

→ Domestic waste management by regional co-operation

Country Romania

Project title Cost-effective domestic waste management through regional co-operation

Twinning Inter-municipal Co-operation Gooi en Vecht Streek (the Netherlands)

Tarnava Mare Region (Romania)

Project period 6 October 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 46,796

Project objective

Support the municipalities in the Tarnava Mare region in setting up a co-operation structure for a cost-effective regional waste management system (collection and treatment), based on sound financial management and in accordance with European and national legislation and policies.

Project summary

Co-operation on waste management was stimulated at the regional level and a satisfactory organization structure was created, both from financial as well as from management point of view in order that the regional municipalities could provide a basic waste management service.

Core information

The local governments involved were the municipalities, of Medias, Copsa Mica, Dumbraveni and 10 other municipalities in the Tarnava Mare region. Also the local government of Sibiu County was involved since all municipalities are located in Sibiu County. Sibiu County is located in central Romania and has a population of 420,000. The economy is driven by several industrial parks and agriculture (corn, potato, barley and sugar beet). Tourism has potential as there are opportunities for mountain hiking, cultural tourism (museums, historical monuments) and spas.

Problem analysis

Municipalities in the Tarnava Mare region lacked an adequate organization to perform a basic municipal service related to waste management. Most waste is dumped locally at dump sites that have no provisions for modern disposal. With the upcoming accession to the EU, Romanian local authorities became aware that they would have to comply with European

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regulations regarding waste management issues and were committed to upgrade their services.

Project implementation

The project was based on a formalized co-operation at the regional, political and administrative levels. A review was done in the existing waste processing by analyzing domestic waste, management experiences and legislative obligations. Also the waste financing options were reviewed and organizational and financial structures were developed. The project resulted in obtaining a regional political commitment, analysis of the waste situation, developed organizational and financial structures and a formalized relationship between Tarnava Mare region and the Dutch Gooi en Vechtstreek region.

Process management

The most significant change achieved during project implementation was to get the local authorities to accept that for this type of service delivery it is vital to operate with a regional co-operation association. Focus was put on working together rather than working alone. All the mayors and county councillors of the authorities involved (Sibiu, Medias, Copsa Mica, Dumbraveni and other) were constantly invited to all project meetings. The main responsibility in the project lay with the Medias Unit for Ecology. Though the other authorities in the region also carried their responsibilities by communicating the problems to be solved in their communities and participating in project meetings.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Challenge waste management by creating groups rather than addressing an issue individually. Also associations at the regional level should be created, which facilitates external funding and solves problems of scale;
- Keep patience when operating with different interest groups, especially when stressing public vs private;
- Act in an open manner and keep your mind open for practices in other countries.

→ Integrated beach management plan

Country Romania

Project title Beach management plan at the Black Sea coast

Twinning Water authority Rijnland (the Netherlands)

Dobrogea Litoral Water Directorate Constanta (Romania)

Project period 1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 49,029

Project objective

Integrated beach management plan for the Mangalia area by improving co-operation on management and operations between Dobrogea Litoral Water Directorate Constanta, Mangalia municipality and other local authorities.

Project summary

A beach management plan was developed and a process to establish a spatial plan was designed with involved authorities and stakeholders. Relevant staff of Dobrogea Litoral Water Directorate Constanta and Mangalia were trained in enforcing by-laws and how to create and maintain the plan.

Core information

Dobrogea Litoral Water Directorate Constanta is located in Constanta county in south east Romania on the Black Sea. The county has approximately 756,000 inhabitants. It has a long historical tradition as prosperous colony controlled originally by the Greeks and later the Romans. Today's economy is based on the marine industry, shipping, agriculture and tourism, the latter welcoming some 43% of Romania's tourists.

Problem analysis

Beach management is a new responsibility for Dobrogea Litoral Water Directorate Constanta. One of the problems was lack of experience in bringing authorities and stakeholders together with conflicting interests to create a plan for a joint approach. The need for communication and co-operation among stakeholders on beach management, as well as optimally benefiting from tourism development on the shores of the Black Sea were primary reasons for implementing this project.

