

ACTION FICHE FOR MOLDOVA

1. IDENTIFICATION

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--------|------------------------------------|
| Title | Support to civil society in Transnistria | | |
| Total cost | € 2.0 million | | |
| Aid method / Management mode | Centralized management and joint management with international organization(s) | | |
| DAC-code | 15150 | Sector | <i>Strengthening Civil Society</i> |

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Sector context

The Partnership and co-operation agreement between the Community and its Member States and the Republic of Moldova as well as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plan currently in force are the main elements of the Policy Framework which have guided the programming of Community assistance. Moldova's Country Strategy Paper (2007-13) and the National Indicative Programme 2007-10 have been designed on the basis of such principles and policy framework, and focus on three priority areas:

- (1) Support for Democratic Development and Good Governance;
- (2) Support for Regulatory Reform and Administrative Capacity Building;
- (3) Support for Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth.

Depending on developments regarding the settlement of the Transnistria issue, the Commission would provide further specific assistance, related to all aspects of conflict settlement and settlement consolidation. This Action is designed as a direct contribution to the latter, and directly addresses priority (1) listed above.

Transnistria is a break-away region in Moldova which succeeded in establishing de facto independence from Moldova in 1992 but is not recognised by any member of the international community.

Since 1995, Moldova and Transnistria, assisted by three international mediators, the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine, have been discussing a possible settlement within the so-called "five-sided mediation process". Since October 2005, the EU and the US have been involved in the process as observers, the new format being known as the "5+2". Settlement talks are however blocked since February 2006 following the introduction of the New Customs Regime between Moldova and Ukraine. Most of the population in Transnistria has limited access to media outlets other than those controlled by the de facto authorities that follow the official line.

Since independence in 1991 Moldova has developed a civil society that shows a certain degree of self-organization. A range of functioning non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society actors exist now. NGOs are generally grouped along territorial lines and per field of activity. Overall, Moldovan legislation provides a relatively favourable environment for the development of civil society. Nevertheless there is insufficient co-ordination and co-operation among civil society organizations and their overall effectiveness is still limited. The interaction between NGOs and authorities is not systematised.

Civil society in Transnistria is weaker than that in the rest of Moldova. The Transnistrian civil society lacks capacity to push for reforms. The break-away authorities do not accept any political or policy dialogue with NGOs and at times even persecute NGO leaders. A large number of NGOs registered in Transnistria exist on paper or else are Soviet style organisations dealing with trade union activities, pensioners, etc. The number of NGOs focusing on youth issues, environment and community issues is small and those organisations which do exist have poor resources and limited capacities. They have been mostly created in recent years with support from international donors and Moldovan counterparts. NGO activity is centred in the main cities (Tiraspol and Bender) and is very limited in rural areas. Nevertheless, there have been some positive signs of NGO co-operation over recent years. In March 2006 a decree of the self-styled president of the region banned external funding of NGOs in Transnistria. However, a coalition of civil groups was successful in suspending the prohibition for non-political organizations. There are also examples of successful co-operation between NGOs and local authorities in tackling community issues.

The overall objective of the project is therefore to contribute to addressing the needs of Transnistrian communities including by increasing their access to basic social and economic services, as well as to objective and diversified sources of information. This objective will be achieved by promoting grass-roots action on a local level through a community-based approach bringing together organizations from Transnistria and the rest of Moldova to work to address the needs of the Transnistrian communities. In trying to fulfil this objective the project is fully in line with EC policy on consolidating civil society, including the European Consensus on Development.

2.2. Lessons learnt

EU assistance to Moldova has never specifically targeted either the Transnistrian region or civil society there given the fact that Transnistrian authorities are not recognized by the EU or the international community. However, the experience of other donors shows that projects implemented through informal links between Moldovan and Transnistrian organisations and individuals on the level of local communities have a chance of being successful.

A number of donor supported initiatives have shown that it is possible to make a significant contribution even in such a difficult context as Transnistria. For that purpose, it is important to take note of the sensibilities of local authorities and avoid any overt political content.

The DFID funded *Peace Building Framework* (completed in March 2007) has been the first important initiative which helped to strengthen NGOs across Moldova, including Transnistria, while enhancing the peace building role of the media. Due to its balanced and conflict sensitive approach, the project succeeded in improving the quality of work of NGOs in Transnistria. Experience with PBF showed that it was recommended that projects address the lack of accurate information on both sides of the river concerning the other, as well as the current general lack of contact and dialogue between the two sides. Working with civil society in Transnistria should also contribute to establishing links between citizens and local authorities.

2.3. Complementary actions

Multilateral and bilateral donors provide support to civil society in Moldova mainly through individual grants for NGOs. Only a small number of donors are working with Transnistrian civil society. Their focus is primarily in the following areas: support to NGOs and independent media, support to civil initiatives and assistance with legal rights, increased contact between Transnistrians and both the rest of Moldova and the outside world.

