



***Multi-Beneficiary Project  
“Training in Public Procurement in the Western Balkans and Turkey”  
(Project identification no. EuropeAid/12974/C/SER/Multi)***

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Steering Committee  
Turin, 14 July 2011**

***DRAFT***

***Participants***

***1. EC DG Enlargement***

- Mr Pascal Herry- EC Project Manager - Chairman

***2. OECD SIGMA***

- Mr Marian Lemke – Observer

***3. ITC ILO / ADETEF***

- Mr George Jadoun- Project Team Leader
- Mr Jean Philippe Nadal- Key Expert
- Ms. Veronica Benedettelli – Key Expert / Taking minutes
- Mr. Valeri Malotchko – Key expert
- Ms Emanuela Latini – Project Administrative officer – Observer / Taking minutes
- Ms Dina Podkopai – Project Assistant - Observer

***4. Beneficiary Representatives- SC members***

- Ms Reida Kashta (Albania)
- Mr Josip Jakovac (Bosnia Herzegovina)
- Ms Maja Kust (Croatia)
- Mr Ilaz Duli (Kosovo)
- Ms Mare Bogeveva Mikovska (Macedonia)
- Mr Aleksandar Argirovski (Macedonia) - Observer
- Mr Mersad Mujevic (Montenegro)
- Ms Sandra Krstovic (Montenegro) - Observer
- Mr Djordje Belenzada (Serbia)
- Mr Abdullah Korkmaz (Turkey)

***5. RESPA***

- Mr Aqim Emurli - Observer



These Minutes outline the proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee meeting of the "Training in Public Procurement in the Western Balkans and Turkey" project held in Turin on July the 14<sup>th</sup> 2011 at the premises of the ITC ILO Campus.

As initially decided during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting in Istanbul, the main purpose of this extraordinary SC meeting would have been to assess the quality of the first outputs of the translations of SIGMA material into the respective national languages. Unfortunately, due to weak market response to the first tender of translation launched by the Project a second Request for Quotations competition for the translation work was undertaken with better market response and a sufficient number of offers was received which are currently under evaluation.

The sequence of these Minutes reflects the attached proposed Agenda of the Meeting together with 3 additional topics suggested by the participants namely:

1. trainers' certification issues (Macedonia)
2. trainers' selection for TOT Phase II (Albania)
3. clarifications about NFP role (Turkey)

All participants to this SC Meeting received an advance a copy of:

- ❑ the draft Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Steering Committee meeting held in Istanbul on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011
- ❑ Annex K of the first Interim Report describing project activities implemented during March 2011.

NB.: Permission was given to have the proceedings of this SC meeting recorded on tape.

### **Introduction and welcoming speech**

The chairperson, Mr Pascal Herry, opened the Meeting by welcoming the participants expressing his appreciation for the work done so far on the project and highlighting the importance of this meeting both to check results and outputs produced by the Project up to date and also to brainstorm about future activities, related to:

- ❑ customisation of SIGMA materials to the national contexts
- ❑ translation of SIGMA Modules into national languages
- ❑ drafting of a "Model" National Procurement Training Strategy for each Beneficiary
- ❑ implementation of Phase II of Training of Trainers
- ❑ web platform for Phase II
- ❑ accreditation system for TOT participants of Phase I and Phase II.

He then asked all the meeting's participants to introduce themselves. Mr Aqim Emurli presented himself as the person in charge of the Training Department of RESPA, representing the RESPA Director, Mr Suad Music, who could not attend for unexpected family obligations.

Mr Herry informed the participants that this Project will be subject to external monitoring and he described the functioning of the ROM (Result Oriented Monitoring) which represents an additional scrutiny by the EC (using external consultants) during the project's implementation phase of all multi beneficiary initiatives which are lasting more than 12 months and with a budget greater than 1 Million Euro.

ROM procedure has recently been changed; in fact it is now foreseen that the EC external consultant/s will visit and report only 3 selected Countries among the beneficiaries (previously progress in all Countries was assessed).



The first monitoring mission for this project was initially planned for July 2011, but it has been decided to postpone it until October 2011 in order to put at ROM's disposal more outputs and results. During this mission, EC external experts will probably meet PPA/Os representatives.

Mr Herry exposed an overview of the most recent IPA Multi Beneficiary projects (launched or ready to launch) related to Public Administration Sector concerning the following topics:

- land cadastre in Western Balkans
- best practices exchange in financial management
- support to Parliamentary Cooperation in the Western Balkans.

