialised Consultancy Centers created, using the best EU practices (1 National Consultancy Center at NCSC and 25 Regional Consultancy Centers at the 25 Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts)

The CCs will be flexible structures, operated from the administrative coordination units at the National and Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts. The consultants working for the CCs will not be full-time employees in the chamber system of NCSC. Full time-employed will be the administrative staff which will ensure the daily contact between enterprises and the consultants working for the respective RCC. Enterprises will call the office of the RCC to request a certain type of service. The co-ordinator will contact the respective consultant and set an appointment of the consultant with the entrepreneur at a mutually convenient time. The services will be provided by the consultants at the Regional CC or at the location of the enterprise.

The initial stage in the establishment of the CC network will be the implementation of the respective administrative measures and the regulation of all relevant legal issues. The next stage will be completed after the consultants and the administrative staff have been recruited and trained. The final stage will be completed after the creation of the Information System and the completion of supply of the technical equipment.

The CCs will be established on the basis of best EU practices, introduced by the technical assistants. Meanwhile the Bulgarian specifics and the particular needs of the Bulgarian crafts sector will be taken into account. The establishment of 26 CC within the structure of NCSC will ensure a network comprising the territory of all Bulgarian regions in a balanced manner. As the CCs network will comprise 25 municipalities, it will ensure equal opportunities also for enterprises in small towns that are in a disadvantageous competitive position. The wide access to specialized expert assistance to crafts enterprises will help overcome the "center-periphery" disparities in the artisan sector. While highly-qualified expert assistance is more easily accessible in the big city centers, the access to up-to-date information in some of the periphery regions is hampered due to the "distance-barrier". The creation of a comprehensive network of 25 regional CCs will ensure easy access to specialized expert assistance to the enterprises at a regional level.

The National Consultant Center (NCC) will ensure the co-ordination and harmonized functioning of the network of the 25 Regional Consultant Centers (RCC). The NCC and respectively its consultants will be responsible for providing all relevant up-to-date information and channelling it to all RCCs. At the same time the NCC will

maintain relations with the competent state institutions. Periodically NCC will organize training courses and seminars or other forms of training with the purpose of ensuring consistent professional qualification enhancement for the RCC consultants. NCC will ensure the maintenance of contacts between the RCC consultants and leading experts in the respective fields in the country on a regular basis.

❖ **Respective tools for the training of the consultants elaborated**

The “tools” are training materials elaborated by the technical assistants specifically for the training of the consultants at the CCs. The tools will underpin the training programme as a theoretical basis which will be used by the Bulgarian consultants to prepare for the training events in advance. In the framework of the project the following types of tools will be developed: A) 8 tools on the methodology of services provision and principles of work at the CCs for the needs of the consultants and the administrative staff B) 5 tools on key European legislation C) 1 tool on management and 1 tool on marketing for the administrative staff D) 1 training tool on the Information System.

❖ **Information campaign for the promotion of the activities of the consultancy centers carried out**

The information campaign on the project will consist of two components:

- Dissemination of information by means of publications in specialized editions, national newspapers, publishing of information on NCSC and RCSC web-sites and provision of information on the project at various events, such as national and international conferences, seminars, business forums and in the framework of relevant business support initiatives, organized by NCSC.
- Press conference with the purpose of providing information at the Consultant Day. Massive popularization campaign during the Consultant Day, organized simultaneously by the 25 regional CC.
- Distribution to enterprises of the popularization brochures on their services by the 25 RCCs.

The information campaign will aim above at all at raising awareness of crafts enterprises of the advantages of consulting services provided at the CCs within the structure of NCSC. Being better informed crafts entrepreneurs will be encouraged to resort to the assistance of consultants at the CCs, whose services will help Bulgarian crafts enterprises perform adequately and competitively within the Internal market.

B) Technical Assistance Component

❖ **Web based Information System in place at the consultancy centers, NCSC and RCSC**

As a result of the project activities a tailor-made Information System will ensure the effective functioning of the CCs. The Information System will provide access to all important information needed for rendering qualified consultant services in a dynamic economic environment. The information system will support the activities of: 1) The

CCs - by providing information the experts are in need of for their work; 2) the NCSC and RCSC – by ensuring an optimization of the processes, information streams and the data bases. The information system will enable an optimization and improved management of the processes at the CC network and enhance the coordinated performance between them. The information system will improve the capability of the CCs and NCSC respectively to answer the specific needs of the crafts enterprises.

❖ **Trained staff members of the NCSC and CC administrative staff, competent in the work with the Information System and the specific software and hardware**

The staff members at the NCSC and RCSC, who will be responsible for the work with the information system and the administrative staff of the CC will be trained on the Information System in the framework of 2 separate special training courses. By operating the information system the administrative staff will provide all necessary information and assist the consultant teams on a daily basis. The trained staff members, competent in work with the information system will ensure the effective coordination and harmonised functioning of the CC network.

C) Supply Component

❖ **Technically equipped consultancy centers**

During the duration of the project the technical equipment will be purchased and used for the successful conduct of the Training Programme: the theoretical part of training courses and seminars and the preparation of the Consultancy Days as the practical aspect of the training.

After the establishment of the CCs the technical equipment supplied under the project will be used by the coordinators and the consultants in their daily work. The technical equipment forms the necessary material basis for the effective start of functioning of the CCs.

3.4 Activities

A) Technical Assistance Component

❖ **Selection of experts for the consultancy teams for the NCC and RCC**

The establishment of the consultant teams will succeed in the event of a personnel selection prepared with the support of the technical assistants. The specific criteria for the selection of the consultants will be elaborated by NCSC with the help of the technical assistants. The selection will be conducted upon the following lines:

- **Selection of consultants for the NCC and RCC**

With view to their specific functions the NCC consultants will preferably be sought in the academic circles. University professors who were trained under previous NCSC

projects may be invited. Otherwise the NCC consultants may be experts with experience of over 7 years in their field and a working knowledge of English or other foreign language.

The RCC consultants will be experts with higher education and practical experience of at least 3 years in their respective field of competence: law, finance and accounting; business management and start-up businesses; standardisation, certification and quality management; environmental management. Specific experience in the field of business consulting and knowledge of English or another foreign language will be an advantage.

The consultants will not be full-time employees at the CCs. The RCC consultants will be paid on the basis of fees collected from businesses after the start of functioning of the CCs. The NCC consultants will be paid for their activities out of the proceeds collected by the Regional Consultants Centers for the first year. With the extension of activities of the CC network consultants subsequently may be full-employed.

Consultants will be motivated to become involved in the project because it will provide them additional opportunities for professional realization. The flexible way of functioning of the consultancy centers expectedly will be attractive for the consultants who may be people with liberal professions or free lance working experts, since they will have the opportunity to arrange appointments with enterprises at a mutually convenient time. Since the consultancy centers will ensure the marketing of services the consultants working for them will automatically gain access to a wide number of crafts enterprises and other SMEs interested. At the same time the consultants will have the opportunity to benefit from a comprehensive training programme and enhance their professional competence in the framework of the project. After the expiration of the project the consultants will continue to develop as “life-long-learning” professionals thanks to the training initiatives organized on a regular basis by the National Consultancy Center.

- **Administrative staff selection**

The recruited administrative staff for the purpose of the project will be full-time employed. It will include: 1 Manager at NCC and 1 co-ordinator for each of the 25 RCC (in sum 1 Manager and 25 Co-ordinators). The criteria for the selection of the 25 coordinators are: education in the field of economics or social sciences, at least 2 years of experience and good working knowledge of English.