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Project implementation

The project started with encouraging stakeholders to ensure (and share) project ownership and to establish responsibilities of stakeholders. A strategic plan was drafted, staff trained in new essential competences and local law enforcement officials were trained. A communication plan was drawn and implemented and advertising materials were produced. Citizens and organizations were educated and Mangalia staff and relevant stakeholders were trained in spatial planning.

Process management

Key decision makers like local councilors of Mangalia city hall and responsible persons for final approval of the beach management plan were included. This was achieved through constant and constructive communication with this group over the entire project implementation period. Each of the other stakeholders (Constanta Prefecture, Environmental Protection Agency Constanta) involved participated in the working groups and project training activities.

Recommendations: dos and don'ts

- Be as open and receptive as possible to new views, ideas and perspectives;
- Ensure that key decision makers are involved in the process;
- Ensure that involved parties possess the required skills in problem solving, open discussion, conflict resolution, planning, and communication in achieving the objectives set at project start, and if not ensure training.

→ Strengthening internal management of the Department of Social Welfare

Country Romania

Project title Towards vital social welfare services

Trinning Municipality of Zutphen (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Tartu (Estonia)

Municipality of Satu Mare (Romania)

Project period 1 July 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 69,279

Project objective

Strengthen the internal management and organization of the Department of Social Welfare of the municipality of Satu Mare in their tasks, responsibilities and position.

Project summary

The project focused on improving the internal management within the Social Welfare Department with the opportunity of extending the achieved results at the whole organization level.

Core information

Satu Mare with a population of 130,000 is a town in north west Romania. Its economy is mainly industrial (food and light industry, furniture) and agriculture-based. It is also an important cultural and tourist centre as it has several museums, libraries, cinemas, orchestras and art galleries.

Problem analysis

The Social Welfare Department of the municipality of Satu Mare experienced poorly organized work, unclear staff relationships, a lack of human resources capacity and poor quality of services delivered. The local government decided to address these issues to create more effective internal management structures and better social service provision to Satu Mare citizens.

Project implementation

The project started with an information campaign targeting the main stakeholders. Data were collected to design the new organization chart and to establish job descriptions and an evaluation system. Procedures for communication were designed and an action plan to assure implementation

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of project results was drafted. To ensure project sustainability, additional informal training sessions targeting the new Human Resources manager were added to the initial plan of implementation. The results achieved are job descriptions, an evaluation system and an organization chart for the Social Welfare Department. Based on the experiences of the Social Welfare Department an action plan was prepared for extension of results across the wider local government organization.

Process management

In the Romanian local public administration the role of the mayor is crucial. For all project team meetings organized, the deputy Mayor and a local councillor were involved. The deputy mayor's involvement facilitated approval of the procedure manual for co-operation and communication and assisted in obtaining approval for the evaluation system, job descriptions and the plan for applying the results to the entire organization. The local councillor facilitated approval of the organization chart by the local council. Engaging these stakeholders assured a smooth process and further sustainability of the results. Furthermore it became inevitable that the Human Resources department should be involved so as to assure successful implementation.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Closely involve representatives of stakeholders in the decision making process;
- Inform all parties about upcoming changes;
- Political support facilitates implementation and team commitment;
- Extensive communication and collaboration is the key to successfully implementing changes in the organization.

→ Integrated sustainable care system through public private co-operation

Country Romania

Project title Towards an integrated, sustainable care system through public private co-operation

Trinning Municipality of Aalten (the Netherlands)
Municipality of Swidnik (Poland)
Salaj County (Romania)

Project period 21 October 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 64,644

Project objective

Provide management know-how and skills to project development and management staff of the county of Salaj responsible for care services to its citizens.

Project summary

Staff involved in care services from the Salaj County level were trained to manage project development and implementation with an emphasis on Public Private Partnerships, communication, access to EU funding and writing projects proposals.

Core information

Salaj county has a population of 250,000 and is located in north west Romania. The county's main activities are industry (cellulose and wood, metal, equipment, light industry) and agriculture. In medieval times Salaj was an important place on the salt route to Western Europe. Tourism potential is high as the area has many churches, monasteries, spas and beautiful natural protected areas.

