### Reporting Agency: UNDP

### Country: Romania

### **STANDARD PROGRESS REPORT**

### *The return of former convicts to the labour market and their integration in society*

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### Project ID: 78185

### Reporting period: January 2012 - December 2012

### **I. PURPOSE**

The **main objective** of the project is the social reintegration of former convicts through the creation of a network of social inclusion centres, increased green jobs skills, as well as the removal of societal prejudgments and stereotypes with regard to present and former convicts. The specific objectives of the project are:

1) Studies and policy recommendations for improving the legal and administrative framework to facilitate the social inclusion of vulnerable target groups (i.e. convicts and former convicts);

2) Development of a pilot system of training of detainees, as an open or quasi-open centre, split by professions and ecologic occupations, as well as a training centre for penitentiaries officers and guards, on themes related to communication and conflict management;

3) Large awareness campaigns that promote the social inclusion of former convicts and the removal of societal prejudice and stereotypes which impede the social reintegration of these vulnerable groups.

Equal opportunities between women and men represent one of the main values promoted by the UNDP. Each of the project activities has envisaged securing equal opportunities, especially at the stage of recruiting and selecting the project beneficiaries and the project staff. The operating principle is that of non-discrimination in terms of gender, ethnicity and religion. The project promotes equal opportunities as well as non-discrimination and social inclusion. In its work the project implementation team shall consider applicable law regarding equal opportunities and non-discrimination (Romanian Constitution, Government Order #137/2000, Law #202/2002, Emergency Government Order #96/2003, Law #210/1999, Law #148/2000 on advertising).

This project is funded by the Social European Fund through the contract signed between the National Penitentiaries Administration (NAP) and the Managing Authority. The project will be implemented by the NAP - the Implementing Partner, ultimately accountable for the project efficient and effective implementation to the Managing Authority.

 Other partners:

Calarasi Regional Centre for Professional Training of Adults (CRCPTA)

West University of Timisoara (WUT)

National School of Political and Administrative Sciences (NSPAS)

The Calarasi Regional Centre for Professional Training of Adults (CRCPTA) will have a direct contribution to providing the expertise needed for professional qualification. This will allow the professional training of convicts in green jobs. The CRCPTA will provide the technical expertise needed in developing the training curricula and delivering the training for the developing the skills in environmental friendly occupations- as described in this project document.

West University of Timisoara and National School of Political and Administrative Sciences will bring a rich expertise in multiple social inclusion domains given by their institutional vast experience in education projects, implementation of the curriculum and initiatives that respond to the constant changes of the current society. These partners will provide the technical expertise for the development and delivery of the training packages for penitentiary officers and penitentiary officers trainers in communication techniques and conflict-resolution methods.

### **II. RESOURCES**

UNDP will receive from NAP the amount of **1,343,523 USD** for the implementation of the activities that were assigned to UNDP and also for meeting the costs of the project management and supervision. Distinct project accounts will be opened for this project’s funds.

It is estimated that contribution funds will be deposited into the UNDP project bank account in 10installments throughout the project implementation period.

### **III. RESULTS**

During this implementation period, the project team enhanced the communication with all the project partners and continued the implementation of the project activities. Regarding the objectives of the project, the UNDP team has carried out entirely the Activity 2 of the project representing the elaboration of a study containing a comparative analysis of the measures taken for the social reintegration of former convicts at EU level followed by a series of practical recommendations on applying such measures in Romania and creating a model suitable for the Romanian social and economic realities.Going beyond the project’s assumed activities, UNPD has made substantial efforts to improve the legal and administrative framework to facilitate the social inclusion of former detainees, assuming for a new and extremelyimportant activity, the elaboration of a Financial Impact Assessment which will enable the National Strategy for Social Reintegration of Detainee to be approved and enforced by means of Governmental Decision, thus ensuring a legislative framework in this area.

The main activities undertaken during this period were:

**Activity 2.Comparative analysis and prospects of developing an integrated inter-institutional mechanism to promote social inclusion.**

UNDP finalized the study concerning the development of an integrated inter-institutional mechanism for the social reintegration of former convicts. The working-group together with two hired experts in the field concludedthis study containing a comparative analysis of the measures taken for the social reintegration of former convicts at EU level, followed by a series of practical recommendations on applying such measures in Romania and creating a model suitable for the Romanian social and economic realities.According to the recommendations of the working-group, the scope of the study was extended in order to cover also an analysis on gender specific issues and recommendations for the reintegration of female convicts. The final version of the study included this extra part of the analysis which was performed during the first months of 2012. The study has been published in 3000 copies and started being disseminated during the four regional seminars.