EC is also planning to give substantial support to RESPA with the aim to allow, inter alia, an effective, operational and continuous follow-up of this PP project (an overall amount of 6 Million Euro is budgeted for RESPA).

SIGMA will also receive EC support at least until the end of 2012.

Mr Herry stressed once more that this project is one of the most important projects within the Public Administration Sector. For this reason in particular, he requested the meeting's participants to express their views on project's performance and gave the floor to each of the SC participants especially considering that some of them were also attending the just finalised Phase I TOT.

Without exception all beneficiaries' representatives i.e. Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey expressed their full satisfaction with the project as well as with the TOT training programme, its training materials and logistic organisation.

#### **Endorsement of the proposed meeting Agenda**

Mr Herry requested the participants' comments on the proposed "draft" agenda of this extraordinary SC meeting. Participants found the agenda to be satisfactory nevertheless 3 more topics had to be added (see page 1). ***Following to this the agenda was approved.***

He then gave the floor to Mr Jadoun in order to proceed with presenting the first item of the agenda that is to say the approval of the Minutes of the SC which took place in Istanbul on 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2011.

#### **Comments and approval of the "draft" Minutes of the second Steering Committee meeting held in Istanbul on 31 March 2011.**

Mr Jadoun went quickly through the content of the Minutes reminding the participants of a number of critical points which were further explained during his presentation as follows:

##### □ Translation of SIGMA Modules

ITCILO initially prepared the set of tender documents based on PRAG procurement rules; however following Mr Herry's clarification that there was no need to use PRAG, ITC ILO launched the tenders following its own procurement procedures.

Because of their huge content, SIGMA Modules were divided into 4 Lots and all translation companies deemed qualified were invited. The list of companies to be invited was generated following a market research conducted by ITCILO in addition to the names suggested by the respective PPA/Os.

The market response to this tender was rather weak and only 2 awards could be made namely: all the four lots were awarded for translation into Macedonian and only one Lot for translation into Turkish. Both companies are about to start the translation work. No responsive bids (for Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina) or no bids at all (for Albania/Kosovo) were received for the other beneficiaries.



Incorporating the lessons learnt from the first tender (in particular related to TOTs' advice to segregate Bosnia Herzegovina/Croatia/Montenegro/Serbia into two separate tenders, one for Croatia and one for Serbia, whereby Bosnia Herzegovina and Montenegro versions can be produced through minor subsequent editing work), ITCILO launched a second simplified tender through a Request for Quotations inviting even additional firms identified in the period between the two tenders.

During the week of 11 July, ITCILO conducted the evaluation of the second tender for translation into Croatian, Albanian & Kosovar, Serbian offers as well as the Turkish ones for the remaining 3 Lots. Awards will be communicated as soon as possible in order to start the translation work immediately. Mr. Jadoun expected that the second tender will result in comprehensive awards that will cover all lots for the eight Beneficiaries.

The timeframe for the delivery of the first draft of translation, taking into consideration summer holidays, should be expected during the first two weeks of the month of October 2011.

Mr Jadoun recalled that some of the SC members expressed reservation about their staff's availability and time constraints related to PPA's foreseen role in conducting a "quality check" of the translated SIGMA modules. The PPA representatives stressed the importance of the role of PPA in checking the translation and/or selecting trusted national experts to support this effort. Mr Jadoun also recalled that Mr Herry envisaged the possibility of a 2 months extension of project deadline which could offer more flexibility to the currently tight schedule for undertaking customisation and final quality check on the translation work. Mr Herry confirmed such a possibility with foreseen Project duration extension until 30 November 2012.

#### □ Customisation of SIGMA Modules

Whereas it is evident that PPA/Os staff would be the most appropriate, and that some incentive should be envisaged to the above staff in order to encourage them to undertake this time-consuming and demanding activity, the EU rules do not allow civil servants to receive remuneration other than their salary in the framework of EU funded projects. To overcome this obstacle without compromising the quality, all parties involved should find out a solution. PPA/Os should indicate some trusted national experts to be recruited. In such way, PPA/Os will only be in charge of a rapid final revision prior to the launch of Phase II which could be organised at RESPA (October 2011) for assessment of the quality and precision of terminology used in the translated materials.