Problem analysis

Major problems in the county included care for the elderly, mentally handicapped and young people in problematic situations, or in families with problems in the countryside. There were insufficient facilities for the task or experience with involving private organizations. To attract future project funds from various donors, including the EU, skills and experience in project development and management were necessary. Also it was seen to be vital to involve the private sector (in the form of Public Private Partnerships) and to better improve both internal and external communication.

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Project implementation

The activities included training in the Netherlands of Romanian participants on public private co-operation, and attracting EU funding and communication with the elderly and young. Assessment of possibilities for public private co-operation was done in Romania and experiences in care services of the training partner Swidnik (Poland) were incorporated in the project. Handbooks for public private co-operation and communication materials targeted at the elderly and young were developed. Furthermore a manual on management of care systems was drafted as well as a manual on project management. Civil servants were trained in principles of public private co-operation and application on EU structural funds resulting in a projects pipeline at the county level.

Process management

Some aspects of project implementation were difficult to implement due to the Romanian legal framework. All the trainings and documents produced were linked to internal management and this process aimed at the preparation of project proposals at the county level targeting different international donors. The main stakeholders in the project were the County Council and its departments, Direction of Project Management, External Relations and Regional Development Direction and General Direction for Social Assistance. The former was mainly involved in management of the project, while the latter was targeted for more technical issues connected to social assistance.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Consider all partners' proposals and views on all respective issues;
- Keep in mind that communication is important in winning support from all parties involved;
- Try to take cultural differences into account and deal with them;
- For sustainable results in training sessions use a high ratio of practical approaches;
- Regardless of the level of development in a country, local communities face the same difficulties which often require similar solutions.

→ Improving internal management by setting priorities

Country Romania

Project title Training of top management and council in setting priorities within policy documents as to improve internal management

Twinning Municipality of Deventer (the Netherlands)
Municipality of Sibiu (Romania)

Project period 1 September 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 16,780

Project objective

To train 16 local and regional top-managers and councillors how to co-ordinate their duties and responsibilities to reach planned results by the municipality of Sibiu and comply with the goals of the local development plan (known as Local Agenda 21).

Project summary

The project broadly consisted of two activities which involved the training of top management and council of the Sibiu Municipality and the Sibiu County council on strategic management and priority setting.

Core information

Sibiu County has a population of 420,000 and is situated in central Romania. The economy is driven by several industrial parks in the county and agriculture (corn, potato, barley and sugar beet). Tourism has great potential as there are opportunities for mountain hiking, cultural tourism (museums, historical monuments) and spas. The city of Sibiu has been the European Capital of Culture in 2007, which has brought about a high raise of tourism in Sibiu.

Problem analysis

The main problem identified was related to the insufficient competences and skills of Sibiu's municipal top management and councillors in organizing their activities and setting priorities. Prioritizing tasks was therefore required and a training programme on this issue was provided by the Dutch partners as to contribute to improving the quality of work within the municipality of Sibiu Municipality and the Sibiu County Council. This was viewed as a solution to better respond to the needs imposed by the decentralization process.

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Project implementation

A training session in setting priorities within the tasks and responsibilities (strategic management) for four local councillors from Sibiu and four county councillors was organized. The Local Agenda 21 was not prioritized as such, but the training session addressed this issue as well, prioritizing a number of its chapters. A second training session was organized for 4 local top-managers from the municipality of Sibiu and 4 top managers from the Sibiu County Council. An important achievement is that the participants acknowledged the need for the local and county administration to get organized. Moreover, due to the combination of theory with practical sessions, the Romanian participants got the chance to implement the knowledge acquired directly into practice.

Process management

The project generated modifications by raising awareness concerning the importance of long term planning versus an incremental approach to tasks. The inclusion of both local and county council decision makers and top management in the training was intended to bring benefits in the planning process at those levels. Most departments from the county and local level were represented at the training sessions to ensure better inter-departmental co-operation in the longer term.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- At the design of the proposal undertake a thorough analysis of the envisaged target group to raise effectiveness in the implementation phase;
- Involve decision maker(s) early in the process to facilitate smooth implementation of activities;
- Good teamwork is inevitable for effective project results.

