

## A consolidated UN support for conducting the 2011 Population Census

Strengthening the capacity of the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) to increase the credibility of the census data and the legitimacy in terms of the completeness of the census results, particularly regarding national minorities' issues, with a special attention to Roma minority

**Country** Romania

**Focus Area** Strengthening the capacity of the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) to introduce data gathering and analysis instruments that would increase the credibility of the census data and the legitimacy in terms of the completeness of the census results, particularly regarding national minorities' issues, with a special attention to Roma minority.

**Project Title** A consolidated UN support for conducting the 2011 Population Census in Romania

**Project Duration** May – October 2011

**Project Number** ROU2P11A

**Implementing Agency** **UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund**

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**Total Project Budget** **29,000 USD**

**Agreed by UNFPA**  
**on behalf of the UN Country Team:** François Farah  
Representative



Date: 18 May 2011

**Agreed by NIS:** Vergil Voineagu  
President



Date: 18.05.2011

## 2011 Population Census

### 1. Project Summary

The project is devised to provide a consolidated UN support, under the leadership of UNFPA, to contribute to improving the accuracy and credibility of the 2011 Population Census particularly in terms of an improved representation and coverage of Roma and other minority groups.

It aims at strengthening the capacity of the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), the agency responsible for conducting the 2011 population census, to introduce data gathering and analysis instruments, that would increase the credibility of the census data and the legitimacy in terms of the completeness of the census results, particularly regarding national minorities' issues, with a special attention to Roma minority.

The project will further reinforce the partnership between NIS, National Agency for Roma and Roma NGOs, thus contributing to the broader democratisation of the policy development process. Among the interventions foreseen under the present project are:

- building coordination mechanisms between NIS and civil society (Roma NGOs) to better respond to situations that call for rapid interventions;
- refining the census instruments (questionnaires and manuals);
- ensuring a qualitative training for Census Enumerators, including a Roma sensitive training component (ethnic identity and Roma issues);
- designing and conducting an effective awareness campaign for the 2011 census with a special focus on the Roma communities - census awareness campaigns targeting the general population, would also take into account the special characteristics of Roma community, to make them feel confident about the census.

### 2. Project justification

#### 2.1. Context

The Roma represent one of the main minorities in Romania. According to the 2002 census, they number 535,250 people (2.5% of the total population), being the second-largest ethnic minority in Romania after Hungarians. The Roma are, however, also Romania's most socially- and economically-disadvantaged minority, with unofficial sources<sup>1</sup> claiming that there are between 0.7 and 2.5 million Roma in the country or approximately 8% of the total population. This may be caused either by the fact that many Roma do not declare their ethnicity in the census, because of the stigma that still exists, or do not have an identity card or birth certificate. However, based on the NIS figures, those estimates may be outdated because a large number of Romanian populations, including Roma, migrated to Western countries during the last years, especially after Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007.

In the 2002 population census there have been no indications that other minorities had reservations about the census, but the possibility should not be neglected.

The 2011 population census is expected to yield reliable statistics about the population and houses, both at national and at each community level and will be the basis of all future social policies. In compliance with good statistical practices and Eurostat recommendations, censuses are expected to ensure the full inclusion of all minorities. That's why in the preparations of the 2011 population census, a special attention should be paid to Roma minority, in order to overcome the reasons of not declaring freely their ethnicity in the previous censuses and to make them feel confident about this year's census.

The main challenge faced by NIS is the problem of funding and the lack of human resources. NIS, even if it has several vacancies, cannot hire experts, because all the posts are frozen and the census budget, even if approved, did not include specific funds for a better participation in the census of the Roma

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the two research projects figures conducted by the UNDP Regional Centre in Bratislava: 1. "The socio-economic status of the Roma in five Central and East European countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia) " conducted in 2001–2002; 2. 'Vulnerable Groups Survey' conducted in 2004



minority. This fact might pose the risk that the same shortcomings experienced in the 2002 population census will be repeated and the Roma minority will continue to be reluctant to declare their ethnicity.

In this context, the need for further strengthening and empowerment of NIS to be able to be a valid player in the process of designing and implementing all the census instruments, in selecting the census enumerators, in organising and providing qualitative training, including a Roma sensitive training component, in designing an efficient awareness campaign able to reach all the minorities, with a special attention to Roma community, emerged as potential area of intervention for UN Agencies.