#### □ Training of Trainers Phase I

The Minutes also described the content of the 1<sup>st</sup> TOT Module during which the presentation of SIGMA Module A had been squeezed in 2 days only, to leave enough time for the presentation of the Turin Learning Approach (TLA). Participants will have to express their opinion whether these sessions on training methodologies were sufficient or not. If deemed necessary a supplementary workshop on "training methodology" could be offered by the Project prior to the end of Phase II TOT or at any suitable time in 2012.

#### □ Trainers' certification

The issue of trainers' certification process on whether this will be national, regional or both was initiated during the second Steering Committee Meeting and became one of the main topics of this meeting.

Following to these additional explanations *the Minutes of the second Steering Committee Meeting were unanimously approved without changes.*

#### **Presentation of Annex K of the First Interim Progress Report by George Jadoun**

Mr Jadoun explained that this document describes the activities undertaken in March 2011; following the decision to hold the 2<sup>nd</sup> SC Meeting in Istanbul on 31 March 2011 to take



advantage of the SIGMA conference (although the first six months of project implementation expired on 31 March 2011), the First Interim Progress Report presented in the SC Meeting in Istanbul covered 5 months instead of 6 due to the "early scheduled" SC meeting.

During the presentation of the paragraph on "Preparation of tendering documents for the translation of SIGMA training Modules" it was noted that the words "following UN/ILO procurement rules" should be deleted, since the decision to apply ITCILO procurement rules instead of PRAG was taken afterwards.

***The document was unanimously approved as: Supplement to the 1<sup>st</sup> Interim Progress Report instead of Annex K and this Supplement is to be incorporated into the text of the First Interim Progress Report for the period 22 September 2010 – 31 March 2011 as an integral part of the Report in order to render the First Interim Report in line with the requirements of the contract i.e. covering six months period..***

Before the break Mr Herry asked about comments on TOT Phase I which then generated some discussions.

Representatives from Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo and Turkey (both SC members and TOT participants) considered SIGMA Modules a very comprehensive material including economic aspects, strategic issues such as procurement organisational design and contract management (Module G) as well as the role of the public procurement officer.

Serbia pointed out that, due to the huge bulk of information contained in all Modules, training workshops should have a longer duration.

Representatives from Albania and Macedonia (both SC members and TOT participants) shared the views of their colleagues, thus stating that there is always room for improvement, e.g. rephrasing some of the slides (this would also help customisation and translation activities), increasing practical aspects rather than academic ones, rebalancing Modules' duration giving more importance to topics such as e-procurement, review and remedies, contract management, including examples and exercises connected to the local contexts rather than to other Countries with different systems (Member States and Anglo-Saxon system).

Representative from Montenegro (SC members) expressed their satisfaction about the TOT Phase I results on behalf of the Montenegrin participants to the workshops and welcomed this opportunity to stress the importance of a sustainable involvement of RESPA and made a remark about the efforts that customisation process will require. Also, more should be done in terms of communication and awareness about the importance of this project and Public Procurement issues in general at the national level.

Mr Jadoun emphasized the importance of greater publicity for the Project and reminded the SC Meeting that a big event will be probably held in RESPA in Autumn (early October 2011) in order to prepare for the launch of Phase II of TOT through implementing a pre-final check on the customised and translated SIGMA materials.

Mr Herry added that sustainability, follow-up and advertisement are very important. It could therefore be a good idea to invite some media during one of the events to be held in RESPA. At this proposal Bosnia Herzegovina representative suggested that some media should be also involved during the implementation of II Phase of TOT. Mr Nadal added that to emphasize project sustainability after its completion, one of the best starting points could be the preparation of a good and detailed National Procurement Training Strategy since this involves all major institutions at the political and technical levels.

Mr. Lemke – SIGMA representative – replied to comments on Modules improvement, informing that the SIGMA Modules are a starting tool for further adaptation to the local context during the customisation phase.

The word "customisation" triggered additional discussions, summarised hereunder:



Albania representative stated that the Modules included too many references to the Anglo-Saxon system, which were a bit difficult to understand since they are very different from their local system.

Macedonia reiterated that only competent public procurement staff can provide an adequate customisation and provide the relevant local cases useful for training and therefore external consultants' products may be more of a burden on PPA/Os staff who will be ultimately responsible for the final revision.

Mr Herry reminded that the project's key experts as well as trusted local consultants can be a supportive resource for customisation.

Back to the comments on SIGMA Modules, Mr Lemke remarked that the latter will soon become partially obsolete when in the next two years the new EC Directives on Public Procurement – quite innovative - will be in force.