The recommendations formulated within the “Study regarding the development of an integrated inter-institutional mechanism for the social reintegration of former convicts” developed by the UNDP have been integrated in the National Strategy for Social Reintegration of Detainees, document that establishes responsibilities for the institutions involved in social reintegration of this vulnerable group. In order for the Strategy to be approved and enforced by means of Governmental Decision, thus ensuring a legislative framework in this area, NAP, the Beneficiary of the UNDP coordinated project,officially asked for UNDP’s support concerning the elaboration of a Financial Impact Analysis. The analysis should determine the amount of funds needed in order to implement each of the Strategy’s measures and it is requested by the Government as a prerequisite for the approval andimplementation of the Strategy. UNDP has assumed all the necessary actions needed to include such action in the projectandthe Addendum no.7 to the financing contract, submitted in this respect, was approved by the Regional Intermediate Body of SOP HRD on the 16th of November, 2012. Consequently, the project implementation team has started the discussions with NAP regarding the Terms of Reference for two experts that should perform the financial impact analysis.

**Activity 4.4 – Develop and provide training package for prisoners” Education for reintegration in society.”**

The UNDP team has carried out the activity of developing the curricula for the training package ”Education for reintegration in society”. Two experts have been selected and started their work performing an assessment of the training needs. During the training need assessment phase, the consultants have performed the following tasks:

* Analysis of the best practices – analysis report;
* Developing questionnaires and guides for the focus groups;
* Visits to the NAP and penitentiaries in Bacau, Rahova and Craiova in order to perform the training needs assessment;
* Organizing 5 focus groups;

Following the training needs assessment phase, the experts drafted the training curricula and performed 2 pilot studies at Rahova and Tulcea penitentiaries. After the pilot studies, the experts have updated the curricula and delivered the final version to UNDP.

In view of starting the trainings for the detainees, the project team has started the procurement process for selecting 4 trainers that should deliver the trainings “Education for reintegration”.

**Activity 6 – Promote social integration of former convicts.**

In 2012, UNDP Romania and the National Administration of Penitentiaries held four regional seminars gathering over 300 participants from different regions of Romania (Tulcea, Cluj-Napoca, Timisoara and Pitesti), to promote the project objectives and increase public awareness at regional level. The regional seminars aimed to bring to the attention of local authorities, civil society representatives, potential employers and the community in general, the main problems faced by the current system: the high level of recidivism in the country, discrimination and exclusion of ex-convicts from the labor market. These events created a forum for debate on solutions and European best practices in the field of reintegration of former convicts.

In the same time, UNDP team organized 5 small scale project promotion meetings aiming to increase public awareness and promote equal civil rights and employment opportunities for former detainees. The meetings took place in Bucharest and have been attended by representatives of civil society organizations, education institutions, NGOs and public administration. The events consisted of debates and presentations, aiming to promote the social reinsertion of former detainees and identify the best practices to prevent recidivism.

The project has been the first in Romania to deploya large scale national TV-radio-outdoor campaign in order to increase public awareness on the need for social reintegration of former detainees. According to the Campaign Evaluation report provided by the Contractor (Next Advertising), during the broadcasting period (20.09.2012 – 19.10.2012), the main TV target audience reachedby TVR1 and RealitateaTV stations (in the 35-55 y.o., medium & high income, medium & high education, national residence) was of 30.9 %, meaning that 818,000 individuals in that target audiencesaw the commercial at least one time.The secondary target audience reached (individuals aged 18+, of national residence) was of 30.7%, meaning that 4,982,000 individuals in that target audience saw the commercial at least one time.In the same respect, according to the above mentioned report, during the radio broadcasting period (20.09.2012 – 19.10.2012) it was estimated that an audience up to 43% of the total urban populationwas reached.

Moreover, according to the Kantar Media report concerning the TV shows and commercials broadcasted in the period 15.12 - 21.12.2012 by the B1 TV station, other 748,000 individuals aged 18+ were reached.

However, going beyond the project’s assumed activities, UNPD has made substantial efforts for increasing public awareness on social reintegration of former detainees through different other channels, social networks, as well as participation to local TV and radio shows focused on the theme, thus the overall impact on the target groups was higher.

**Activity 7 – Organize procurement of goods and services**

Within the framework of this activity the UNDP project team has carried out procurement procedures for all the equipment, goods and services required for the activity of the team and the implementation of the project activities.