The criteria for the selection of the Manager at the NCC is: higher education in economics or social sciences, at least 5 years of experience at a similar position, very good knowledge of English. The administrative staff will be full-time employed and will be paid from the annual budgets of NCSC and the RCSC in proportion 50%/50% for the first year. After the start of functioning of the CCs the salaries of the administrative staff will be provided on the basis of the fees collected from businesses and by projects that may be developed in future..

On the basis of the established criteria a wide-range personnel selection campaign will be launched. Advertisements will be published on web-sites in newspapers; and at the National employment agency offices. The selection process will consist of two stages: submission of applications and interviews. The contracts will be concluded with NCSC.

❖ **Elaboration of a training programme and provision of a targeted training, using the best EU practices in the following fields: law; finance and accounting; start-up business and business management; quality management, standardization and certification; environmental management**

A comprehensive training Programme will be elaborated by the technical assistants with the purpose of training the NCC and RCC consultants on the best EU consultancy practices in the fields of competence where consultancy service will be rendered. Specific training events will target the administrative staff of the CCs. The Training Programme comprises a sequence of targeted training initiatives designed specifically for the NCC, RCC consultants and the administrative staff. The Training Programme consists of two major parts:

A) *Theoretical training*, including courses and seminars

In the course of these training events the consultants will acquire the necessary theoretical knowledge on the specifics of their work. In order to boost the effectiveness of the seminars and courses specific training tools will be developed to provide sound theoretical basis for the training.

Training tools

Specific training tools on major topics will be elaborated by the technical assistants for the purposes of the training programme. In order to boost the effectiveness of the training events the tools will be provided and studied by the consultants, attending the training before the respective training events take place..

B) *Practical Training*, including the organization and conduct of Consultant Days. The Consultant Days are designed in order to create the conditions to observe and the practical work of the trained consultants before the establishment of the CC which will not be accomplished until the very end of the project. The Consultant Days represent the advanced part of the training with a focus on the practical aspect of consultancy services. After the Consultant Day events the consultants will discuss the problems arisen with the technical assistants and identify solutions.

Interactive Approach: discussions and evaluation sessions

An important characteristic of the Training Programme is its interactive approach, where the emphasis is laid on discussions and exchange of opinions at evaluation sessions between the technical assistants and the Bulgarian consultants to be trained. The purpose of the discussions accompanying the training events is to adapt the best foreign practices introduced by the technical assistants to the specific conditions in Bulgaria. In order to ensure the productivity of the discussions they will be concluded by the formulation of general guidelines on the work of the consultants in each specific field, the participants will have agreed on.

The Purpose of the evaluation sessions after the Consultant Days is to assess the practical performance of the consultants and to identify the good practices applied and the problems that have to be avoided in future.

A) THEORETICAL TRAINING OF THE CONSULTANTS

- **Training of the team of NCC**

With view to the specific functions of the NCC consultants who will be responsible for the professional qualification enhancement of all RCC consultants their training will precede the training of the RCC consultants. The training will be conducted by the technical assistants in the frame-work of a 3-day course where the NCC consultants will acquire the necessary theoretical knowledge on the essence of their responsibilities at the NCC. The training will be conducted on the basis of a tool on good practices and methodology specifically for the needs of the consultants at the National Consultant Center.

The NCC consultants will subsequently have the opportunity to acquire practical experience by becoming actively involved in the training events designed for the RCC consultants. The NCC consultants will moderate the discussions, accompanying the training events and formulate the guidelines agreed on by the participants.

- **Training courses on methodology for the RCC consultants**

The training will be conducted by the technical assistants with the assistance of the NCC consultants. The training courses programme and will be divided into two parts: A) general and B) specialised information..

- a) The first part of the training will be delivered in the framework of a 2-day training course. General information on the purpose, activities and way of functioning and the methodology of work at business CCs will be provided. The emphasis will be laid on the methodology and good practices in the provision of services at the CCs.

The training will be conducted on the basis of a training tool on methodology of work at business CCs. The course will be concluded by a discussion will be moderated by a representative of the NCC consultants. Purpose of the discussion will be to collect ideas and opinions on how the best practices presented by the technical assistants could be implemented in view of Bulgarian specifics. As a result of the discussion general guidelines on the work of the CCs will be agreed by the participants and formulated by the moderators from the NCC.

- b) The second part of the training will focus on the specifics in the consultancy services in each of the 5 fields in which services will be rendered. The training will be conducted in the framework of 5 parallel 2-day training courses.

The content of the courses will be based on 5 specific training tools elaborated by the technical assistants. The tools will be provided to the participants in the courses in

advance. The NCC consultants from the respective fields of competence will moderate the discussions after the courses.

- **Five seminars on relevant EU legislation**

The seminars will focus on relevant legislation in the 5 fields where consultancy services will be rendered. The seminars will be divided into 2 parts: a) relevant EU legislation; b) relevant Bulgarian legislation. The duration of each seminar, including both parts will be 4 days.

a) The first part seminars will focus on key EU legislation and good practices in the fields where consultancy services will be provided. The seminars will be conducted by the technical assistants. Specific tools will be elaborated for each of the fields covered by a seminar and provided to the participants in advance. The specific emphasis on EU legislation is necessary with view to the increased importance *acquis communautaire* will play in daily business life after Bulgaria's accession to the EU.

b) The second part of the seminars will focus on key issues in Bulgarian legislation in the fields where consultancy services will be rendered. Experts from state institutions and academic establishments in the respective field will be invited to deliver lectures on relevant national legislation. The participants will split in working groups, where the elaborations will be moderated by the NCC consultants.

B) THEORETICAL TRAINING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

- **Training course on methodology for the administrative staff**

A 3-day-training course for the CC administrative staff (1 Manager and 25 Coordinators) will be conducted by the technical assistants. The focus of the training will be on the methodology of work at the CC, including management, coordination and administrative functions of the administrative staff. The training course will be underpinned by a training tool on methodology of work at CCs

- **Training course on management**

A 3-day training course on management will be conducted by the technical assistants. The administrative staff will be trained on the principles of management and become acquainted with good practices implemented at business CCs. The course will be underpinned by a training tool on management. On the third day a discussion will take place on how these good practices can be effectively implemented within the system of the centers to be established. As a result of the discussion general guidelines on the principles of management at the CCs will be formulated.

- **Training course on marketing**

A 3-day training course on marketing will be conducted by the technical assistants. The administrative staff will be trained on marketing approaches that may be applied in order to ensure the successful functioning of business CCs. The administrative staff

will acquire general knowledge on marketing and acquire an idea of principles applied in strategic marketing, so as in practical aspects of marketing in day-to-day work with businesses. The course will be underpinned by a training tool on marketing for business CCs.

C) PRACTICAL TRAINING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

At the later stages of the project the administrative staff will become actively involved in the practical organization of the events under the project. By performing its co-ordination functions in the course of the project activities the administrative staff will acquire an idea of the practical aspects of their future work for the CCs network. This idea will be widened in the course of the study visit.

- **Study visit**

The administrative staff will visit the organization of the technical assistants with the purpose of becoming acquainted with the practical dimension of the consultancy activity at a well-established consultancy institution. The participants will have the chance to observe the actual work there in the course of one working week.

- **Evaluation session and preparation of the Consultant Days**

After the completion of the training courses and the study visit the administrative staff from all CCs will gather for an 1-day-evaluation session. The event will be moderated by the Manager of the NCC and attended by a technical assistant. The purpose will be to discuss the lessons learned from the study visit and how the good practices introduced by the technical assistants can be effectively implemented within the network of the 26 CCs to be established. Based on the conclusions from the discussions the administrative staff will adopt a unified approach for the preparation of the Consultant Days.