Mr Jadoun indicated that SIGMA Modules constitute a training resource kit with a wide choice of topics that could be selected by the future trainers on the basis of the intended duration, title and target groups of each training event.

Mr Herry finally concluded with the agreement of all the participants that this TOT Phase I was successfully concluded in terms of quality of training methodology, resource persons and logistics.

After the break, the discussion focused on the following:

□ Development of a "model" for the National Procurement Training Strategy for the 8 Beneficiaries.

Mr Herry recalled that it was agreed during the Istanbul SC Meeting that the Project will develop for each Beneficiary a "model" National Procurement Training Strategy (see pages 3 and 4 of the approved Minutes of Meeting of the Istanbul Steering Committee).

Mr Jadoun explained the Terms of Reference for the drafting of the Model National Procurement Training Strategy (Annex I of the approved First Interim Progress Report and circulated in the room for easy reference); to better understand the practical use of this "Model". He then gave the floor to Ms Benedettelli and Mr Nadal in order for them to report about the respective fact-finding missions implemented in Serbia and in Croatia during the month of May 2011 with the aim of starting the work on the development of a "model" procurement training strategies for these two beneficiaries.

**Serbia**

Ms. Benedettelli explained that at present the PP Training System in Serbia can be considered quite fragmented since it is regulated by different legislative provisions and implemented by multiple providers both at public and private level. Moreover there is no fully-fledged TNA that will establish clearly how many people should be trained and which are the concrete needs (basic, advanced, specific).

The legal framework for provision of training is constituted by the Civil Servants Act which establishes mandatory general training for civil servants without specifying subjects/content/duration/materials for training courses.

The Institution in charge for providing such training is the Human Resource Management Service (HRMS – SUK) located in Belgrade and delivering courses at its premises mainly using central government budget. In some cases, funds are also provided by international donors and/or EU funded initiatives.

SUK targets central administrations from which it receives training requests and participants' list. SUK uses a mixed group of trainers, some coming from the consulting, some from the academic world, some from cooperating institutions (e.g. PPO provides the trainers for PP courses). Methodology and material used are the classical ones: workshops



and seminars supported by power point presentations. PP course has 8 hours duration (1 day) and it is repeated more than once a year according to the needs/requests of Ministries. It is free of charge. Overall speaking, SUK system covers basic introductory civil servants training needs.

Another source of training is linked to the PP officers certification system. According to a 2008 Ministry of Finance secondary law, those Contracting Authorities (public and utilities sector) having a yearly turnover, more than 30 millions dinar have to employ at least 1 certified officer. The certification, which has no time limit, is obtained after passing an exam in front of a mixed panel composed of members from PPO, Ministry of Finance and Commission for Protection of Bidders' Rights. In order to pass such exam, preliminary not mandatory training courses are provided by private companies certified by the Ministry of Finance. Trainers are also certified by MoF and some of them belong to the staff of the PPO or of the Commission for Protection of Bidders' Rights. These courses have a short duration and mainly cover the mandatory aspects of PP law. Courses are based on the Manual elaborated by PPO covering main aspects of PP Law. All courses have a duration of 3 or 4 days and cost between 150 and 220 euro on participants' or their employers' charge. These courses are implemented both in Belgrade and in other locations of Serbia. It is envisaged that the needs for certification will be covered in 2 years time (2011 – 2012).

Apart from the above described mechanisms there are other initiatives dealing with training and/or awareness raising campaigns in the sector of PP. By the means of seminars, workshops, conferences, specific trainings, private companies and NGO target a wider audience of PP operators such as small Contracting Authorities, Municipalities and bidders. Materials and costs vary from case to case. Public institutions, such as SEIO (Serbian European Integration Office), deliver training or assistance to Ministries in complying with EU Acquis towards accession while institutions like the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SKGO) deliver direct support to local level operators (Municipalities); this occurs via international or EU funds but also through beneficiaries' funds.

Nevertheless, some key actors are still not covered by the system, such as the auditors and courts personnel (judicial system).

It is common opinion that training in PP should expand its target groups, amplify its content, improve the quality of the material used, utilise more numerous and skilled trainers. The system lacks in coordination and homogenisation of contents and inputs.

The fact that Serbia would need a comprehensive public procurement training system is also stated inside the draft Strategy plan for the development of the Serbian Procurement System (2011-2014) recently produced by the Twinning Project in cooperation with all the main relevant stakeholders and still in its finalisation phase.

