

Enterprise

Case Study: Technical Assistance to SMEs (Romania)

Background

The Government of Romania recognises the importance of SMEs and micro-enterprises as the basis for establishing and developing a modern, dynamic and knowledge-based economy.

Since the early 1990s, the Government of Romania has introduced a number of measures to accelerate growth in the SME sector.

However, the density of SMEs and micro-enterprises is still very low when compared to European Union Member States but also to the average of the new Member and Accession States.

Project Information

Donor: EC Phare
Value: € 6,292,000
Dates: November 2006 - November 2007

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Initial Situation

In January 2007, Romania became a full member of the European Union. As part of the Phare Programming document and National Development Plan, actions considered important for this project related to developing the productive sector through support to SMEs.

Key Customer Requirement

The priorities for this project are

- to support institutional, human resources and technical capacity of the National Agency for SMEs and Co-operatives (NASMEC) to introduce and develop e-governance and to foster use of ITC by innovative SMEs
- to improve Business Support Services for SMEs
- to improve the access to finance of SME start-ups and micro-enterprises

Our Response

With its consortium partners, Enterprise Ltd is working on achieving the following objectives:

- Institutional Building of NASMEC for building capabilities and for implementing the priorities of the SME Strategy related to access of SMEs to ICT, BDS and Finance.
- Institutional Building of the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Housing following the Investors in People model.
- Introducing e-governance practices that improve communication between SMEs and public administrations at national and regional level for effective implementation of SME policies throughout Romania.
- Improving SMEs access to ICT via a SME-tailored portal for e-business to enable SMEs to better compete on the global e-marketplace.
- Enabling RDAs, Chambers of Commerce, regional offices of NASMEC, business associations etc to direct entrepreneurs and SMEs to professional and financial support.

- Delivering training to BSPs
- Providing technical assistance to NASMEC to develop its capacity to design, manage and implement a Voucher Counselling Scheme.
- Developing innovative financing instruments for the SME sector.
- Improving the capacity and awareness of microfinance institutions and SMEs to access financial support.

Improvements Achieved

The following are ongoing achievements of the project:

- Creation of a national network of Regional Helpdesks in all development regions.
- Organisation of study tours to UK and Poland, with others planned, for NASMEC to understand SME structures in these countries.
- Design and implementation of an awareness campaign for business development services.
- Design and implementation of an awareness campaign for the micro-credit scheme.
- Design of a research methodology for SMEs, BSPs and regional institutions to establish an awareness baseline for NASMEC.
- Training needs analysis and design of training programmes for Micro-Finance Institutions and BSPs on micro-finance, Structural Funds, business planning.
- Monitoring and evaluation system of a credit Scheme.
- Training needs analysis for the National Guarantee Fund for SMEs
- Development of e-portal for SMEs

Conclusions / Summary

This is a major, diverse and complex project which is supporting SMEs at a national, regional and local level. It is playing a key role in Romania's development and competitiveness as a new Member State through the many different initiatives which are being undertaken.