The PBF programme supported by DFID has been to date the most progressive Western programme working with Transnistrian civil society. The other player with significant experience is the Soros Foundation, which has worked to strengthen NGOs and media, build leadership skills and encourage dialogue. Soros-Foundation Moldova supports civic initiatives and promotes partnership programmes

involving groups from both sides of the Dniestr River with financial support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The OSCE maintains an office in Tiraspol and provides grants for organisations in both Transnistria and the rest of Moldova involved in democratisation and citizen's rights programmes.

The US Embassy has for years supported NGOs in Transnistria through grants, and has organised exchanges for young Transnistrian leaders. Additional US assistance comes from ABA-CEELI, which operates a legal clinic in Transnistria working with vulnerable groups.

One of the other major players in Transnistria is the CONTACT Centre. CONTACT is a Moldovan NGO active on both sides of the river, providing services, training and assistance for rural NGOs involved in community development. It actively supports civic initiatives in the region.

2.4. Donor coordination

There are several parallel structures aiming to co-ordinate donor activities in Moldova. The unit at the first Deputy Prime Minister level is co-ordinating donors in line with the Paris Declaration. The unit within the Ministry of Economy and Trade (also known as the National Co-ordinating Unit) is co-ordinating donors in view of assistance provided to Moldova and matching it with Moldova's priorities and development strategies. On a more working level, several line Ministries are hosting donor co-ordination units in specific sectors, i.e. health, social issues, etc. In addition to that, donors themselves organize monthly co-ordinating meetings and ad-hoc meetings related to specific events in specific sectors.

For this specific action, the implementing team will make sure that donors supporting similar actions will be kept informed of project developments. The implementing team will also ensure co-ordination of activities in view of avoiding overlap and duplication.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The overall project objective is to contribute to addressing the needs of Transnistrian communities including by increasing their access to basic social and economic services, as well as to objective and diversified sources of information. The goal here is to strengthen civil society, to increase the information space in order to reduce mistrust and misinformation, and to and to increase openness and transparency in the public sector, especially at local level.

The project purpose is to promote action on the local level through a community-based approach bringing together Transnistrian and Moldovan organisations to work towards this common objective.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

As a result of the project, the capacity of Transnistrian civil society organisations (CSOs) to address the needs of citizens will be strengthened; links between Transnistrian and Moldovan CSOs will be increased; links between the communities and CSOs will be reinforced; relationships between local authorities and CSOs will be improved and local communities will be empowered through a micro-grant programme focusing on needs to be identified by the communities themselves. The project is also expected to improve access to objective information, including development of alternative sources of information. CSOs comprise not-for-profit non-governmental apolitical organizations, as well as Non State Actors in various sectors, including media. The project will try to integrate a broad range of civil society actors of Transnistria and the rest of Moldova, registered as well as non-registered entities (especially on the Transnistrian side), service providing organizations as well as those having advocacy functions, provide consultations or engage in training delivery. Geographical balance will be ensured to the extent possible and target organizations will come from a broad range of sectors (media,

environmental NGOs, organizations dealing with gender or human rights issues, education, social protection or youth issues).

The main activities of the project include but are not limited to:

- Establishing consultation mechanisms with local communities and their representatives enabling participative dialogue on priority actions to be supported by the project, as well as definition of operating modalities;
- Awareness-raising regarding the project among the general public and CSOs;
- Selecting eligible organisations and individuals from the Transnistrian region and the rest of Moldova to participate in the project and assisting them in the preparation of actions to be supported by the project.
- Developing work plans;
- Fostering collaboration among CSOs
- Facilitating discussions about best practices in creating and maintaining effective collaborative structures;
- Researching key issues important to the process, including demographic data, service data, financing data, community opinion leader data and other methods that have proven effective in addressing particular issues;
- Organising appropriate consultation mechanisms committees working in support of the community-based planning effort;
- Co-ordinating staff from participating organisations;
- Developing reports and other documents;
- Monitoring and evaluation of micro-projects;
- Mentoring and consultation on effective project management;
- Mentoring and consultation on advocacy and awareness-raising issues;
- Establishing guidelines for CSOs on how to effectively address issues such as sustainability.

3.3. Stakeholders

On the Government side, stakeholders will include the Ministry of Reintegration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. The Ministry of Reintegration (MoR) was established with the specific purpose of settling the Transnistrian conflict and activities concerning the Transnistrian region should be co-ordinated with this Ministry. The MoR welcomed the people-to-people approach in developing civil society in Transnistria, as well as projects in partnership with CSOs from the rest of Moldova in achieving the objectives of the proposed action. Stakeholders will include representatives from all levels of local government, public-interest groups, academic institutions, business, media, CSOs and concerned citizens from both Moldova and the Transnistrian region.

3.4. Risks and assumptions

One should note the volatile political and security environment that is subject to unforeseen and sudden changes. The project will take into account the specific political setting that will exist in Transnistria at the moment of implementation. This refers mainly to an eventual settlement agreement that may impact on the operational environment. Even in the light of a political settlement, the objectives of the project will remain relevant.