**Activity 8 – Project management**

The UNDP project management team is responsible for the overall management of the project and the project partnership.

Within the project management activity, the UNDP team is responsible to organize and supervise the implementation of all the project activities of the other partners, maintaining the relationship with the authorities responsible with the management of the financing contract and elaborating all formal documents submitted with the financing authority.

The indicators assumed by UNDP according to the Financing Contract have been achieved as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Indicators**  | **Value**  | **Current status** | **Current status %** |
| 1 | Studies & recommendations regarding the creation of a social reintegration centers network | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| 2 | Conference and regional seminars to promote the project | 9 | 4 | 44% |
| 3 | Better informed social inclusion stakeholders | 500 | 493 | 99% |
| 4 | Training curricula and delivery for detainees | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| 5 | Instruments for planning and implementation of legislative framework revision, offered to the Government of Romania | 1 | 0 | 0% |
| 6 | Promotional and information materials disseminated | 2500 | 1865 | 75% |
| 7 | Number of detainees trained | 200 | 0 | 0% |
| 8 | Assembling a working group in the field of social inclusion | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| 9 | Organizing 2 study visits for the working group | 2 | 2 | 100% |
| 10 | Organizing stakeholder workshops for consultations and validation of the social inclusion study | 2 | 2 | 100% |
| 11 | Printing the social inclusion study on recycled paper | 3000 | 3000 | 100% |
| 12 | Promotional bilboards | 200 | 147 | 74% |
| 13 | Meetings organized with potential employers at the Chilia training center | 3 | 0 | 0% |
| 14 | Meeting with penitentiaries staff focus-groups participants, for project promotion | 5 | 5 | 100% |
| 15 | Small scale project promotion meetings | 10 | 2 | 20% |
| 16 | 1 media conference at the project end | 1 | 0 | 0% |
| 17 | TV and radio spots | 4 | 2 | 50% |
| 18 | documentaries regarding the social reintegration of convicts | 2 | 1 | 50% |

1. Due to the sensitive nature of the 3rd specific objective of the project, namely promoting the social inclusion of former convicts and removing social prejudice and stereotypes which impede the social reintegration of these vulnerable groups, it is crucial to enhance efforts through all communication channels in order to widely involve the stakeholders and relevant actors, such as potential employers, in all the activities meant to bridge the gap between them and former convicts.
2. The lack of post-detention services in Romania along with the presence of a social prejudice and stereotypes regarding the detainees and former detainees, led us to the conclusion that the social reintegration process of this vulnerable group is a gradual process that requires the participation of the entire society, showing that actual system is not a solution for preventing recidivism.
3. The main measures that should be implemented in this field should not only address the actions taken to prepare a convict for the moment of his released (such as individual counseling, training and work qualifications etc.), but also measures to motivate the potential employers to hire former convicts (tax incentives, solidarity contracts etc.)

### **IV. FUTURE WORK PLAN**

In the next year, the UNDP team will continue to supervise the implementation of all the project activities of the other partners, focusing more on the financial management of the project in the last year of implementation, helping the partners to manage the cash flow.

In the same time, UNDP team will carry out the Financial Impact Assessment for the measures included in the National Strategy for Social Reintegration of Detainees aiming to improve the legal and administrative framework to facilitate the social inclusion of former detainees.

Under the Activity 4.4, UNDP will contract 2 trainers to deliver the ”Education for reintegration in society” training within 16 training sessions in several penitentiaries in Romania, 13 locations are currently taken into consideration. At least 200 detainees will benefit from this training.

The media campaign,aiming at increasing public awareness on the need for social reintegration of former detainees, will continue with the next 5 small scale promotion meetings that will be organized by UNDP. Moreover, new TV and Radio spots will be created and disseminated during a new media and outdoor campaign that will be organized in the last year of implementation.

During the next year, 4 more regional seminars promoting the project will be organized, thus, covering all 8 regions of Romania by the end of 2013.

In order to bridge the communication gap between potential employers and former detainees, there will be organized 3 meetings bringing together these 2 groups, stimulating debates on finding the best solutions to help former detainees reintegrating on the labour market.

Last, but not least, UNDP management team will enhance the efforts of submitting the reimbursement request in due time and keep a good contact with the representatives of project partners and Management Authority in order to have the expenses reimbursed in due time and with no non-eligible expenses.

### **V**. **FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION**

During the second year of implementation, the total amount spent on the project activities was 415,512.93USD. The share of each activity is presented below: