

Minute of the meeting – Final Project Review
Project: 75018 - A Social Economy Model for Romania

Date: 28 February 2014, 14:00 -16:00	Participants: <u>Alternative Sociale, Iasi</u> Mr. Catalin Luca – Project Manager Mr. George Pascaru – Assistant Manager Mr. Cristian Anghel – Financial Responsible <u>United Nations Development Programme</u> Ms. Alina Bocai – Project Coordinator, Steering Committee Member Mr. Dorian Ilie – Communication and PR Assistant <u>Bucharest University of Economic Studies</u> Mr. Silviu Negut , Steering Committee Member Mr. Marius Neacsu , Project Coordinator <u>“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iasi</u> Mr. Nicu Gavriluta , Steering Committee Member Mr. Contiu Tiberiu Soitu , Project Coordinator Mrs. Geta Mitrea – Assistant Coordinator
Agenda: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Final Project Review & Lessons Learned2. Effective date of project closure3. Transfer/disposal of assets	

The Project *A Social Economy Model for Romania* with the ATLAS ID: 75018 is pursuant to the CPAP 2010-2012, based on which UNDP is committed to support social inclusion and the economic and political empowerment of vulnerable groups in Romania.

The project was funded by the European Social Fund through the financing agreement concluded between Alternative Sociale Association (AAS) and the Managing Authority of the ESF Operational Programme Human Resources. The three-year project had a total budget of 10,297,124.68 RON (equivalent of about 3.1 mil. USD). UNDP had a budget of 5,878,754.74 RON (equivalent of about 1.76 mil. USD) allocated for the implementation of the following activities:

- Activity 1 – Analyzing the context for the Social Economy introduction in Romania
- Activity 2 – Setting up and development of the Social Economy Laboratory
- Activity 3 – Development of the Social Economy Resource Centre
- Activity 5 – Organizing awareness campaign
- Activity 6 – Management
- Activity 7 - Procurement

The project implementation was NIM with UNDP support.

Main points of discussion:

The UNDP Project Coordinator presented a situation of the main achievements in line with the provisions of the Financing Request. With the understanding that not all the documentation and originals were submitted/ transferred to the Main Implementing Partner, all the activities assigned were accomplished. Through social economy promotion, building capacity of social inclusion and social economy professionals as well as through the development of a multitude of structures, mechanisms, the project successfully advanced theoretical research and created a supportive environment for the strategic development of social economy in Romania.

The following outputs have been noted:

Instruments (Publications)

- Elaboration and printing of the Social Economy Opening Report
- Elaboration and printing of the Social Economy Recommendation Report
- Elaboration and printing of the four Social Enterprises Models for Disadvantaged Groups (Roma, people with disabilities, young people over 18 who leave the child protection system, low guaranteed income beneficiaries)
- Elaboration and publication of the four Guides for Establishing Social Enterprises
- Elaboration and printing of the Good Practice Guide in Social Economy
- Elaboration and printing of the Promotion Materials for the Social Economy Incubators
- Elaboration and printing of Training Materials
- Translation and printing of the Social Economy Journal (12 issues)

Mechanisms

The Network for the Development of Social Economy in Romania was established under the project. The network contributes to the development and the implementation of social economy in Romania. The members of the network are specialists in social economy, social inclusion or people interested in these fields of work. The network gathers over 230 members.

Structures

- The Social Economy Laboratory
- Three Social Economy Incubators established in three development regions in Romania: Center (Sfântu Gheorghe), North-East (Bacău) and South-West Oltenia (Craiova)
- 18 social enterprises received technical assistance from the Social Economy Incubators
- 5 new social enterprises were established with the help of the Social Economy Incubators
- 18 new jobs were created as a result of the technical assistance provided by the Social Economy Incubators

Capacity building

- Five training seminars were organized in Bacau, Targoviste, Curtea de Arges, Galati and Bucuresti with 100 specialists in social inclusion and social economy.

- Five study tours were carried out with 76 participants from Sfântu Gheorghe, Bacău, Craiova, Arges county and Bucharest.

Promotion

Over a period of three months an awareness campaign (radio and outdoor) promoting social economy was carried out in Sfântu Gheorghe, Bacău and Craiova. The campaign reached about 3.7 mil people among the general population. The intensive PR work resulted in gaining media attention and bringing social economy on the public agenda. The National Romanian Television and other major media outlets showcased social economy stories. The project website www.profitpentruoameni.ro was constantly updated with news, articles and stories from the project and/or the social economy sector in Romania.

Overall, most of the project indicators were achieved (> 90%) and all target groups were reached.

During the project implementation 7 reimbursement requests were submitted and approved by the Managing Authority. The Reimbursement request no. 8 is under preparation and will be submitted by the Main Implementing Partner by April 2014. The final reimbursement request (no.9) will be submitted after the approval of the reimbursement request no.8. For the preparation of the final reimbursement request, UNDP will submit to AAS all supporting technical and financial documents.

After reviewing the achievements, the participants shared the following lessons learned and recommendations:

- UNDP shall carefully evaluate before committing to implement ESF (European Social Fund) projects due to the major differences between UNDP rules, regulations and procedures and the national applicable ones. Moreover, the high level of bureaucracy and administrative work along with the related costs must be taken into account in proposal writing and planning process.
- UNDP shall focus on policy change and tools development while limiting its work with direct beneficiaries such as vulnerable groups. Strategic partnership with a responsible party (i.e. Ministry of Labour) may significantly increase the project impact at the policy change level and guarantee a sustainable framework for the project results.
- More support and technical assistance shall be considered for social economy entities in order to promote national good practices.
- Fewer partners' engagement may limit inconsistencies in work coordination as well as gaps in communication.
- Stability (with limited turnover) of project staff may influence the achievement of the project outcomes.
- Build up and maintain/monitor a realistic cash flow.
- Undertake regular reflection upon, assessments of the impact of activities, events.

Decisions:

- The Project Steering Committee agreed that the project had fulfilled its objectives and will be closed according to the initially established closing date, respectively 28 February 2014.

- The main implementing partner declined the handover of the assets procured by UNDP for the project office at its headquarters in Bucharest. Therefore, all the assets procured by UNDP under the project for its project office will remain in the property of UNDP. A complete list of assets can be found in Annex 1.
- All the assets procured by UNDP under the project for the social economy incubators established in Sfantu Gheorghe, Bacau and Craiova will also remain in the property of UNDP and will be handed over in temporary custody for ensuring the continuity of the social economy incubators. A complete list of assets to be handed over in temporary custody for each of the three social economy incubators can be found in Annex 2. Further agreement between UNDP and AAS (the main implementing partner) on the transfer of assets will be considered before the UNDP Office closure in Romania.
- In order to compile the final reimbursement request, UNDP will submit to AAS all the necessary technical and financial documents by end of April 2014.
- UNDP will submit for signature to AAS a financial statement for 2013 and 2014 project expenditures under the form of UNDP Standard Combined Delivery Report, by the end of December 2014. The project will be financially closed according to the UNDP rules on December 2014.

Catalin Luca
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 Steering Committee Member
 Alternative Sociale Association

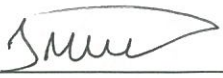
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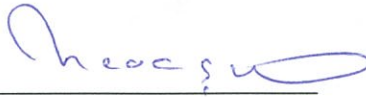
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