D) PRACTICAL TRAINING OF THE CONSULTANTS

- **Consultant Days**

- a) Consultant Day 1**

The first Consultant Day will be organized by the NCC and Sofia RCC with the support of the NCSC and conducted in Sofia. It will have the nature of a large-scale event which will fulfil the following major functions:

- Presentation and Popularization of the Consultant Centers network within the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts at a national level.

The massive information campaign that will accompany the event will present the CC network before the state institutions and popularize its services among crafts enterprises and other SMEs in Bulgaria. All interested entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to attend the event and benefit from consulting services for free.

- Becoming acquainted with the practical dimension of consulting

During the first Consultant Day only the RCC consultants from Sofia will have the opportunity to practically provide services to enterprises. They will be supported by the technical assistants, who will attend the Consultant Day. The teams of all the other RCCs will attend the event and observe the work of their colleagues rendering

services. They will gain an idea of the practical aspect of consultancy services and become acquainted with the type of questions asked by entrepreneurs.

- Identification of problems in consulting and provision of solutions

On the next day the teams from the 25 RCC, the NCC and the technical assistants will gather at a joint session to evaluate the First Consultant day, discuss the problems arisen and provide solutions. The lessons learned from the First Consultant Day will be taken account of in the second Consultant Day.

b) Consultant Day 2

The second Consultant Day will be a large-scale event in the form of consulting campaigns, conducted simultaneously at the 5 regional centers of the rest of the planning regions, (except Sofia). The Consultant Days organized at the different locations will last for two days. During the two days the consultants from the RCC from the region will rotate, so that every RCC consultant has a chance to consult enterprises. The event will fulfill two major functions:

- Presentation and popularization of the RCC to enterprises at a regional level

The Consultant Days will be preceded by a massive information campaign, organized by the administrative staff at the RCC. The information campaign will also fulfill a popularization function. The events will be attended by a number of artisan entrepreneurs, who will be offered consulting services for free.

- Acquisition of practical experience by the RCC consultants.

The services will be provided by the consultant teams from the region. In the course of the event the RCC consultants will have the opportunity to acquire practical experience and answer themselves questions of entrepreneurs. Each of the 5 simultaneous events will be observed by a technical assistant and by the consultants from the National Consultancy Center (NCC). The Consultant Day will be then evaluated and the problematic issues discussed at the concluding session.

- **Evaluation Session**

The concluding session will be organized by the consultants at NCC and will be attended by all CC teams and by the technical assistants. The purpose of the session will be to evaluate the Consultant Days and the performance of the consultants and the administrative staff. The problems occurred will be pointed out by the technical assistants and solutions will be formulated. The session will be concluded by the adoption of General Guidelines on the future work of the CCs as an integrated network.

❖ Creation of a network of consultancy centers, using the best EU practices: a National Consultancy Center within the NCSC and 25 Regional Consultancy Centers at all RSCSs.

The establishment of the consultant centers will be a process which will be supported by the technical assistants throughout the duration of the project. It will consist of several stages.

- **Administrative and legal measures for the creation of a National Consultancy Center (NCC) and of 25 Regional Consultancy Centers (RCC)**

The technical assistants will become involved and support the implementation of the administrative and legal measures for the creation of NCC and RCC. The persons responsible for conducting the initial administrative measures at NCSC will be the employees at the Regional Chambers of Skilled and at the NCSC office. At a later stage the administrative staff recruited for the CCs will also become involved.

The administrative measures will prepare the ground for the legal measures essential for the establishment of the CCs: adoption of Regulations on the status of the CCs, adoption of a Tariff on consultancy services by the Board of Trustees of the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts, etc. The guidelines on the practical aspects of work, elaborated in the course of the discussions accompanying the training events will help coordinate and unify the procedures and style of work at all CCs in the network.

- **Formation of the consultant teams**

The technical assistants will provide support for the conduct of the personnel selection and for the regulation of the major legal issues related to the activity of the consultants and the administrative staff at the CCs. After the end of the personnel selection campaign contracts will be signed. The permanent staff of the CC (1 manager and 25 co-ordinators) will be employed on the basis of a *labour contract*¹⁰. The consultants, not being full time employees at the CCs, will be bound by *civil contracts*.¹¹ A certain period in which the consultants will be obliged to work for the NCC and RCC within the structure of the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts will be determined.

- **Technical equipment of the CCs**

The supply of the technical equipment will provide the necessary material basis for the implementation of the project. The technical equipment will be used for the preparation and conduct of the training activities. After the completion of the project the technical equipment will be used by the administrative staff and the consultants in their work related to provision of services at the Consultant Centers.

❖ **Elaboration of tools for the training of the consultants and of brochures promoting the activities of the consultancy centers**

The elaboration of the training materials and brochures will proceed upon the following lines:

- **Creation of training materials by the technical assistants:** The technical assistants will be responsible for the preparation of the training materials and handouts which will be used during the training courses. A specific training

¹⁰ *Labour contract: regulated by the Bulgarian Labour Code; the object of the contract is prestation of work*

¹¹ *Civil contract: regulated by the Bulgarian Act on Contracts and Obligations; the object of the contract is prestation of a result*

tool will be elaborated for each training event in order to provide the essential theoretical basis for the training (16 tools in total). The tools will be between 40 and 60 pages long. The tools will be translated into Bulgarian and provided to the participants in the courses and seminars in advance.

- **Creation of brochures by the CC consultants:** after passing the training courses the 5 groups of consultants in the 5 fields of competence where consultancy will be rendered will define the specific type of services they will provide in each field. The administrative staff will prepare brochures on the services offered at the CCs in each specific field. One general brochure on the CCs will be elaborated.

The brochures will be distributed to enterprises in order to promote the activity of the CCs and to raise awareness of the importance of consultancy for successful business. The brochures will have an informative and popularization function.

❖ **Organization of an Information campaign for the promotion of the activities of the consultancy centers among crafts enterprises, partner organizations, public institutions and the media**

The information campaign for popularizing the project will consist of the following components:

- **Information dissemination:** Information on the project and the establishment of consulting centers will be disseminated by the National and the 25 Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts where CCs will be established. This will be done through:
 - a. publications in the specialized editions of NCSC, RCSC and of the branch associations;
 - b. information will be provided on a daily basis at the offices of RCSC
 - c. An announcement of the project will be made at all official meetings of the governing bodies of the NCSC.
- **The Consultant Day as a Popularization Campaign**
 - d. Organization of a Press conference for disseminating information on the Consultant Day initiatives.
 - e. Popularization of the CC services among crafts enterprises across the country.
 - f. Distribution of the popularisation brochures to enterprises

B) Technical Assistance Component

❖ **Design and development of an Information System.**

In view of its future development and European integration, NCSC recognizes the need of an information system for management of the processes and activities linked to the functioning of the CCs and its work as a whole.

- **Purpose of the computerized Information System**

The computerized information system (IS) will perform a number of functions that will permit:

- b) Data centralization
- c) Processes control
- d) Information transfer
 - From the Consultancy Centers to NCSC
 - From NCSC to the Consultancy Centers

One of the major priorities of the IS is raising effectiveness of the processes at NCSC and the CCs. For example the IS will help reduce the time to access important information in the data base on crafts enterprises or provide up-to date and precise information on time. The information presently available in the data bases of NCSC is insufficient. The computerized IS under the project will extend and enhance the possibilities for saving and providing specific information of different kind, important for consultancy as well as for statistical needs of NCSC.

