



European Union

Support to Confidence Building Measures Programme



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Minutes of the 10th Board Meeting

Tuesday, 14 April 2015

Members of the Board present at the meeting:

1. George Balan, Head of the Bureau for Reintegration, Government of the Republic of Moldova
2. Aneil Singh, Head of Operations, EU Delegation
3. Narine Sahakyan, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
4. Henrik Huitfeldt, Counsellor/Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden
5. Iulia Cozacenco, Political and Economic Officer/Projects Coordinator, British Embassy

Other participants:

6. Jarek Domanski, Project Manager, EU Delegation to Moldova
7. Doina Munteanu, Head of Programme, UNDP Moldova
8. Nicolai Moroz, Bureau for Reintegration, Government of the Republic of Moldova
9. Support to Confidence Building Measures Programme Team

I. Agenda

- 15.00 - 15.10 Opening Remarks**
Narine Sahakyan, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
Aneil Singh, Head of Operations, EU Delegation
- 15.10 – 15.45 Presentation of the Business and Civil Society project final results**
Victor Dragutan, Project Manager
- Presentation of the Community Empowerment project final results**
Viorel Albu, Project Manager
- Visibility**
Natalia Costas, Communications Consultant
- 15.45 - 16.00 Discussions**
- 16:00 – 16.10 Presentation of next phase objectives and key results**
Doina Munteanu, Head of Programme
- 16.10 - 16.25 Discussions**
- 16.20 – 16.30 Closing Remarks**
Narine Sahakyan, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
Aneil Singh, Head of Operations, EU Delegation

II. Presentation and Discussions

Ms. Narine Sahakyan, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative and SCBM Programme Board chairperson, welcomed the participants. She presented the agenda, mentioning it is the final Board meeting of the SCBM third phase, bridging to the new, fourth SCBM phase.

Mr. Aneil Singh, Head of Operations at the EU Delegation commended the impact of the Programme and its effective use of the financial resources invested. He announced the upcoming evaluation of all CBM activities, to be performed by independent evaluators in May-July 2015. Identified lessons learned will be integrated to the extent possible in the new confidence building programme.

1. Presentation of the Business and Civil Society project final results - Victor Dragutan, Project Manager, Business & Civil Society

Mr. Dragutan presented the key objectives and results of the **Business Development component**, emphasizing that it provided a comprehensive support to businesses on both banks, and helped establishing links of cooperation between them. This includes more than **400 companies from both banks** involved in **joint activities** and offered necessary support services; at least **60 cross-river business partnerships** established, providing improved economic opportunities to the population on both banks; more than **800 jobs** created; **livelihoods** of more than **2,000 people** improved. Overall, 1,772 **direct beneficiaries**, including 809 women and **15,639 indirect beneficiaries** were involved. Mr. Dragutan presented in detail results achieved within each sub-project implemented within this component (2012-2015 excel brief report and the presentation attached).

Within the **Civil Society component**, four grant competitions were organized, with 390 joint project proposals received, and **41 cross-river cooperative partnerships** were supported. All in all, 14,500 women, men, and children on both banks benefitted directly, with **1,350,000 EUR** invested in joint activities, and more than **600,000 EUR additional resources** brought in by NGOs as co-funding.

Under the **Civil Society Dialogues initiative**, an informal platform for civil society leaders, experts, professionals from relevant sectors was created. Over **110 experts** from both banks engaged in one-year facilitated dialogue process, formulating **2 reports** including 18 concrete projects of joint interest in the fields of economy/trade and social issues/humanitarian aid. More than 80 CSO representatives and experts from both banks studied the experience of successful EU-funded regional development and educational projects in Lithuania, Estonia, Sweden and Cyprus; 20 cross-river partnerships were established and/or reinforced. Additionally, 26 capacity development trainings were conducted involving more than 400 men and women, representatives of 120 CSOs & 56 Local Communities.

In addition, an Opinion **Survey on cross-river confidence** and **study of capacities** for joint development initiatives at the local level were carried out, providing an improved understanding of local needs and the SCBM impact on the ground. Following a request from the Moldovan authorities to support a decision reached in the 5+2 format, the SCBM team provided assistance to the Rezina municipality and Civil Protection and Emergency Situation Service to dismantle the industrial cable car over the Nistru River.