Additionally it has to be mentioned that a complete new public procurement law is expected to be enacted at the end of 2011 or at the beginning of 2012.

The Law will probably introduce innovative elements in the system (e.g. centralisation and e-procurement) leading to substantial changes at administrative and institutional levels.

Given these circumstances, it seems more appropriate to start working on the strategy from the autumn onwards as key aspects of the possible new organisational framework will be then clarified and disseminated. The Serbian representative at the SC Meeting also seconded the notion to slow down the activities for development of the Model strategy until early 2012.

### Croatia

Mr Nadal recalled that Croatia volunteered to launch this exercise during the SC which took place in Istanbul but at the same time insisted on the need of taking into due account the already existing training strategy implemented at national level. A preliminary mission was therefore organised in order to meet with Croatian PPA and be informed about the current



and future legal frameworks concerning public procurement training, training policy implementation and results achieved until now.

The Croatian situation differs from the Serbian one since the PPA is fully mandated by the PP law to organise and monitor PP training. On the other hand, the two systems are very similar as regards their legal backgrounds and education policy elements since the Serbian system was partially inspired by the Croatian one.

The training policy is based on two legal pillars, the first one being the obligation for contracting authorities to employ trained public procurement officers, the second one being the basis for the organisation of the training of public procurement officers. This policy was designed in 2008 and achieved quite impressive results with more than 2500 trained public procurement officers. Main institutions involved were the Ministry for Public Administration Centre for Vocational Training responsible for State civil servants (PP officers) and 17 other organisms approved as training institutions for the other PP officers.

Beyond the specificity of Croatia as regards training policy, Mr Nadal outlined common issues related to this project activity and all the beneficiary countries:

- the first issue is the possible different contribution of the Project to training strategy according to the current situation: as Croatia already designed and implemented a quite satisfactory policy over the last three years, project efforts should be focused on upgrading and improving the existing system. For other countries, the Project could contribute to suggest a model for a training strategy to be proposed to the relevant responsible authorities in each system;
- the second issue refers to the global objectives of the Project: the Croatian case demonstrates that past efforts in training strategy and activities were undertaken in response to requests made by the EC as part of the process of accession negotiations. This example should serve to conduct similar processes in the other beneficiary countries.

Ms. Kust, representative of Croatia to the SC, considered Mr. Nadal's presentation as a fair description of the situation in Croatia.

After the presentation of Ms. Benedettelli and Mr. Nadal on Serbia and Croatia, the representatives of all beneficiaries were given the floor to expose the situation in terms of National Procurement Training Strategy in their respective contexts.

### **Albania**

In the framework of their on-going twinning project, a National Procurement Training Strategy has already been developed in draft. Once the draft report of this exercise will be ready, Albania will seek this Project's collaboration in revising and eventually optimising such document.

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina will discuss the issue together with the PPA Director – Ms. Dijinta Fočo – who will give an answer on how and when to envisage a National Procurement Training Strategy exercise in the country.

### **Kosovo**

A new Procurement Law in Kosovo should soon be approved by Parliament and will hopefully enter into force by the end of 2011. It does not seem wise to start a National Procurement Training Strategy before the Law is in force since it foresees relevant changes in the Training System and the organisations responsible for its delivery (training and implementing public entities will be given different roles and responsibilities).

### **Macedonia**



The representative from Macedonia pointed out that a Twinning Project concerning Public Procurement is about to start (kick-off meeting will probably take place in September 2011) and that the same project will produce, among others, a Public Procurement Strategy including a training component. Therefore it is necessary to avoid duplication of tasks and maximising synergies between the two projects. Similarly to Albania, Macedonia will provide us as soon as ready the output of the National Procurement Training Strategy results for scrutiny and appropriate action.

They finally stressed the point on the fact that Macedonia system is at the moment focusing on e-procurement and e-auction.

### **Montenegro**

The representative from Montenegro informed the SC meeting that in the framework of another IPA project, a Public Procurement Strategy had been developed and is made of 5 components, one of which is concerned with Public Procurement Training.

They will be pleased to receive support and comments on this Strategy before its presentation to the Government foreseen at the end of the year; for this purpose an English version should be provided to ICTILO/ADETEF team at the earliest.