The IS will enhance effectiveness by the following means:

- Ensuring coordination with and communication between NCSC and the CCs;
- Achieving higher precision and higher quality in information provision;
- Achieving higher precision in data transfer in different directions;
- Reducing paper usage, etc.

- **The information system will support the activities of:**

- a) The CCs – by ensuring coordination between the administrative staff and by providing information to the consultants for their work with enterprises.
- b) The NCSC and RCSC – by ensuring an optimization of the processes, information streams to and from the CCs network. .

- **Functions and capacity of the IS**

The computerized IS will provide a possibility to make automatic most processes, related to maintaining information data bases and key documents for the functioning of the CC network.

- **The major activities falling within the scope of the system:**

- a) CCs:
 - Creation of data bases, necessary for the activities of the consultants (for example: data bases on national and European legislation; standards; financing etc);
 - Data bases on expert-consultants in different fields throughout the country;
 - Operational statistics based on the data related to the services rendered.
- b) NCSC and RCSC
 - Summary, systematization and analysis of the information related to the activities of the CCs;

- Maintenance of a data base on training and qualification enhancement of the expert consultants working in the CCs;

❖ **Training on working with the NCSC Information System and the specific software and hardware, conducted by the technical assistants for the administrative staff of the consultancy centers, NCSC and RCSC.**

- **Two training courses on the information system**

- 1 course (2-day long) on the information system will be organized with the purpose of introducing the information system to the administrative staff of the CC (1 manager and 25 coordinators) who will operate the system on a daily basis

- 1 course (2- day long) on the information system will be organized

for the administrative assistants employed by the 25 Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts and the NCSC staff. As some of the functions of the information system will be specifically designed to meet the operational demands of NCSC and RCSC their staff has to become acquainted with the parameters of the IS. The training courses will be supported by a training tool on the information system, which will be elaborated by the technical assistants and distributed to all participants.

C) Supply Component

❖ **Purchasing of equipment and specific software for the NCC and the 25 RCC and installation**

Purchasing of technical equipment for the 26 CCs will ensure the necessary material basis for the functioning of the CC network. In the course of the project the implementation of this activity will lead to the achievement of one of the envisaged project results: establishment of technically equipped consultancy centers. The material basis ensured by the technical equipment will create the necessary conditions for the effective start of work of the CCs after the expiration of the project. At the same time it is an important prerequisite for creating a good image of the CCs as modern and prestigious institutions in the eyes of entrepreneurs.

- **National CC**

The National CC will have two rooms: an office room and a meeting room. The office room will be supplied with 1 computer configuration with the IS installed and the essential technical equipment that will ensure the daily work of the Manager of the National CC. One computer configuration and a laptop with the IS installed will be available for the needs of the NCC consultants on a daily basis.. The National CC will be supplied with all necessary technical equipment for the training events and the Consultant Day as planned in the project. After the completion of the project the technical equipment will be used for various professional enhancement events for the RCC consultants, organized by the NCC consultants.

- **Regional CCs**

Each CC will have two rooms: an office room and a meeting room. The office room will be the working place of the RCC coordinator, who will be reachable there by all enterprises interested in consulting. The meeting room will be used by the consultants for two purposes. In the first place it will be available for them for appointments with entrepreneurs for consulting at a mutually convenient time. In the second place it will serve as a meeting room for the consultant team and for various initiatives that may be organized by the RCC.

The technical equipment at the CCs will be used to support the conduct of the training events and subsequently the work of the training centers. It will consist of the essential technical equipment for the working place of the coordinator. One computer configuration and a laptop with the IS installed will be available in the training room for the needs of the RCC consultants. The laptop will be used by consultants when services are rendered at the location of the enterprise. Each training room will be supplied with the essential technical equipment necessary for consulting on a daily basis and for the organization of periodical events, such as the Consultant Day during and after the completion of the project.

3.5 Linked Activities:

The implementation of the present project will be facilitated thanks to the experience acquired from a number of linked activities NCSC has recently been involved in.

- **Linked activities under multilateral projects**

Under the Business Support Programmes I and II in the Framework of PHARE NCSC was involved as a partner in two multilateral projects managed by the European Association of Craft and SME(UEAPME) SME Excellence and SMECA.

A) *SME-EXCELLENCE, Business Support Programme I:* The objective of the project was to facilitate the integration of Central and Eastern European SMEs in the European Union by strengthening their business support associations with a view to fully developing the job creation potential of this sector.

B) *SMECA, Business Support Programme I:* Strengthening the activities of SME-Organisations in the CEEC to help SMEs to adjust to the Community acquis.

The leading organization under the project was the European Association of Crafts, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, UEAPME, based in Brussels. Partners were 20 business organizations: 10 from EU member states and 10 from the candidate countries. The bilateral partner of the Bulgarian Chamber of Skilled Crafts (the predecessor of the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts) was the Koblenz Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Germany.

The objective of the projects was to stimulate and foster the activity of SMEs and raise their efficiency and professionalism in the light of the forthcoming EU accession. Another objective of the projects was to strengthen the capacity of the partner organizations representing SMEs. The major activities included conduct of 8 seminars on EU legislation and the elaboration of training tools on EU legislation and study visits. NCSC ensured the involvement of key governmental institutions in the project and their representation at all seminars. The seminars were attended by crafts

entrepreneurs from the whole country. The budgets of the projects was respectively 2, 136,446.00 euro for SME Excellence, and 1,052,754.00 euro for SMECA, with own participation 10%. The funding was provided by the European Commission and managed by the leading partner UEAPME.

C) SME FIT (2003-2005), Business Support Programme II:

The leading organization under the project was the European Association of Crafts, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UEAPME), based in Brussels. The NCSC was a partner organization under the project with business and branch associations from Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The objective of the project was to raise awareness of SMEs in Central and Eastern Europe of the changes in legislation in the process of EU accession in the following fields: standardization, certification, quality management, health and safety at work, environment, social affairs and employment. Another objective of the project was to strengthen the capacity of the partner organizations representing SMEs. The major activities included seminars, elaboration of training tools and brochures and training of experts from the partner organizations. The budget of the project was 1, 874,932 euro, with 20% own contribution. The funding was provided by the European Commission and managed by the leading partner UEAPME.

A value added from the participation of NCSC in the above multilateral projects was strengthening of existing bilateral partnerships and the establishment of new durable partnerships with sister organizations from the EU. The development of subsequent projects, resulting from the bilateral partnerships with organizations in Germany and Belgium proved that NCSC has been recognized as a reliable partner by well established institutions in the EU.

- **Linked activities under bilateral projects**

A) Project Partnership Program of the Chamber of Skilled Crafts in Koblenz, Germany with Bulgarian Chambers and Unions (1997-2005)

The objective of the project was the development of self-governing structures in the crafts sector; The activities included: establishment of 4 vocational training centers to support adapting of vocational training to the needs of business, train-the-trainer initiatives, creation of training materials, establishment of the Bulgarian Chamber of Skilled Crafts (which subsequently was succeeded by NCSC), consultant assistance for the elaboration of the Bulgarian Crafts Act - on the basis of which NCSC was established, development of a system of services in support of crafts SME.

The budget for the whole duration of the project amounted to 1.200,000 DM and 120 000 euro for the consolidation phase in 2005. The funding was provided by the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation of Germany. NCSC was actively was a partner in the project and successfully fulfilled its responsibilities.

B) CREATOS Project with UNIZO, Belgium (2003-2005)

Leading organization was UNIZO, Belgium, whereas the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts was the partner from Bulgaria. The project objective was strengthening the capacity and development of service provision potential of the SME organizations in Bulgaria by transfer of Flemish know-how and good practices. The major activities included seminars, study visit and the development and adaption of training materials. The project was funded by the government of Flanders In the framework of a donor programme administrated by the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with own contribution 47%.

Running Projects:

C) STARTERSCOACH with UNIZO, Belgium (2005-2007):

The leading organization is UNIZO, Belgium. The leading partner in Bulgaria is the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts. Other partners in Bulgaria are: The Bulgarian SME Promotion Agency, the Regional Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Plovdiv, the Bulgarian Trade and Industry Chamber Plovdiv. The objective of the project is to support the development of start-up businesses through introduction, implementation and dissemination of the experiences from Flanders with regard to business start-ups. In the framework of the project training courses and study visits have taken place. The major event under the project will be the organization of a Bulgarian Starter's Day in Sofia and Plovdiv in 2007, based on the Flemish model. The budget amount is 169.856 euro with own contribution 15%. The funding is provided by the Flemish Government.

D) "Support to the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts for raising competitiveness of crafts enterprises by the development of their potential for participation in national and international crafts fairs and trade exhibitions" (2005-2006) with the Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Munich and Upper-Bavaria, Germany

The leading partner under the project is the Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Munich and Upper-Bavaria, where NCSC is the partner from Bulgaria.

The objective of the project is to raise the export potential of Bulgarian crafts enterprises. The goal is organization of a collective Bulgarian stand at the Munich Fair "Heim+Handwerk. The major activities include training of the NCSC experts on consulting of crafts enterprises on approaches to successful participation in international fairs." The project budget amounts to 51.122 euro. The funding is provided by the German Society for Technical Assistance (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Zusammenarbeit - GTZ).

3.6 Lessons learned:

In the course of elaboration of this project the experience under the above mentioned projects has been taken into account.

All linked activities the NCSC was involved in either focused on information dissemination and awareness raising in key fields for crafts enterprises, or aimed at the provision of services in specific fields. These activities significantly enhanced the administrative capacity of NCSC and raised awareness of its member enterprises of

various important issues. Yet each initiative was restricted to one or several particular aspects, which hampered the development of a comprehensive and sustainable system for services. A major lesson learnt based on the experience from the previous projects is that only by a comprehensive systematic approach could the existing information and serviced provision gaps be filled in. The present project fiche constitutes a wider and more comprehensive attempt to establish a unified consolidated system of CCs is therefore the logical continuation of these previous project initiatives.

4. Institutional Framework

IA

The Ministry of Economy and Energy will be the Implementing Agency and will have the following responsibilities:

- Allocation of funds to the contractors
- Verification all contract documentation and payment authorisation
- Overall monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Project Steering Committee

A Project Steering Committee will be established in order to coordinate and monitor the project implementation activities and will include representatives from MoEE, the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts, the Ministry of Finance and other concerned public bodies.

The main functions of the PSC are to provide strategic advice and recommendations for the implementation of the project activities and counseling on problem issues.

PIU

A Project Implementation Unit will be established at the Bulgarian SME Promotion Agency, including representatives from NCSC and RCSC, as set out in the document on the Administrative capacity. The PIU will be responsible for the technical implementation of the project.

PAO

The PAO has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the Programme is implemented fully in line with the Financing Memorandum and the government policy in terms of sound administrative and financial management of the project, including tendering, contracting, disbursement, accounting, payment and reporting procedures, and monitoring of the project.

The National Chamber of Skilled Crafts will be responsible for the implementation of the activities under the project. By the establishment of the consultant centers network under the present Project the National Chamber will have significantly strengthened its institutional capacity.

5. Detailed Budget

	Phare/Pre-Accession Instrument support	Co-financing			Total Cost
€M		National Public Funds (*)	Other Sources (**)	Total Co-financing of Project	
Year 2006 Investment support jointly co funded					
Supply	0,315	0,105		0,105	0,420
Investment support – sub-total	0,315	0,105		0,105	0,420
<i>% of total public funds</i>	<i>max 75 %</i>	<i>min 25 %</i>			

Year 2006 Institution Building support					
Technical Assistance 1	0,670				0,670
IB support – sub-total	0,670				0,670
Technical Assistance 2	0,090				0,090
IB support – sub-total	0,760				0,760
Total project 2006	1,0750	0,105		0,105	1.180

6. Implementation Arrangements

6.1 Implementing Agency

The Implementing Agency is the Ministry of Economy and Energy.

Ministry of Economy and Energy
“Pre-accession Programmes and Projects” Directorate
8 Slavyanska Str.
1046 Sofia;

The Implementing Agency will have the following responsibilities:

- allocation of funds to the contractor;
- verification all contract documentation
- payment authorization;
- overall monitoring of the project.

The Ministry of Economy and Energy will be the Implementing Agency and in that capacity it will conduct tenders, conclude contracts, allocate funds to the contractors, verify all contract documentation, authorize related payments, execute overall monitoring and evaluation of the Project.

6.2 Twinning

Not applicable

6.3 Non-standard aspects

There are no non-standard contracts or tender procedures envisaged under the project.

6.4 Contracts

The envisaged project activities will be implemented through 2 TA contracts and 1 Supply Contract.

7. Implementation Schedule

7.1 Start of tendering

The start of tendering will be in the first quarter of 2008.

7.2 Start of project activity

The implementation of the project activities will begin in September 2008.

Component A – November 2008

Component B – November 2008

Component C – September 2008

7.3 Project completion

The project will be completed in October 2009.

8. Equal Opportunity

The equal participation in the project by women will be assured during the selection of experts for the consultancy centres. Equal opportunities will be assured to female candidates during recruitment procedure. The observation of the principle of equal opportunities will then be measured based on the composition of the consultancy centres' personnel. The principle of equal opportunities for women has been consistently observed in the system of the National chamber of skilled crafts and therefore no obstacles for the implementation of this principle in the present project are expected.

9. Environment

The implementation of the project will have no negative environmental impact with view to the nature of the activities which will be performed.

10. Rates of return

Not applicable

11. Investment criteria

11.1 Catalytic effect

The project shall make a considerable contribution to improving the quality and attainment of a high standard of professionalism in services provision to SMEs in the crafts sector. The establishment of a network of consultant centres will be a progressive step in line with the recommendations of the European Commission to ensure a coherent provision of SME support services across the country and service provision to companies more professional.¹² The EU support under the present project will produce a catalytic effect for the achievement of the above recommendations which otherwise would not be possible with view to the scale of the project and the poor likelihood to attract financing from non-governmental institutions with view to its economic parameters.

11.2 Co-financing

The necessary co-financing for this project will be provided from the Bulgarian national budget.

11.3 Additionality

Investments from private donors are not envisaged.

11.4 Project readiness and size

The concept of the Project has been developed on the basis of the conclusions drawn from the recent reports submitted to the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts by its Regional Chambers and the Annual Report of the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts for the year 2004. Based on the evaluation of the current state of affairs a conclusion

8. Regular Report on the Progress of Bulgaria towards Accession 2004, Brussels, 6.10.2004p SEC(2004) 1199, p.98

was drawn that the range of services presently rendered at the Regional Chambers has to be extended and their approaches in consulting harmonized with the aim of providing up-dated information to entrepreneurs on a daily basis in key areas related to their economic activity. The reports, based on the practical day-to day experience of the 25 Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts, therefore highlighted the need for strengthening the capacity of the NCSC system to provide consultancy services and related information to crafts enterprises.