→ Raising local government strategic and financial planning capabilities

Country Romania

Project title Raising local government strategic and financial planning capabilities

Twinning Municipality of Leek (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Dumbraveni (Romania)

Project period 1 September 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 69,931

Project objective

Provide the municipality of Dumbraveni with new skills in strategic and financial planning, raise staff qualifications and clearly describe job tasks in the town hall.

Project summary

Financial assistance was focused on training sessions delivery and providing advice on improving financial and human resource management. Emphasis was also placed on local authority staff acquiring information technology knowledge and skills.

Core information

Dumbraveni has a population of 8,500 and is situated in Sibiu County, in central Romania. Its economy is agriculture-based, and includes 40,000 square meters of vegetable and flower glasshouses and hemp production.

Problem analysis

Dumbraveni experienced insufficient human resources capacity, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Dumbraveni thus had insufficient capacity to provide certain necessary services to its citizens. The local government is responsible for identifying solutions to provide better services and for improving financial and strategic management. It also seeks upgraded human resource management, to attract projects supported by various donors and to be able to assure co-financing for potential projects.

Project implementation

The project focussed on the delivery of financial and strategic management training and on training delivery on human resources management (to management staff and civil servants from the Human Resources

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Department). Job descriptions were drafted. A training on long term budgeting was delivered which was useful in designing project proposals that entail co-financing issues with long term perspective. Visible improvements in internal management structures were achieved, particularly a new organisation chart, job descriptions, and awareness raising on modern human resources management techniques as management tools.

Process management

The process was supported by including the mayor and a local councillor in the Romanian project team. Furthermore, project support from the mayor rose as project results became visible during implementation. The process change was spread over the entire local authority, as it targeted almost all departments of the organization (Financial, Human Resources, Public Procurement and Judicial Departments).

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Be supportive and open to collaboration with all foreign and local partners;
- Be patient as the impact of project activities may sometimes only be visible in the long term;
- Do not ignore the basic rules of communication;
- Do not disregard the experience and cultural differences of partners;
- Good organization of the local government is a vital condition for improving results and increasing the effectiveness of services for citizens.

→ Enhancing interaction between the City Hall and its clients

Country Romania

Project title Development of interaction and feedback between the City Hall of Targu Secuiesc and its citizens, NGOs and businesses

Trinning Municipality of Maassluis (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Hatvan (Hungary)

Municipality of Targu Secuiesc (Romania)

Project period 1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 69,984

Project objective

Raise the effectiveness of internal management at Targu Secuiesc city hall by increasing interaction between public administration, citizens, NGOs and businesses, and by enhancing digital service provision and by upgrading skills and abilities of city hall staff.

Project summary

Hardware and software were upgraded for better and faster delivery of information to citizens. Municipal staff members were trained to work with the new equipment. Work visits were organized to Hatvan and Maassluis to learn from past experiences.

Core information

Targu Secuiesc has a population of 22,000 and is situated in Covasna County, the second largest town in the county after Sfantu Gheorghe. Together with ten surrounding villages it represents 25% of Covasna's population. The town has an important historical centre based on the traditions of ancient guilds which functioned until early in the 20th century.

Problem analysis

The main problem identified related to the lack of transparency in the local public administration's decision-making process. The causes included the stranglehold of traditions, the absence of citizen information centres, existing bureaucracy, complicated administrative methods, inefficient information systems, lack of IT knowledge, and ineffective communication and teamwork between back-office and front-office. The local authority wanted to raise the effectiveness and quality of services delivered to citizens, business and NGOs.

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Project implementation

After establishing a project team, purchase for IT tools (computers, printers, touch screen system, counter client kiosk, photo copier, word center PRO 128) was prepared and various hardware systems (accounting, registration) were upgraded. The organization prepared for ISO certification and a training on internal management was organized for a group of 33 civil servants of Targu Secuiesc (mainly heads of departments). Furthermore the website www.kezdi.ro was upgraded, information made available on-line and booklets containing information for citizens were prepared. The team has been tested and certified for the European Computer Drivers License.

