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Twinning Project AZ/13/ENI/TR/02/16 (AZ/46)

NEWSLETTER No 1 of the TWINNING PROJECT

Strengthening the National Accreditation
System of the Republic of Azerbaijan

September 2018



INTRODUCTORY

Dear readers,

The issues such as improvement of the legislation in the field of accreditation, undertaking the institutional reforms, strengthening of the communication with international organizations, enhancing the skills of the personnel will be solved within the framework of this project.

Our objective is to contribute to the economic development of Azerbaijan through the accreditation system that meets the European requirements and the access of local products to the world market.

In 2017, the Azerbaijan Accreditation Center was admitted to the associate membership of the European Accreditation Organization (EA).

The purpose here is to ensure the availability of certification, recognized in foreign markets, for local products as well as for food products, through the international recognition of the conformity assessment system in Azerbaijan.

All of this is important for gaining a solid trust in front of foreign partners in implementing the scientific - technical cooperation and in the field of quality infrastructure of the Republic of Azerbaijan and for the local entrepreneurs to export their products without obstacle.

Dr. Namig Aliyev, BC Project Leader



Dear readers,

What is the meaning of accreditation and why do we need it? These are the essential questions surrounding our EU Twinning Project. To put it simple: It is the quality of products and services we strive for.



Individual consumers, companies or government agencies all expect that products and services have a particular level of quality. We need quality for the people of Azerbaijan and we need quality for trading on the international and the European markets.

The whole exercise involves three different layers: Fixing the requirements of products and services – you get the requests from your customers.

Checking if the requirements are fulfilled – that is the job of conformity assessment bodies (CAB). Providing evidence that the CAB have the competence to do their job – that is the task of AZAK.

Our experts from the accreditation bodies in Germany, Italy and Latvia share their own experiences to enable the management and the staff of AZAK to do their job according to international and European requirements and to make the government and business in Azerbaijan aware of the importance of accreditation.

Dr. Norbert Schultes, MS Project Leader

TWINNING

With this newsletter we would like to provide all interested parties brief information about the activities performed during the first year of running of the Twinning Project " Strengthening the National Accreditation System of the Republic of Azerbaijan" Twinning ref.: AZ/13/ENI/TR/02/16 (Az46)

The background of the project

The Twinning Project is a program financed by the European Union and jointly implemented by the consortium of National Accreditation Bodies of EU Member States (MS), DAkkS (Germany), ACCREDIA (Italy) and LATAK (Latvia) for the Beneficiary Country (BC) AzAK - Azerbaijan Accreditation Centre.

The project purpose

is to strengthen the capacity of the Azerbaijan Accreditation Centre (AZAK) in line with the requirements of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA)

The project components:

- Component 1 : Upgrading the legal and regulatory framework
- Component 2: Capacity Building
- Component 3: Institutional Capacity improvement
- Component 4: External Communication and International Networking

The value

About 1.200.000 Euro have been allocated to the project that will last 24 months starting from July, 1 2017



On 7th of September, 2017 the kick off conference of the project took place at the Boulevard Hotel Baku Autograph Collection. The event was aiming to launch and present the project topics to the stakeholders, the media and the public at large. In order to guarantee large public information about the start of the project a press conference was conducted and a press release was published.

Institutional capacity improvement



Consultancy on the development of an updating AzAK internal management system procedures ongoing.

Two workshops were held on Regulation 765, "The Role and Place of Accreditation in Azerbaijan for Regulatory activity" for regulators and Government, and "The benefits of accreditation" for the private sector, conformity assessment bodies, businesses' associations and consumers.





Training on ISO/IEC 17020 standard for AzAK assessors

SPECIFIC GOALS

AZAK prepared for participation in EA

AZAK became an associate member of EA (European co-operation for Accreditation) in November 2017 and participated at the EA General Assembly in May 2018. AZAK is also associate member of ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation).

Practical implementation of Regulation EC 765/2008 as regards the area accreditation

Gap analysis of the legal framework was conducted in the first quarter of the project, while during the second quarter of the project the draft Law on accreditation was developed.

PROJECT KEY DATA

Project duration: 24 months

- More than 140 man days of international experts.
- 4 component, 25 activities.
- More than 30 technical expert covering all the project areas.
- Study tours to Italy, Germany and Latvia on going.
- 10 trainings sessions, seminars and awareness workshops for targeted internal and external audiences and stakeholders.
- Joint assessments and follow up workshops with lessons learned for the technical staff and assessment team.
- 4 regular Steering Committee meetings held at quarterly intervals to promote effective management and monitoring the project activities.
- A Kick off Meeting (September 2017) and a Mid term Conference (September 2018) to officially present the overall objectives and achievements and results of the project.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS



Upgrading the legal and regulatory framework

Two missions were performed regarding development the new version of the national law on accreditation.

Capacity building

Trainings were conducted on conformity assessment standards and applicable EA, ILAC and IAF guidelines.

- ISO 9001:2015 "Quality management systems, Requirements"
- ISO 22000:2018 "Food safety management systems - Requirements for any organization in the food chain"
- ISO/IEC 17025:2017 "General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories"
- ISO/IEC 17020:2012 "Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection"
- ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 "Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems"
- ISO/IEC 17065:2012 "Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services"
- ISO/IEC 17067:2013 "Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes"

Institutional capacity improvement

Study tour to LATAK was organized to observe how accreditation process takes place in the national accreditation bodies signatories of EA MLA - Multilateral Agreement. Development of an updating AzAK internal management system procedures was also achieved.

External communication and international networking

Two workshops were held on Regulation 765, "The Role and Place of Accreditation in Azerbaijan for Regulatory activity" for regulators and Government, and "The benefits of accreditation" for the private sector, conformity assessment bodies, businesses' associations and consumers. A project for the development of the new AzAK website was developed and the institutional brochure of AzAK was realized in English and Azeri.



The first half of the Twinning project in numbers/ in a nutshell

- Our senior Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA) has spent 14 months (July 2017-August 2018) in Baku, providing day-to-day advice to AZAK with the help of 1 RTA assistant and 1 language assistant.
- 20 senior experts from German, Italian and Latvian National Accreditation Bodies were involved so far. Their work is structured by 4 EU member states (MS) Component leaders and 4 AZAK Component leaders.
- The project organised 25 activities with 122 expert days in order to provide consultancy, training and assistance in awareness raising to AZAK staff and to further accreditation stakeholders. AZAK staff went on 2 study tours to Latvia and to the EA General Assembly in Bulgaria.
- The 3 EU MS project leaders spent 36 expert days in Baku for preparation, coordination and monitoring of the project together with 1 AZAK project leader and 1 AZAK RTA Counterpart. They participated in the Kick off Conference of the project, the Awareness raising workshops as well as in the 4 Steering Committee Meetings.



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