Project will start with technical assistance contract, aiming to strengthen the National Chamber and its regional offices. It will be followed by the second TA contract and the Supply contract. ToRs and technical specifications will be put on operation after an approval by ECD.

11.5 Sustainability

The Consultant Centers, established under the project will function as permanent institutions and will ensure the fulfillment of the project objective in the long term. The proposed activities are in full compliance with the governmental policy, implemented in the SME sector. This line of development is also in accordance with general EU policy and the Lisbon objective. The investments made under the project will be sustained on the basis of the income the CC will gain for the services rendered to crafts enterprises. The project sustainability will gradually be enhanced, since the teams of consultants are expected to extend in the mid-term, by recruitment of more consultants in the fields where higher demand for services is registered.

11.6 Compliance with state aids provisions

Not applicable

12. Conditionality and sequencing

The project will start after the signing of the Financial Memorandum between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the European Commission by the end of 2006.

The active involvement of the NCSC as a beneficiary organization will be crucial at all stages of the project.

ANNEXES TO PROJECT FICHE

1. Logframe in standard format
2. Detailed implementation chart
3. Cumulative contracting and disbursement schedule by quarter
4. Reference list of feasibility/pre-feasibility studies, indepth ex ante evaluations or other forms of preparatory work
5. Reference list of relevant laws and regulations
6. Reference list of relevant strategic plans and studies
7. Administrative capacity of the NCSC

Annex 1 LFM

	Project name and number	
ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSULTANT CENTERS NETWORK WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF SKILLED CRAFTS	Contracting period expires: 30 November 2008	End of execution of contracts: 30 November 2009
	Total Budget 1 180 000 EUR	Phare / pre-accession budget : 1 075 000 EUR

Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators /	Sources of Verification	
Raising the competitiveness of Bulgarian crafts enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in quality of Bulgarian crafts production - Increase in export activity by Bulgarian crafts enterprises - Participation of more Bulgarian crafts enterprises in International Fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Statistics data; - Annual report of the NSCS - NCSC data on export-oriented crafts enterprises 	
Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
Strengthening and developing the capacity of the Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts (RCSC) and the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25%-35% annual increase in the number of consulted craft enterprises - 40% increase in the number of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual reports of the NCSC - Annual report of the RCSC - Surveys made by NCSC and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Willingness of the craft enterprises to benefit from the offered services

National Chamber of Skilled Crafts (NCSC) to provide consultancy services	consultancy services provided	RCSC	- Lack of qualified experts in some of the regions
Results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
A) Technical Assistance Component 1.) Consultancy teams at the NCSC and RCSC established 2) NCSS and RCSC consultancy teams trained in target areas 3) Network of 26 consultancy centers created, using the best EU practices (1 National consultancy center - NCSC and 25 regional consultancy centers at the 25 Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts 4) Respective tools for the training of the consultants elaborated 5) Information campaign for the promotion of the activities of the consultancy centers carried out	- Number of consultants selected for training (130 persons) - Number of trained consultancy teams (26 teams) - Network of consultancy centers established by month 12 of the project - Number of elaborated tools - 26 information campaigns carried out (1 at national level and 25 at regional level)	- Project Reports - Lists of participants in training events - Project reports - Internal regulation of the NCSC and RCSC - Project reports - Project reports - copies of tools translated into Bulgarian - Articles and publications - Feedback from enterprises	- lack of support from the relevant business organizations

<p>B) Technical Assistance Component</p> <p>6) . Web based Information System in place at the consultancy centers, NCSC and RCSC</p> <p>7) Trained staff members of the NCSC and CC administrative staff, competent in the work with the Information System and the specific software and hardware</p>	<p>- Workable and accessible Information System installed at all consultancy centers, NCSC and RCSC</p> <p>Number of trained administrative staff of the CCs (26 persons)</p> <p>- Number of administrative assistants at NCSC and RCSC trained (26 persons)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receipt protocols, technical documentation - Project reports - List of participants in training - Feedback questionnaires - Project reports 	
<p>C) Supply Component</p> <p>8) Technically equipped consultancy centers</p>	<p>- Equipment and relevant hardware and software in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receipt protocols, technical documentation - Project reports 	

Activities	Means		Assumptions
<p>A) Technical Assistance Component</p> <p>1.) Selection of the experts for the consultancy teams of the NCC and RCC</p> <p>2) Elaboration of a training programme and provision of targeted training, using the best EU practices in the following fields: law; finance and accounting; start-up business and business management; quality management, standardization and certification; environmental management</p> <p>3) Creation of a network of consultancy centers, using the best EU practices: a National Consultancy Center within the NCSC and 25 Regional Consultancy Centers at the RSCSs</p> <p>4) .Elaboration of tools for the training of the consultants and of brochures promoting the activities of the consultancy centers</p> <p>5) Organization of an Information campaign for the promotion of the activities of the consultancy centers among crafts enterprises, partner</p>	<p>TA Contract 1</p> <p>TA Contract 2</p> <p>Supply Contract</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A change in the status of the NCSC - Changes in the composition of the respective teams

organizations, public institutions and the media

B) Technical Assistance Component

6) Design and Development of an Information system

7) Training on working with the NCSC Information System and the specific software and hardware, conducted by the technical assistants for the administrative staff of the consultancy centers, NCSC and RCSC.

C) Supply Component

8) Purchasing of equipment and specific software for the National consultancy center at the NCC and 25 RCC and installation.

Annex 2: Detailed Implementation Chart

Components/ Project activities	Q 1 07	Q 2 07	Q 3 07	Q 4 07	Q 1 08	Q 2 08	Q 3 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	March 09	Apr 09	Ma 09	Jun 09	July 09	Aug 09	Sep 09	Oct 09	Nov 09
Operational PIU	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Operational PSC		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
A) TA 1					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1. Personnel selection								X	X	X										
2. Training activities										X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
3. Establishment of Consultancy Centers								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
4. Elaboration of tools for the CC								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
5. Information campaign							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
B) TA 2					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
6. Development of an information system								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
7. Training on IS																		X		
C) Supply					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				

Annex 3: Cumulative contracting and disbursement schedule by quarter

Components	Cumulative contracting and disbursement schedule by quarter in MEUR					
	Q3/08	Q4/08	Q1/09	Q2/09	Q3/09	Q4/09
A) TA Contract 1 Contracting		0,670	0,670	0,670	0,670	0,670
Disbursement		0,536	0,536	0,536	0,536	0,670
%		80%				100%
B) TA Contract 2 Contracting		0,090	0,090	0,090	0,090	0,090
Disbursement		0,072	0,072	0,072	0,072	0,090
%		80%				100%
C) Supply Contract Contracting	0,420	0,420	0,420	0,420	0,420	0,420
Disbursement	0,252	0,252	0,252	0,378	0,420	0,420
%	60%			90%	100%	

Annex 4: Relevant studies used in the preparatory work on the project

- Annual Report of NCSC for the year 2004
- Annual Reports of the RCSC for the year 2004

Annex 5: Reference list of relevant laws and regulations

- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Act
- Crafts Act
- Statute of the National Chamber of Skilled Craft

Annex 6: Reference list of relevant strategic plans and studies

Strategic plans

- National Development Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2000-2006
- National Plan for Economic Development of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2000-2006
- National Regional Development Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2005-2015
- National Strategy for SME Development Promotion for the period 2000-2006
- National Plan for the Adoption of Acquis for 2005