Process management

The project contributed to a change of attitude and mentality of Targu Secuiesc town hall staff. Co-operation between town hall departments and openness to new communication channels with citizens improved. Business, citizens and NGOs were constantly informed about project status through mass-media channels and the town hall website. In a self-critique mode, town hall staff admit that further efforts are necessary in effectively communicating with citizens. The process change had an impact across almost the entire organization by involving all departments with training sessions and acquisition of IT equipment (hardware and software). Decision processes were facilitated by including the mayor of Targu Secuiesc, the main promoter of the project, in the project team.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Encourage public administration organizations to show transparency and be client friendly;
- Optimize teamwork in the organization;
- Use the benefits of foreign partners' experience to best effect while always adapting solutions to the local context;
- Seek to convey to town hall staff the fact that local citizens are not often familiar with how the town hall works. They are the key to having citizens understand and should thus be open and responsive to citizen needs;
- Keep in mind that ultimately it is the citizen who is the most important client of local authorities.

→ Creation of a water management co-ordination centre

Country Romania

Project title Establish a water management centre as new tool of management

Twinning Province of Overijssel (the Netherlands)

County council Teleorman / Municipality of Turnu Magurele (Romania)

Project period 1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 69,713

Project objective

Establish a water management centre in Teleorman County to co-ordinate and implement projects and activities in the field of water management.

Project summary

In Turnu Magurele a water management centre was created to assist authorities and provide a platform for co-ordination and management of water projects. Six specialists were trained to write project proposals and develop information programmes.

Core information

Turnu Magurele is a town with 30,000 inhabitants in Teleorman county in southern Romania. Its economy is based on a mix of agriculture and industry (chemical fertilisers, furniture, silk processing) and it has an industrial park developed under an EU pre-accession funding instrument. It has limited tourism potential.

Problem analysis

The main problem was that local and regional authorities did not possess the know-how and experience to carry out and co-ordinate demanding programmes and projects to optimize regional and local water management. The municipality wanted to create a water management centre with staff able to use certain modern management tools to ensure better management of regional projects related to water quality.

Project implementation

A plan of logistics and administrative needs was established and work spaces were prepared and equipped in the headquarters of the water centre. A public relations plan was written, job descriptions of water centre staff were drafted and civil servants were selected to work at the centre.

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Training courses on various relevant topics were organized and a support manual was drafted. Results achieved include the establishing of the board of the centre in March 2007, five specialists are formally employees of the centre, the training courses were implemented, the office space renovated and supplied with equipment, and all results from other water management projects in Teleorman were circulated.

Process management

As the project implied the creation of a new entity, there was a strong need of engaging local decision makers. The mayor of Turnu Magurele and a local councillor were involved and assured their support during implementation. It was also compulsory to involve other key stakeholders such as EuroTeleorman (The Association of Teleorman Communities and Communes). The European Integration department from the Turnu Magurele Town Hall also acted as project promoter. The EuroTeleorman Association provided support over the entire period of project implementation. The creation of the water management centre not only brought together different experiences in this field, but also developed a coherent approach of water management in the region. The project also improved internal management tools used by the project promoter (models of job descriptions, selection process, etc).

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Create ownership within the project team;
- Gain commitment and confidence of stakeholders;
- Consider all main issues and consult all main parties before taking decisions;
- Communication is the key to successful project implementation.

→ A new taxation system to ensure income balance

Country Romania

Project title Equilibrium: restore the balance between expenses and income

Trinning Waterboard Roer en Overmaas (the Netherlands)

Water board Trans Tisza Region Environment and Water

Directorate Debrecen (Hungary)

Somes Tisa Water Division Cluj (Romania)

Project period 1 November 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 68,021

Project objective

Enable the financial department of the Somes Tisa Water Division Cluj to design a tax system to finance maintenance expenses against flooding.

Project summary

The financial department of the Somes Tisa Water Division of Romania benefited from joint partner know-how and experience of the waterboard Roer en Overmaas, and the Trans-Tisza Region Environment and Water Directorate in Hungary to design a blueprint for a tax system to finance long term flood prevention.