### **Turkey**

The Turkish Training Department in KIK already has well established annual training programme implemented by local experts. Due to a change in KIK leadership, the representative of Turkey suggested to postpone the start of the activity on Procurement National Procurement Training Strategy until after September 2011.

### **□ Process for customisation of SIGMA material**

Mr Jadoun introduced this topic stating that Project ToR limit the scope of customisation to a level not exceeding 10% of the whole content of SIGMA Modules including the customisation of legal provisions and case studies selected from the local contexts. Mr Herry replied that ToR should not constitute a burden to the achievement of a well composed training package and that for this purpose an addendum to the contract should also be considered.

Mr Jadoun added that this activity, if performed to its full desired scope, requires more time than is foreseen under the Project and that it would necessitate the involvement of PPA/Os.

Macedonia pointed out that experts involved in the TOT were obliged to take holidays in order to participate to the workshops in Turin and that, for this reason, it is now highly presumable that they could not be involved in the customisation activity for lack of time.

Serbia could recommend good experts to undertake this job but in any case PPO will have to check all the material at a final stage.

Macedonia agreed with Serbia while Montenegro brought the example of a similar activity implemented by external experts which subsequently requested an additional effort by the public procurement agency's internal staff for quality, content check and revision.

Bosnia and Herzegovina added that the engagement of external staff would create content discrepancies.

Mr Herry concluded that customisation had to be considered a living process connected to the future evolution of the EU public procurement regime as well as National legislations and systems. Therefore, PPA/Os won't have to endorse the final customised training package, but only approve that it can be used for teaching purposes.

On the other side Mr Lemke offered the support of SIGMA in updating the Modules once the new EU Directives will be published. Moreover if some rephrasing is necessary SIGMA is positive about considering it.



□ Trainers' certification

Participants to the Steering Committee are familiar with the proposed certification scheme that Mr Jadoun summarised as follows:

- Written examination at the end of every workshop.
- Performance assessment where each candidate trainer will deliver 12 to 15 training sessions in TOT Phase II and will be evaluated by the trainees and monitored by Project's key experts.
- Each candidate trainer successful in the written examination and well evaluated in sessions' delivery will be given an attestation from ITCILO/ADETEF that she/he has passed the requirements.
- The successful candidate trainer will hopefully receive a certificate as National Trainer from her/his government/PPA.
- ITCILO/ADETEF cannot certify that the successful candidate is a National Trainer in her/his respective country but can give an attestation stating that the named candidate has passed all the requirements to become a Trainer in her/his country and EU procurement system.

However, at the end of the project also candidates attending training workshops during Phase II will in turn become trainers as foreseen in the TOR. Despite the delay in translation and customisation, this should be possible if the project is extended till the end of next year to allow ITCILO/ADETEF to finish training this second batch of candidates and supervise them in delivery.

Mr Jadoun proposed that on the basis of the size of the country, the participants to Phase II – decided on a country by country basis – could be either future candidate trainers or normal procurement officers (if the beneficiary deems so). In big countries, the trainers accredited in Phase I may not be enough to provide the required training for the whole country.

Some of the participants noted the following obstacles that may face automatic conversion of ITCILO/ADETEF attestation into National Certificate namely:

- The training is mainly on EU PP rules
- PPAs may not be entitled to issue certificates
- The training is run in English, not an official language of beneficiary
- National certificates are usually given for specific training programmes and not for a wider programme organised outside the country like this one
- Therefore, the issue of national certification may prove difficult especially because of existing certification schemes.

Mr Jadoun urged the SC members to work towards a Regional Certification Scheme by RESPA that may address most of the above concerns. He proposed that candidate trainers of Phase I, who passed Project's evaluation criteria, can potentially be certified as "Regional Trainers", while Phase II trainers should not have problems in acquiring national certification.

Serbian & Macedonia representative stated that the level of effort faced by the candidate trainers of Phase I is much higher than the one of candidate trainers of Phase II and this needs recognition.

Albanian representative agreed with her colleagues highlighting that Phase II curricula will be mainly based on National Procurement Systems whereas Phase I curricula had been based on EC Procurement rules.



Croatia representative queried the meaning of a Regional Certification: Mr Jadoun replied that a candidate with a Regional Certificate may deliver sessions on EC Procurement rules in the Western Balkans and not be limited to the respective national procurement laws.

Mr Jadoun envisaged that Phase I's successful candidate trainers can receive an attestation by ITCILO/ADETEF followed by a certificate as Regional Trainers issued by RESPA, whereas successful candidate trainers of Phase II will receive a National Certificate provided that the respective beneficiary can issue it.