Studies

- Regular Report on the Progress of Bulgaria towards Accession 2004, Brussels, 6.10.2004p SEC(2004) 1199
- Annual Report on the State and Development of SME in Bulgaria 2004, prepared by the Ministry of Economy and Energy of Bulgaria, Sofia 2005
- Bulgaria 2010: Economic Challenges, Report Commissioned by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Sofia 2005
- Annual Report on the State and Development of SME in Bulgaria 2004, prepared by the Ministry of Economy and Energy of Bulgaria, Sofia 2005

- Bulgaria 2010: Economic Challenges, Report Commissioned by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Sofia 2005
- Open Society Institute: Interim Civil Report on the implementation commitments in crucial areas with view to Bulgaria's preparedness for EU Membership, Sofia 2006

Annex 7 Administrative Capacity of the National Chamber of Skilled Crafts in Bulgaria

1. NAME OF BENEFICIARIES: National Chamber of Skilled Crafts

2. NAME OF PIU:

For the time of implementation of the project the following staff will be involved within the PIU:

- **Head of the project at NCSC - Ing. Rangel Tcholakov**, President of the Board of Trustees of NCSC , degree in engineering.

In the period 2000-2005 as a President of NCSC Mr. Tcholakov was in charge of the following projects:

- 7 international projects in the framework of PHARE aiming at raising awareness of EU legislation and boosting support for business associations and entrepreneurship (BSP 1 and 2, EIE and others)
- 4 bilateral projects for technical cooperation with the Chambers of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz and Muenchen and Oberbayern
- 2 projects in the framework of the Program of the Flemish Government in support of CEEC
- Project in the framework of the Swiss State Trade Promotion Program (SIPPO)
- Project of the Swiss Cooperation Development Agency (SDC)
- Pilot project introducing crafts dual system education, involving the Ministry of Social Policy and Labor, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz
- Youth employment project for the establishment of a National Crafts Training Center in the framework of PHARE

- **Project Manager (NCSC):**

A. Valeri Merodijski, Expert in standardization and certification, Degree in Engineering

In the period 1994-2005 Mr. Merodijski managed a project on technical assistance in the framework of PHARE and coordinated 3 other PHARE projects.

- **Project Coordinator (NCSC):**

Simona Staikova, Project Manager, Department "International Cooperation and Projects"

At NCSC. Master of Arts Degree in International Relations, 2005

- In the Period 2000-2001 Ms. Staikova was a project co-ordinator of 2 international projects in the framework of BSP I/ PHARE aiming at raising awareness of EU legislation and boosting support for business associations and entrepreneurship.
- Since 2006: Manager of 1 projects and co-ordination of 3 international projects at NCSC.
- Specializations in International and European Law.

➤ **Accountant:**

Evgenia Lakova, Financial manager at NCSC, degree in economics.

Mrs. Lakova is financially managing the following projects:

- 1 bilateral projects for technical cooperation with the Chambers of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz and Muenchen and Oberbayern
- 1 projects in the framework of the Program of the Flemish Government in support of CEEC
- 1 Project under Leonardo Program
- 1 Project in the framework of the Swiss State Trade Promotion Program (SIPPO)
- 1 Project of the Swiss Cooperation Development Agency (SDC)

➤ **Administrative and technical assistance:**

Dessislava Icherenska, administrative assistant, degree in management.

Mrs. Icherenska has been the technical coordinator of NCSC projects since 2003.

Experts at Regional Chambers of Skilled Crafts

➤ **Local Co-ordinators of the Project:**

- **Jasmina Ivanova** – Chairman of RCSC Vratsa, higher education in engineering

In the period 2002-2005 Mrs. Ivanova was involved in the following projects:

- Manager of Project “Youth employment project in the framework of PHARE”
“Education through practice”;
- Participation in the implementation of activities under the partnership project “Balkan Office for the Middle Class” of the German Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz at a regional level (in the framework of the bilateral technical cooperation with Germany)

- **Rumen Marinov** – Chairman of the RCSC Gabrovo, member of the Control Committee of NCSC, higher education in engineering
In the period 2002-2005 Mr. Marinov was involved in the following projects:

- Youth employment project for the establishment of a National Crafts Training Center in the framework of PHARE]
- Program of the Joint Commission Bulgaria-Bavaria;
- Program of the French Cultural Institute for training of masters at the Chamber of skilled crafts at Yvelin, France

- **Rositsa Popova** – Executive Director of RCSC Varna

In the period 2002-2005 Mrs. Popova was involved in the following projects

- Project Qualification services under the Program “Active Services for the Labour Market”
- Participation in the implementation of activities under the partnership project “Balkan Office for the Middle Class” of the German Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz at a regional level (in the framework of the bilateral technical cooperation with Germany)

- **Ivan Nikolov** – Chairman of NCSC Plovdiv, ex-Member of Parliament at the 38th

National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria, higher education in economics

In the period 2002-2005 Mr. Nikolov was involved in the following projects:

- Pilot project introducing crafts dual system education, involving the Ministry of Social Policy and Labor, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz
- Project STARTERSCOACH in the framework of the Program of the Flemish Government in support of CEEC
- Participation in the implementation of activities under the partnership project “Balkan Office for the Middle Class” of the German Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz at a regional level (in the framework of the bilateral technical cooperation with Germany)

- **Mesrob Engibarov** – Executive Director of RCSC Burgas, member of the Board of Trustees of NCSC

In the period 2002-2005 Mr. Engibarov was involved in the following projects

- Participation in the implementation of activities under the partnership project “Balkan Office for the Middle Class” of the German Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz at a regional level (in the framework of the bilateral technical cooperation with Germany)

- **Genko Genkov** – Expert RCSC Sofia

In the period 1998 -2005 Mr. Genkov was involved in the following projects

- Program ACDI/ VOCA
- Participation in the implementation of activities under the partnership project “Balkan Office for the Middle Class” of the German Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz at a regional level (in the framework of the bilateral technical cooperation with Germany)

▪ **Nevena Hadjieva:** - Executive Director of the RCSC in Blagoevgrad
Participation in 3 projects, implemented by the Municipality and NGOs.

▪ **Koljo Nikolov** – President of RCSC Vidin
Participation in 1 Project under PHARE and several regional projects

▪ **Nedko Pashanov** – President of RCSC Smolian
Involvement in 2 regional projects under PHARE.

▪ **Stefan Petkov** – President of RCSC Russe
- Participation in the implementation of activities under the partnership project “Balkan Office for the Middle Class” of the German Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz at a regional level (in the framework of the bilateral technical cooperation with Germany)

3. TOTAL STAFF OF THE BENEFICIARY: NCSC Staff members:

- 11 staff members NCSC and 6 experts /current number of staff/
- 11 staff members NCSC and 6 external experts /number of staff at the time of procurement and implementation of the project/

4. NUMBER OF STAFF TO BE INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT: The project will be implemented with the participation of 9 staff members from NCSC and 3 external experts working for NCSC, as well as 10 persons from the RCSC.

NCSC Staff members:

▪ **Ing. Rangel Tscholakov**, President of NCSC, degree in engineering.