Starting 2010, UNFPA, in its technical advisory capacity, already facilitated the cooperation between NIS and representatives of Roma NGOs and in 2011 initiated a series of technical meetings.

As a result, the following areas of intervention were identified:

- (1) Refining of the census instruments (questionnaires and manuals)
- (2) Training of the census enumerators, ensuring a Roma sensitive training of the enumerators
- (3) Designing an awareness campaign: a census education campaign (both at national level and at Roma community level), in order to make all the minorities feel confident about the census

## 2.2. Past and related activities and assistance

UNFPA has already assessed the NIS technical capacity in evaluating the Geographic Information System (GIS) in order to determine existing gaps that need to be bridged and the appropriate strategies required to make the GIS a functional and sustainable system at NIS. The assessment mission was conducted in January 2011 and the GIS international expert has provided a comprehensive report with conclusions and recommendations.

UNFPA initiated a round of technical meetings on census issues with NIS and Roma experts belonging to different Roma NGOs in order to identify the possible areas of intervention.

## 2.3. Coverage

Primary beneficiary of the project is NIS and secondary beneficiaries are Roma community and Romanian society as a whole. Full coverage and full inclusion of all minorities are particularly key issues, since future monitoring of the implementation of the national strategy for Roma minority inclusion will widely rely on 2011 census data. Therefore, the project proposes two levels of interventions at:

- Government level, through advocacy for increasing NIS human resource capacity,
- NIS and Roma community level, through TOTs,
- Media and Roma community and NGOs level, through awareness campaigns.

## 3. Outputs and activities

The project is in line with previous efforts supported by UN Agencies in their strategies to develop capacity building, thru continuously providing expertise and technical backstopping.

**Project Output:** *To increase the 2011 population census legitimacy and credibility/coverage in terms of the inclusiveness primarily of national minorities and Roma groups and incidentally of other under-represented and vulnerable groups and groups at risk, including refugees.*

The output will be achieved through further reinforcement of the partnership between UN agencies, NIS, Roma community level, media.

Activities:

1. *Refine the census instruments, questionnaires and manuals*

This activity will require the catalytic role of UN agencies in facilitating technical meetings between NIS and Roma representatives and in providing technical support regarding the refining of the census instruments, both in content and in wording, with the final scope of gaining more credibility in the census operations.

Further specific needs will be identified following wide consultations with Roma experts (both from government agencies and civil society) and further technical meetings between NIS and Roma NGOs will be organised accordingly.

As a result, the census instruments will be improved by their taking into consideration Roma sensitive issues and will be agreed and accepted by Roma community. Moreover, this working process will represent a platform for raising support towards a more democratic process, where consultations between Governmental institutions and civil sector become a norm, and NGOs are viewed as legitimate partners throughout the process.

2. *A comprehensive Roma sensitive training of census enumerators (having two levels: first addressed to all enumerators, and secondly designed to Roma enumerators)*

This will require some preliminary activities before the training:

- a map of the Roma minority distribution, in order to estimate the necessary numbers of Roma enumerators.

- the Roma social networks (e.g. health mediators, community nurses, social workers) already in place to be used for the census purposes.

For the organisation of the training, the necessary activities are:

- a training plan using a cascade principle (including all the logistic aspects) for TOTs in Bucharest and subsequently in all Roma communities.

- training resource person(s) to provide a qualitative training.

Special attention will also be given to the direct relation with local authorities – in the area with large Roma minorities. Dialogue will be initiated also with other players such as the association of mayors for the logistics of the training in the field.

As a result, all the census enumerators will be aware of how to act in order to make all the respondents feel confident about the census and the Roma enumerators will be able to understand the census philosophy, will be familiar with all the information required in the questionnaires, will know how to approach the people, how to act in each circumstances, and how to respond to the most frequent questions.

3. *To design a comprehensive outreach strategy for all categories of census respondents, both at national level and at each Roma community level*

Efforts will be made to design a census education campaign. A communication strategy has been design for the 2002 population census to respond to the general census issues, and generate, before the census began, the awareness and knowledge about the census. In the evaluation of last census results and in the consultations with the Roma minority representatives, it has been mentioned that



some members of the Roma community hesitated to declare their ethnicity because of the stigma that still exists in the Romanian society and also because they feared that the census enumeration will be used as a means to ensure more efficient collection of taxes, payment for electricity, or license fees. These issues are also relevant to other population groups and therefore should be dealt with in the communication strategy.