The Training materials used for Phase II will be the OECD/SIGMA modules customised to suit each beneficiary's local context.

Macedonia representative asked about which recognition will be given to those participants of Phase II who are not candidate trainers. Mr. Jadoun replied that these persons may only receive an attestation of attendance to the TOT workshop (unless they also participate successfully in training delivery). However he remarked that priority for admission to Phase II should go to candidate trainers.

Albania representative underlined once again the difference between participants to Phase I and Phase II. The first should also be given from ITCILO/ADETEF an attestation of attendance to the whole Phase I.

Albania representative asked who will deliver the sessions on National Procurement Law during Phase II. Mr Jadoun replied that the National experts recruited by ITCILO/ADETEF who took part to the customisation exercise together with successful candidate trainers of Phase I will deliver those sessions.

Experts have been already identified by ITCILO/ADETEF and will be recruited in consultation with each PPA/O, but since the number of sessions each successful candidate trainer have to deliver is between 12 and 15, a good percentage of the training in Phase II will be performed by the successful candidate trainers with the support of ITCILO/ADETEF experts and the above national experts, taking also into consideration that the training will be in national language.

Mr Jadoun also asked the Steering Committee members their commitment to advertise or directly choose the candidates for Phase II. The selection of candidate Phase II trainers should be completed prior to November 2011, giving priority to advertisement process.

Croatia representative is concerned about the logistics for Phase II, in order to make Phase II participation more attractive.

Summarising the Regional Certification, Mr Herry proposed to go ahead with the programme and evaluate the possibility that, if the project will be taken over by RESPA in two years time, RESPA – although is still in its early days - may look into other example of regional certification - if they exist already - and consider the opportunity about issuing a certificate for this specific project. Probably RESPA will have to think about certification at regional level also for other types of specific training that will be organised when ReSPA will take over from ITC-ILO after 2012.

Mr Emurli – representative of RESPA – stated that RESPA is actually working on a certification system for future activities but at the moment RESPA is not in a position to issue any certification for the training conducted by ITCILO/ADETEF in Phase I. When RESPA will take over the project and will manage Phase III they may be in the position to issue a Regional Certification.

#### □ **Role of the National Focal Points**

Turkey representative asked about the role of National Focal Points. Mr Jadoun replied that they are liaison officers that can help in dealing with administrative issues and in those cases where the appointed NFPs are procurement experts then they can also be involved in activities like customisation or other issues (quality check on translation).



□ VAT exemption

Further to the exchange of e-mails between Mr Herry and Mr Jadoun, there is now a possibility to overcome this problem through the EC Delegations offices. The issue is that as the project is not in the portfolio of one specific country, some problems occur with VAT exemption for local expenditures. Mr Jadoun stated that ITCILO/ADETEF will try the mechanism proposed by Mr Herry which looks pretty straightforward should someone in the EU Delegation be responsible for the process. Each country-based EU Delegation would have to register the project and should give their prior clearance to every invoice issued by any local supplier; such clearance should constitute the basis for VAT exemption by the National Tax Authorities for each expenditure incurred in each country within the framework of this project.

□ Selection of candidates for Phase II

Each beneficiary will have the option either to choose directly the candidates or to advertise this opportunity. Mr Jadoun stated that ITCILO/ADETEF will provide before September the Information Note for advertising TOT Phase II. The timing for starting Phase II depends on Modules translation and customisation. It has been decided to send the Information Note once the timing is defined in order to put precise information in the advertisement.

□ Update of Workplan and Risk Register

Mr Jadoun confirmed that the above updates will be ready together with the Second Interim Progress Report, due for the period 1 April – 30 September 2011.

□ RESPA Meeting on Customisation

The RESPA Meeting should be after mid September and Mr Emurli stated that he will give more precise information on the date, but since there will be an important RESPA Governing Body session that is scheduled by end September 2011 therefore it is more realistic that the meeting will be organised in October.

□ The next meeting of the Steering Committee will take place in November, venue and date to be decided.

□ Mr. Herry concluded the meeting by informing all participants that the draft of the Minutes of this Meeting will be prepared in the forthcoming days, sent to him for approval and circulated to all participants by end of July/beginning of August.

□ Following the meeting the Albanian representative proposed Tirana as the potential venue of the next SC meeting.