



INTRODUCTORY REMARK

Dear readers,

With this newsletter we would like to provide our project partners, Azerbaijani and EU experts and all other interested parties with information about the new Twinning project between the Azerbaijan Standardization Institute (AZSTAND) of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), German Institute for Standardization (DIN), National Metrology Institute of Germany (PTB), Spanish Association for Standardization (UNE) and Swedish Institute for Standards (SIS).

This project is dedicated to strengthen the cooperation between AZSTAND and its peers in the EU. It aims to facilitate the transformation process of AZSTAND and to foster the harmonization of standards with European and international requirements for future accession to the WTO. Thereby, for the next 18 months the project will address three main areas: corporate governance, digital transformation and financial mechanisms. The project is led by Dr. Thomas Zielke (BMWi) and his counterpart Dr. Namig Tagiev, head of AZSTAND.

The future editions of the newsletter will inform continuously about the progress of the Twinning project. We are looking forward to a fruitful cooperation in order to realize the aims of the project.

Berlin, Baku January 2021

STRUCTURE

The project is structured into three components.

Component 1 Corporate Governance: targets the development of the national standardisation strategy, institutional roadmap and market surveillance mechanisms as well as further development of technical committees landscape, optimization of its procedures and processes.

Component 2 Digital Transformation: the main focus here is to develop a digital transformation plan for AZSTAND, strengthen brand awareness and communication.

Component 3 Financial Mechanisms: the aim of this component is to improve financial stability and independence of AZSTAND by analysing budgetary processes, developing a forecasting model and providing assistance to deep market analysis and customer needs.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The current project started officially on 1 November 2020 with a duration of 18 months. It is funded by the European Union within the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) with a budget of about 1 million EUR.

The Member State lead partner of the Twinning is the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), supported by the following junior partners: the German Institute for Standardization (DIN), the Spanish Association for Standardization (UNE) and Swedish Institute for Standards (SIS).



The overall objective of the project is to enhance the legal and institutional framework for the voluntary standardization system in Azerbaijan.

The specific objective of the project is to assist AZSTAND as a National Standardization Body (NSB) in addressing new legislative and regulatory requirements and improve its performance.

IMPLEMENTATION

The project contract was notified on 29 May 2020 but was suspended until 1 November due to COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason the official launch of the project took place with the virtual **Kick-Off** meeting on 4 November and was followed by the **first Project Steering Committee** on 2 December that approved the first Rolling Work-Plan. In order not to lose time the Consortium met several times remotely to discuss the Rolling Work-Plan and the implementation of the project under COVID-19 circumstances. This happened before November and on a voluntary basis. Thereby, in joint effort with the Beneficiary the first Rolling Work-Plan was drafted within a few weeks after Kick-Off.

The selection process of the two assistants has been conducted in parallel and remotely, while the Beneficiary started to prepare office space and other relevant equipment for the twinning team.

Twinning Team

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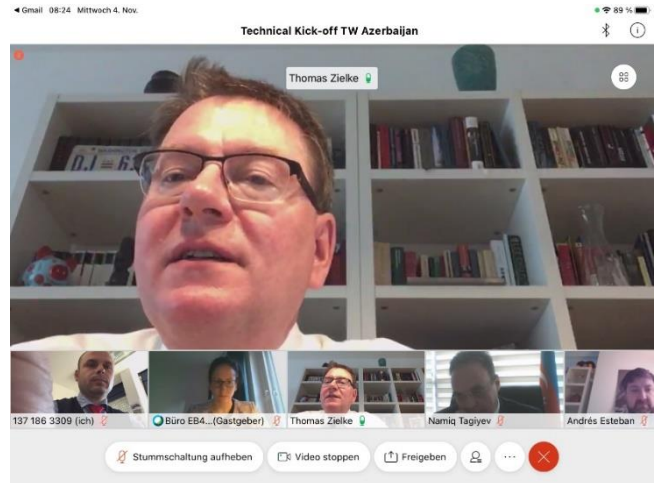
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Online Kick off meeting, 4 November 2020



BEGINNING OF ACTIVITIES

The first activity was carried out after the Steering Committee, right before the holiday season started. It was dedicated to the Component 1, analysing the legislative framework. Besides, this consultation was also used to gain more information about the other two Components to get a better picture of the status quo at AZSTAND. The Consortium expert met all AZSTAND component leaders, thus, first contact was established. The activity report will serve as a basis for the first consultations in other Components. It is likely that the traditional way of consultations will resume no sooner than autumn 2021, that's why experts on both sides will have to maximise effectiveness of remote session to keep a sound level of expertise provided and received.

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The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Denis Kaschuba, RTA of the Twinning, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