Core information

Cluj County is located in north western Romania, in 2002 recording 703,000 inhabitants. Cluj County's economy is based on porcelain and ceramics production, pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries, and the IT and financial sectors. The county has tourism potential, being in a mountainous area with caves and historic castles.

Problem analysis

The Somes-Tisa Water Division of Cluj faced difficulties to accomplish its tasks because of an unbalance between income and expenses. A clear need existed to restore the balance to provide a reliable basis for financing maintenance expenses for the protection against flooding, using Dutch and Hungarian twinning partners' experience.

Project implementation

The project started with exploring and evaluating the Dutch and the Hungarian tax system and the designing of an evaluation grid. A blueprint

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for a tax system for financing maintenance expenses against flooding based on the best practices was realized. Conferences on co-operation among the waterboards and universities of Cluj were organized for representatives of the central government, waterboards, universities and National Administration of Romanian Waters. Emphasis was put on the taxation system blueprint, as well as an extensive 90 page brochure in English and Romanian disseminated to all stakeholders.

Process management

There was considerable support from the Babes Bolbay university in Cluj and the Dutch Union of Waterboards in the Netherlands. Employees of the Financial Department understood different models of taxation (Dutch, Hungarian) and were able to pilot the Somes Tisa region. The so-called 'system of equilibrium', based on best practices of the Dutch and Hungarian tax system was the most important result achieved.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- The principle of taxation can be extended to environmental activities and to other regions;
- Do not underestimate the planning function in the implementation of the organization's tasks;
- Create and maintain the best possible relationship with project partners, and build effectively on project results.

→ Training of Trainers to improve EU projects' capacity

Country Romania

Project title Creating a ToT team in European project management and EU fund raising

Twinning Municipality of Deventer (the Netherlands)
Sibiu County Council (Romania)

Project period 1 August 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 55,408

Project objective

Form a Training of Trainer's (ToT) team of 18 specialised staff in project and programme management, including European Union fundraising who have the ability to train and disseminate important information in this field.

Project summary

A change management process at the Sibiu county level was supported by the Netherlands partner municipality Deventer and involved human resources management consultants. A number of on-the-job trainings were held specifically on project and programme management, EU fundraising and information dissemination. Stakeholders were representatives of the municipality of Sibiu, Sibiu County Council and the General Directorate for Social Welfare and Child's Protection Sibiu. In this way implementation at the intra and inter-institutional level within the public administration of the Sibiu County was reached.

Core information

Sibiu County has a population of 420,000 and is situated in central Romania. The economy is driven by several industrial parks in the county and agriculture (corn, potato, barley and sugar beet). Tourism has great potential as there are opportunities for mountain hiking, cultural tourism (museums, historical monuments) and spas. The city of Sibiu has been the European Capital of Culture in 2007, which has brought about a high raise of tourism in Sibiu.

Problem analysis

Sibiu County Council had limited capacity of regional and local governments to effectively apply for and use EU funds. Moreover they experienced a lack of skilled civil servants within the training methods and

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dissemination of information related to EU funding. The creation of a group of trainers inside the county council was seen as a practical solution to raise the internal capacity for managing projects with European Union funds. Local training providers had a more supply-driven perspective, rather than focusing on tailoring training to the needs of staff.

Project implementation

Four training sessions on project and programme management and two training sessions on EU fundraising were organised. The training targeted subjects as vision and goals, obstacles and priorities, managing risks and expectations, financial management and dissemination of results. Obstacles and priorities were formulated and an internet database on EU funds was developed. A clear model of a successful fund application was elaborated and disseminated. Theoretic trainings were combined with practical cases from the projects developed within the interregional co-operation between Deventer and Sibiu.