In the period 2000-2005 as a President of NCSC Mr. Tscholakov was in charge of the following projects:

- 7 international projects in the framework of PHARE aiming at raising awareness of EU legislation and boosting support for business associations and entrepreneurship (BSP 1 and 2, EIE and others)
- 4 bilateral projects for technical cooperation with the Chambers of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz and Muenchen and Oberbayern
- 2 projects in the framework of the Program of the Flemish Government in support of CEEC
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- Project of the Swiss Cooperation Development Agency (SDC)
- Pilot project introducing crafts dual system education, involving the Ministry of Social Policy and Labor, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz
- Youth employment project for the establishment of a National Crafts Training Center in the framework of PHARE

- **Valeri Merodijski**, Expert in standardization and certification, degree in engineering

In the period 1994-2005 Mr. Merodijski managed a project on technical assistance in the framework of PHARE and coordinated 3 other PHARE projects.

- **Simona Hristova**, Head of Department “International cooperation and projects” at NCSC, degree in philology.

In the period 2000-2005 Mrs. Hristova coordinated the following projects:

- 7 international projects in the framework of PHARE aiming at raising awareness of EU legislation and boosting support for business associations and entrepreneurship (BSP, EIE)
- 4 bilateral projects for technical cooperation with the Chambers of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz and Muenchen and Oberbayern
- 2 projects in the framework of the Program of the Flemish Government in support of CEEC
- Project in the framework of the Swiss State Trade Promotion Program (SIPPO)
- Project under Leonardo Program
- Youth employment project for the establishment of a National Crafts Training Center in the framework of PHARE

- **Nikolina Kovacheva**, Secretary General of NCSC, degree in economics.

In the period 1996-1997 Mrs. Kovacheva managed two projects funded by USAID for institutional development and strengthening of the Federation of bakers and confectioners in Bulgaria.

In the period 2000-2005 she was involved in the following projects:

- 7 international projects in the framework of PHARE aiming at raising awareness of EU legislation and boosting support for business associations and entrepreneurship (BSP, EIE)
- 4 bilateral projects for technical cooperation with the Chambers of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz and Muenchen and Oberbayern
- 2 projects in the framework of the Program of the Flemish Government in support of CEEC
- Project in the framework of the Swiss State Trade Promotion Program (SIPPO)

- **Simona Staikova**, Project Manager, Department “International Cooperation and Projects”

At NCSC. Master of Arts Degree in International Relations, 2005

- In the Period 2000-2001 Ms. Staikova was a project co-ordinator of 2 international projects in the framework of BSP I/ PHARE aiming at raising awareness of EU legislation and boosting support for business associations and entrepreneurship.
- Since 2006: Manager of 1 projects and co-ordination of 3 international projects at NCSC.
- Specializations in International and European Law.

- **Maya Ivanova**, Head of Department “Crafts Training” at NCSC, degree in economics

In the period 1996-1999 Ms. Ivanova coordinated a PHARE project in the field of education for the Creation of a Center Model for Staff Qualification.

In the period 2000-2005 she coordinated the following projects:

- Project of the Swiss Cooperation Development Agency (SDC)
- Pilot project introducing crafts dual system education, involving the Ministry of Social Policy and Labor, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz

- **Evgenia Lakova**, Financial manager at NCSC, degree in economics.

Mrs. Lakova is financially managing the following projects:

- 1 bilateral projects for technical cooperation with the Chambers of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz and Muenchen and Oberbayern
- 1 projects in the framework of the Program of the Flemish Government in support of CEEC
- 1 Project under Leonardo Program
- 1 Project in the framework of the Swiss State Trade Promotion Program (SIPPO)
- 1 Project of the Swiss Cooperation Development Agency (SDC)

- **Rumiana Atanasova**, Legal advisor at NCSC, degree in law.

From 2004 Ms Atanasova has been consulting NCSC on the legal aspects concerning the elaboration and implementation of projects at NCSC.

- **Dessislava Icherenska**, administrative assistant, degree in management.

Mrs Icherenska has been the technical coordinator of NCSC projects since 2003.

External experts:

- Prof. Dr. Irena Tsinkolovska –Technical University of Sofia
- Ivan Mastikov – State expert, Ministry of environment and waters;
- Chief Assistant Dr. Valentin Ivanov – Technical University of Sofia

Staff members RCSC

Jasmina Ivanova – Chairman of RCSC Vratsa, higher education in engineering

In the period 2002-2005 Mrs. Ivanova was involved in the following projects:

- Manager of Project “Youth employment project in the framework of PHARE” “Education through practice”;
- Participation in the implementation of activities under the partnership project “Balkan Office for the Middle Class” of the German Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz at a regional level (in the framework of the bilateral technical cooperation with Germany)

Rumen Marinov – Chairman of the RCSC Gabrovo, member of the Control Committee of NCSC, higher education in engineering

In the period 2002-2005 Mr. Marinov was involved in the following projects:

- Youth employment project for the establishment of a National Crafts Training Center in the framework of PHARE]
- Program of the Joint Commission Bulgaria-Bavaria;
- Program of the French Cultural Institute for training of masters at the Chamber of skilled crafts at Yvelin, France

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National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria, higher education in economics

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- Participation in the implementation of activities under the partnership project “Balkan Office for the Middle Class” of the German Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz at a regional level (in the framework of the bilateral technical cooperation with Germany)

Mesrob Engibarov – Executive Director of RCSC Burgas, member of the Trusteeship of

NCSC

In the period 2002-2005 Mr. Engibarov was involved in the following projects

- Participation in the implementation of activities under the partnership project “Balkan Office for the Middle Class” of the German Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz at a regional level (in the framework of the bilateral technical cooperation with Germany)

Genko Genkov – Expert RCSC Sofia

In the period 1998 -2005 Mr. Genkov was involved in the following projects

- Program ACDI/ VOCA
- Participation in the implementation of activities under the partnership project “Balkan Office for the Middle Class” of the German Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz at a regional level (in the framework of the bilateral technical cooperation with Germany)

Nevena Hadjieva: - Executive Director of the RCSC in Blagoevgrad

Participation in 3 projects, implemented by the Municipality and NGOs.

Koljo Nikolov – President of RCSC Vidin

Participation in 1 Project under PHARE and several regional projects

Nedko Pashanov – President of RCSC Smolian

Involvement in 2 regional projects under PHARE.

Stefan Petkov – President of RCSC Russe

- Participation in the implementation of activities under the partnership project “Balkan Office for the Middle Class” of the German Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Koblenz at a regional level (in the framework of the bilateral technical cooperation with Germany)

Full time – 19 people

Part time - 3 people

5. The project is elaborated with the participation 5 staff members from NCSC.

6. – The ToR for TA will be elaborated with the human resources potential of NCSC with the support of NCSC’s partners in this field.
- The Technical specification for the Supply Component /B/ the NCSC will apply for the preparation under PPF.

7. SPO of the project will be Ing. Rangel Tcholakov, President of the Board of Trustees of NCSC.

Members of the Board of Trustees are:

1. RANGEL STEFANOV CHOLAKOV, Chairman

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branch: Reparation of medical technical equipment and electronics

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branch: Photography

7.ALEXANDER DIMITROV YASNIKOV

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branch: Locksmith

8.NEDKO STANISHEV PASHAMOV

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branch: Reparation of control systems

9.DANIELA DIMITROVA SPASOVA

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e-mail: divnamedik@dir.bg

branch: Cosmetics

10. LIUDMILA MARINOVA KUSHINOVA

5800 Pleven, 14 Esperanto Str.

tel.064/3 44 37 GSM 0887 424 005

branch: Optics

11.VALENTIN JIVKOV PANCHEV

6000 Stara Zagora, 59 Slavianski Blvd.

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fax 042/ 60 55 03; GSM 0888 261 860

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branch: Printers maintenance

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branch: Bakers trade

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branch: Reparation of control systems