

# Enterprise

## Case Study: Local and Regional Partnership Development (Romania)

### Background

The context for this project is a region with a poorly performing economy, one of the highest levels of poverty within central and eastern Europe and an ethnically, religiously and culturally diverse population. North East Romania continues to experience the problems that have faced other regions of central Europe whose economies have been in transition. In these cases the problems of unemployment following industrial restructuring, the down-sizing and liquidation of former state enterprises, together with post privatisation restructuring have had the most adverse economic and social outcomes.

As is always the case, it is among the most socially vulnerable parts of the community – the socially excluded – that the impact has been most severe and the target region for this project – the six judets (counties) of the North East Region – provides ample evidence of this.

Until effective regionally planned and locally managed public sector services have the capacity to provide quality services that are accountable to those who use them – and who increasingly will be required to pay for them – the wider goal of a pluralist democracy and well-regulated market economy are unlikely to be achieved.

### Project Information

Donor: DFID  
Value: € 5,175,000 (i.e. £ 3,450,000)  
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### Initial Situation

This four-year project was designed to demonstrate how public bodies and other actors in the poorer communities of the North East region of Romania can effectively work together to stimulate economic and social development, and reduce poverty and social exclusion through an inclusive regional development process.

### Key Customer Requirements

- To support Romania's successful transition to a pluralist democracy and well regulated market economy.
- To demonstrate to public bodies and other actors in poorer communities in the north east region of Romania that they could effectively work together to stimulate economic growth, to strengthen social capital, to reduce social exclusion and poverty through an inclusive regional development process.

### Our Response

To deliver this project, we used international experiences and best practice to assist the North East Regional Development Agency (RDA) and the Regional Pre-Accession Advisor in the development of regional partnerships and effective activities of the local RDA offices.

Project activities included:

- Supporting the North East region Regional Development Board (RDB) and Regional Development Agency (RDA) in the development of regional planning processes;
- Working with selected local authorities in the North East to strengthen their ability to co-operate systematically with private sector and civil society groups and to identify and respond to needs of all community groups;
- Assisting and strengthening local authorities in the North East in their ability to plan and ensure delivery of better basic services;

- Helping local authorities in the North East to undertake an active and appropriate role in local and regional economic development;
- Assisting and strengthening selected local authorities in the North East in their ability to raise and use resources efficiently, transparently and effectively;
- Assisting local partnerships to develop and implement projects that attract external funding; and
- Ensuring that the Government of Romania was engaged in effective policy dialogue on lessons learned from the project.

In addition, the project had a public awareness component which involved organising events throughout North East Romania and the neighbouring region of South Muntenia, together with cross-border co-operation work between Romania and Moldova and Romania and Ukraine.

### Improvements Achieved

Outputs from the project included:

- RDA staff trained in partnership development, monitoring and evaluation, and database management
- Establishment of regional partnerships required for the preparation and delivery of Structural Funds
- Increased capacity within the Ministry of European Integration to co-ordinate and manage the regional programme development
- Increased capacity within the RDA to participate in EU Cross Border programme with Ukraine and Moldova

### Conclusions / Summary

The project resulted in regional planning processes which reflect region wide economic and social interests. Local authorities in the North East now co-operate with the private sector and civil society groups to identify and respond to the needs of community groups.