2. Presentation of the Community Empowerment project final results - Viorel Albu, Project Manager, Community Development

Mr. Viorel Albu presented briefly the main achievements of the **Social Infrastructure component of the Programme**, highlighting that **99,300 beneficiaries** enjoy better living conditions through improved infrastructure and social services as a result of the **41 infrastructure initiatives** implemented during the third phase of the SCBM programme. In addition, **69 permanent and over 400 temporary jobs** were

created within this component. The component had a budget of **EUR 4,167,918** and additionally over **EUR 500,000** were contributions from Local Public Administration.

In cooperation with UN Women, three **Joint Information and Services Bureaus (JISB)** were created in Dubasari, Ribnita and Criuleni districts, including them in the wider network covering the whole country, strengthening the LPA and social projects' activities in terms of gender mainstreaming. The Bureaus assist over 750 people from target districts annually.

Under the **Health component**, with the support of UNICEF and WHO, capacity building support for Perinatal system and Immunizations in the TN region was provided; and an intensive exchange of experience among specialists from both banks was facilitated. Significant support in terms of **medical equipment** was provided to the Perinatal Center from Rybnita amounting to **121,744 EUR**. Additionally, basic training in equipment use were provided to the specialized staff of the medical institution. Due to the implementation of these projects, over 1200 beneficiaries were already assisted during 2014.

Within the **Environment Component**, two joint projects for strengthening **solid waste disposal services** were implemented in Slobozia and Causeni District, that resulted in 10 communities and over 30,000 people from both banks having access to improved solid waste management services; 34 waste platforms and 158 containers installed, 3 sanitation trucks procured; a round table involving representatives of both banks facilitated networking and exchange of best practices. Additionally, **solar collectors** for domestic hot water were installed in 22 social institutions on both banks of the Nistru River, leading to 4,250 people directly benefiting of better social services, 71,719.7 kWh saved and about 92,213.5 kg of CO2 reduction expected annually.

3. **Presentation of the Communication – Visibility achievements.** Natalia Costas, Communications Consultant

Ms Natalia Costas reported that throughout the implementation period more than 75 openings and public events on the both banks of the Nistru River have been organized. The SCBM project used a wide variety of communication materials (info graphics, studies, information boards, balloons, T-shirts, hats, bags etc.) that ensured improved visibility on the ground, as showed by media reports. Media and public opinion were successfully informed through **125 Press Releases, 400 TV stories and programmes, 1400 articles & success stories & news, 25 media field trips**. An additional media tool were the **5 media campaigns** that promoted the programme results in an accessible manner.

Discussions

Q: Mr. Singh inquired about the key lessons learned during the implementation of the third phase of the SCBM programme.

A: Ms. Munteanu pointed that one of the most important lessons learned while implementing the projects on both banks was the need to identify and focus on the interests of populations from both banks that are first of all convergent. Along with this, the need to maintain flexibility and the ability to adapt to changes in priorities, as in the case of the Business Incubator, is another lesson. Keeping expectations and targets realistic and the need to design further project activities accordingly also remains an important lesson learned, taking into consideration the high complexity of the post-conflict environment in which the programme is working. Another lesson was the need to invest significantly in the capacity development of partners on the ground, to ensure quality and sustainability for the interventions. More detailed elaboration of lessons learnt is presented in the project document of the new phase of the project.

Q: Mr Singh asked whether there was a difference in perceptions of what SCBM is trying to do as a whole on the left bank.

A: Ms. Munteanu and Mr. Dragutan answered that visibility of project activities faced different challenges depending on the bank. For example, on the left bank, the position of local authorities made it more complicated to ensure the mentioning of the EU as a donor in subjects produced by official media outlets. In this regard, a Communication consultant was contracted to work specifically with outlets on the left bank, managing to ensure unprecedented coverage of SCBM events and human stories on TV channels in Transnistria, in compliance with visibility rules. To mention is that an independent survey contracted by the EU-funded project offering institutional capacity support to the Bureau of Reintegration mentioned SCBM as the only international project of which a statistically significant number of respondents in the Transnistria region know.