The outreach strategy differs from the communication strategy in its tools and methodology. In the outreach activities, communication is two way, characterised by a genuine dialogue between institutions and persons. Mass media plays an important role in the outreach campaign. However, outreach strategy also employs informal networking at policy and leader level, networking among Roma NGOs, as well as involves local journalists, outstanding Roma personalities and others as means to advocate for active participation in the census.

The outreach mechanism will be designed based on consultations between experts of NIS, the representatives of Roma NGOs, media representatives, Central Census Commission, and it will be used in any circumstances that require urgent action/ consultation.

The overall objective of the Outreach Strategy is to ensure the value and credibility of the census carried out by NIS by strengthening the general active participation of the population as much as possible and particularly of the Roma minority population, on two levels: among Roma to make them feel confident about the census and among public at large to change its perception of and behaviour towards Roma.

#### **4. Project prospects**

Among the concrete results of the proposed project are: by October 2011, the start date planned for the 2011 census, Romania will have:

- a wide support base among Roma NGOs that will advocate for the population census
- census instruments refined, fully in line with international recommendations, and accepted and recognised by Roma minority
- census enumerators and Roma census enumerators well trained
- a constructive outreach strategy designed for the 2011 census, fully in line with Romanian realities, able to reach all the minority groups. As a result, a comprehensive census education campaign, focused on Roma minority, will enable all the population to know what a population census is, which are the main benefits and to freely declare their ethnicity.
- a rapid consultation mechanism between the NIS and Roma NGOs

By the end of the project the mechanisms and instruments developed and tested under the present project will be entirely in the hands of NIS and Roma NGOs involved for further utilisation.

#### **5. Project execution and responsibilities**

The project will be executed by NIS primarily, together with Roma NGOs, and will be funded and monitored by UN Agencies through UNFPA, leading agency.

UNFPA shall provide funds to NIS in an amount of USD 29,000 (twenty nine thousand US dollars) payable in Lei at the UN Exchange rate of the date of payment according to the schedule set out below, subject to the NIS submission of timely and accurate financial/expense and narrative reports:

Lei equivalent of USD 15,000 at the UN Exchange rate, upon signature of the present project document.

Lei equivalent of USD 14,000 at the UN Exchange rate, upon submission to UNFPA of the financial report after completion of the first Output/Activity of the work plan (item 6 below).

NIS shall submit to UNFPA a final narrative and financial report with respect to all expenditures made from the project funds (including those provided to the partner Roma NGOs as per the work plan below) no later than 30 November 2011.

All payments shall be in local currency, and deposited into the NIS bank account of which the details are as follows:

Bank name	Treasury of Bucharest Municipality
Account name	RON
Account no.	R035TREZ7005078XXX000928
Bank address	6-8 Splaiul Unirii, Bucharest

Direct payments to partner Roma NGOs may be made by UNFPA upon official written request from NIS. Such direct payments will be deducted from the second tranche of funds transferred by UNFPA to NIS.

## **6. Work-plan table and budget**

**Implementing partners:** NIS

**Project ID:** ROU2P11A

**Implementation period:** May–October 2011

EXPECTED OUTPUT(S) and PLANNED ACTIVITIES		TIMEFRAME		PLANNED BUDGET (USD)
		T2	T3-4	
<p><b>1. Output:</b> Refine the existing versions of the census instruments, questionnaires and manuals, fully in line with international recommendations and considered adequate by the Roma minority representatives.</p>				
National seminar INSTRUM	Refining the existing versions of the census instruments, questionnaires and manuals (3 days) INS + Roma minority NGOs	X		10,000
<p><b>2. Output:</b> Ensure a Roma sensitive training of enumerators</p>				
Training plan	Technical meetings to develop the training plan		X	
Guidelines for a qualitative training	Drawing up the draft document	X	X	5,000
	Meetings for discussions on the guidelines	X	X	
	Draft document on training improvement, enumerator's profile	X	X	
	Terms of reference for enumerators' selection	X	X	
National seminar RECENZ	Development of enumerators training programme – jointly with the seminar INSTRUM – the same participants – 1 day (INS + Roma minority NGOs)	X		
<p><b>3. Output:</b> To design a comprehensive outreach strategy and an awareness campaign</p>				
Outreach strategy	Activities related with the implementation of the outreach strategy: - at national level: - technical meeting of INS experts with Roma minority NGOs and Central Census Commission in view to identify sensitive issues to be included in the strategy (including target groups with Roma members) - at community level: - door-to-door campaigns		X	14,000