While it may be expected that participants from Moldova would have little difficulty in taking part in all aspects of the project, participants from the Transnistrian region may experience some problems. In this context, it has been assumed that the functioning of the project on a local level only would make it more effective. Formalisation of the participation of Transnistrian organisations should be kept to a minimum in order to avoid potential problems.

3.5. Crosscutting Issues

Women are graduating from high schools and universities in equal or greater numbers than their male counterparts and are increasingly playing more prominent roles in Moldova's political and economic sectors. Recent legislation in areas such as trafficking in persons and gender equality promises to create more opportunities for women's advancement. Despite these important gains, however, women in Moldova continue to face traditional perceptions regarding women's role in society, economic hardship, workplace discrimination and family violence. The project will pay specific attention to tackling the above mentioned issues and to respecting gender equality, (applying, where relevant gender disaggregated analysis to the monitoring of the project) and to promote good governance, human rights and environmental sustainability throughout the supported initiatives.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Implementation method

The implementation method will be:

- A part of the action shall be implemented through joint management with an International Organisation (IO) for the tasks covering the micro-grant programme. The International Organisation will satisfy the criteria laid down in article 53 quinquies paragraph 1 of the Financial Regulation and will be chosen in an objective and transparent manner - considering the delegated tasks - among the active IOs in Transnistria (United Nations Development Programme-UNDP; World Bank; ...). The agreement to be signed with the IO will fully respect the requirements laid down in article 43 of the Implementing Rules to the Financial Regulation".
- Centralised management for the component "independent reviews, communication and evaluation of the Programme" (service contracts).

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the implementation of external operations, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

For the component implemented through joint management, all contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the International Organisation concerned.

Transnistria is a region facing a crisis, as defined in Article 168(2) of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. As a result, negotiated contracting procedures will be used when necessary.

4.3. Budget and calendar

The indicative of budget of the action is as follows:

| Programme component | Amount (million Euro) | Management modality |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Support to Civil Society in Transnistria (grant) | 1.7 | Joint Management with an international Organisation |
| Independent reviews, communication and final evaluation of the Programme (Service contracts) | 0.3 | Central management |
| Total Budget | 2.0 | |

The foreseen operational duration of the project is up to 48 months from the signature of the Financing Agreement, including up to 36 months for contracting.

4.4. Performance monitoring

The project will be monitored according to standard procedures. Project monitoring and evaluation will be based on periodic assessment of progress on delivery of specified project results and towards achievement of project objectives.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

The project will be evaluated and audited according to standard procedures.

4.6. Communication and visibility

Visibility of EU funded action will be ensured according to the EU Visibility Guidelines. Specific ad hoc visibility actions may be envisaged under the component "Independent reviews, communication and final evaluation of the Programme".

ACTION FICHE FOR MOLDOVA

1. IDENTIFICATION

| | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|--------|------------------------|
| | Title | Technical Assistance & Twinning in support of the Agreements between Moldova and the EU | | |
| | Total cost | € 6 million | | |
| | Aid method / Management mode | Project approach – <i>direct centralised management</i> | | |
| | DAC-code | 43010 | Sector | <i>Multisector aid</i> |

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Sector context

Policy dialogue between Moldova and the EU has been established through the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) signed in 1994 (in force since 1998). The PCA provisions were supplemented in early 2005 by an EU-Moldova Action Plan (ENP AP, in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy) aiming at establishing an increasingly close relationship between the EU and Moldova, involving a significant degree of economic integration and deepening of political co-operation.

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) constitutes a significant step in the creation of a new relationship between the EU and its neighbouring countries. The Action Plan is a political document laying out the strategic objectives of the cooperation between Moldova and the EU. It covers a timeframe of three years. Its implementation is expected to help fulfilling the provisions laid down in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) as well as encourage and support Moldova's objective of further integration into European economic and social structures. Implementation of the Action Plan is expected to also significantly advance the approximation of Moldovan legislation, norms and standards to those of the European Union. In this context, it builds solid foundations for further economic integration based on the adoption and implementation of economic and trade-related rules and regulations with the potential to enhance trade, investment and growth. It furthermore helps to devise and implement policies and measures to promote economic growth and social cohesion, to reduce poverty and to protect the environment, thereby contributing to the long-term objective of sustainable development.

In a new departure for EU's relationship with Moldova under the ENP framework, approximation of Moldovan legislation to the one of the European Community, its implementation and the capacity of the public institutions to effectively apply it are key activities that the Commission commits to support through a mix of classical technical assistance, TAIEX short term missions and long term exchange of experience through Twinning arrangements between Moldovan institutions and correspondent structures in the Member States.

If classical technical assistance provided to state institutions through private sector consultants has been the default option during the TACIS programme, with the Neighbourhood Policy and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument it became possible to use long term expertise of public servants of EU Member States through the established mechanism of 'Twinning'. This possibility is expected to strengthen the public administrations in Moldova through provision of expertise coming from similar institutions within a member state as well