As regards to measuring the visibility to the public and their perceptions, this remains a challenge due to difficulties in carrying surveys on the ground. However, a survey carried out by the Programme in Q1 2015 brought some interesting preliminary results; as soon as the survey is translated in English, it will be circulated to the Board.

Q: Ms. Cozacenco asked about the methodology used within the opinion survey conducted in target communities on both banks of the Nistru River.

A: Mr. Dragutan answered that the survey, conducted by the CBS-AXA, relied on both qualitative (focus groups with key stakeholders) and quantitative methods and paid specific attention to gender and HRBA aspects. The survey could also be used for periodical progress measurement, and for the elaboration of an indicators framework to measure progress and impact, as well as planning and adjusting SCBM activities, including for its next phase.

Q. Mr. Henrik Huitfeldt enquired whether the project tried to measure “confidence” levels.

A. Mr. Dragutan answered that the SCBM approach has been based on the concept of confidence building measures in terms of targets that are realistically achievable and measurable in the existing conditions, and its relatively short time-frame. That has meant focusing on cross-river relations established between organizations and people, transfers of knowledge, multiplications of platforms and opportunities for cooperation, etc., rather than changes of people’s attitudes. The latter are not immediate, depend to a larger extent on factors outside the influence of the Programme, need more time to happen, and thus are harder to attribute to the impact of the intervention.

Q: Mr. Aneil Singh asked whether the implementation of projects in communities has raised an interest in other communities on the left bank

A: Ms. Munteanu and Mr. Albu answered that the programme produced a lively interest from communities in the Transnistria region that have not benefitted yet from support. Those communities will be encouraged to participate at the competitions launched in the next phase

Q. Mr. Henrik Huitfeldt pointed at the high number of infrastructure projects in the Dubasari district comparing with other districts and asked about potential reasons for this.

A. Mr. Albu replied that all implemented projects were selected based on open competitions from about 200 project proposals submitted by communities. The proposals were selected based on well-defined criteria and it is possible that communities with more experience in writing of project proposals and work with donors had higher chances to be selected. As this district has also a higher degree of connection to the TN region districts due to its geographical position (bridges, roads, proximity), the projects it proposed had also had more potential for cross-river cooperation. However, the SCBM team will make an additional effort in the new phase to include communities from other districts.

4. **Presentation of next phase objectives and key results.** Doina Munteanu, Head of Programme

The meeting continued with the presentation of the new phase of the EU–UNDP Confidence Building Measures Programme, carried out by Ms. Munteanu. Objectives, expected results, as well as adjustments in the implementation approach were presented and discussed. Detailed presentation is enclosed.

Discussions

Q. Mr. George Balan asked whether the distribution of 30 infrastructure projects between the banks would be based on geographic or jurisdiction criteria, and enquired about the selection method to be used for projects on the left bank

A. Ms. Munteanu mentioned that the distribution of the infrastructure projects will be done based on a balanced geographic approach, but the jurisdiction will be taken into consideration too. The application of a balanced geographic approach was also a recommendation of the Evaluation of the programme.

An open competition will be organized on the left bank with the same approach as on the right bank to ensure a fair selection of the projects

5. Closing Remarks

Ms Narine Sahakyan, closed the meeting and, as a result of discussions the Multi Annual Work Plan of the Support to Confidence Building Measures Programme 2015-2018 was approved:

Signatures of the Board Members:

1. George Balan, Head of the Bureau for Reintegration, Government of the Republic of Moldova

Signature:

Date:

G. Balan 3/7/15

2. Aneil Singh, Head of Operations, EU Delegation

Signature:

Date:

A. Singh 3/7/15

3. Narine Sahakyan, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative

Signature:

Date:

N. Sahakyan
07.07.2015

4. Henrik Huitfeldt, Counsellor/Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden

Signature:

Date:

H. Huitfeldt 7.7.2015

5. Iulia Cozacenco, Political and Economic Officer/Projects Coordinator, British Embassy

Signature:

Date:

I. Cozacenco
3/7/15

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