Process management

The project produced tangible changes concerning the internal management by increasing the sense of responsibility of those involved, by raising awareness related to the importance of team building and by realizing the importance of communication and mutual information needs. Due to different levels of knowledge of the participants, the training sessions needed to be constantly adjusted to the training needs. A tailor-made training approach was necessary, working in subgroups according to the participants' level. The project resulted in an improved co-operation between the three local and county authorities within the Sibiu county.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Careful selection of the project target group is a prerequisite to achieve project objectives;
- Carefully consider the knowledge level of trainees when designing the training sessions;
- Involve decision makers in project activities and request their full commitment at the beginning of the project;
- Ensure effective communication for the efficient functioning of any organization;
- Involve representatives of several local and regional authorities.

→ Raising quality standards of services delivered to citizens

Country Romania

Project title An approach for improving internal management in the town hall of Medias

Twinning Municipality of Skasterlan (the Netherlands)
County of Medias (Romania)

Project period 1 November 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 67,895

Project objective

Improve the quality of internal organization of Medias town hall to assist in raising quality standards of services delivered to citizens.

Project summary

The project focused on concrete management themes and issues such as management skills of local government professionals in strategic, financial planning and accessing EU funds and in improving the internal and external communication and descriptions of organizational tasks.

Core information

Medias, with a population of 55,000 is the second largest town in Sibiu County. Medias is the second largest regional industrial centre, especially in marsh gas exploitation. The town has much impressive and different architecture and with its medieval fortifications, is one of the best preserved historical centres in the region.

Problem analysis

The main problem was related to poor internal management in Medias town hall due to particularly underdeveloped knowledge in obtaining EU and other funding for better local development; to support the local development plan, a low capacity in prioritizing solutions addressing citizen needs, poor communication with clients, and inappropriate recruitment and selection tools. Current project assistance focused on the issues above with the aim of better responding to citizen needs.

Project implementation

The main actions undertaken included an awareness campaign on the importance of clear financial planning, and creating an EU fundraising unit at organization level. Training in internal and external communication was organized and know-how and experience shared by organizing site visits to the Netherlands. Training was delivered in human resources management with a focus on policies, recruitment tools, job descriptions and team building. Furthermore a workshop was organized focusing on the links between finance and strategies, human resources management and communication as well as on their impact on the overall policy of the organization.

Process management

The project was designed, implemented and targeted to both the decision makers (councillors, mayor, and top managers) as well as to technical staff. This assured both the sustainability of the actions foreseen and ensured approval of the documents produced. The project had an impact on improving the organizational structure of the local government by creating new units (human resources, European funds). Additionally, the project generated improvements related to the tools used in human resources management as well as in communication channels inside the organization and with citizens (communication information centres).

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Obtain agreement of key decision makers at an early stage of the project to facilitate implementation of activities foreseen;
- Ensure good internal and external communication as communication is the key to successful project implementation.

→ Improving EU project management capacity

Country Romania

Project title Getting ready for Europe

Twinning Province of Zuid-Holland (the Netherlands)
Constanta County (Romania)

Project period 1 August 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 41,083

Project objective

Improve project management capacity of the Constanta county council staff in attracting EU post-accession funds, improve financial management through enhancing networking with stakeholders by means of best practices and an instruction manual.

Project summary

The County Council needed expertise to manage European Union projects that comply with regulations and quality standards. For this reason, the project activities focused on financial management, project management and networking at county level to facilitate this compliance.

Core information

Constanta County (the country's eighth largest) has some 725.000 inhabitants and is situated in east Romania. The main economic activities are transport, agriculture, and the chemical industry. Constanta is an important tourist destination because of its seaside location and historical heritage.

Problem analysis

Three main problems were addressed: 1) a shortage of knowledge and experience with regard to European projects; 2) a shortage of financial resources (especially co-financing) and; 3) poor co-operation among local government, NGOs and private companies. By addressing these problems, Constanta County Council was enabled to make efficient use of EU funds as well as enhancing the internal management of the organization.

A practice to improve internal management of local governments

Project implementation

The project provided trainings on EU issues, communication techniques and tools and risk management. The multi-year budgeting concept was introduced and assistance was provided in improving tax collection. A best practice guide and manual for EU projects were designed and further training was provided. The conference 'Ready for Europe' was organized. The project resulted in improved skills and knowledge for civil servants on project management, improved relations between the County Council and other local authorities at the county level and strengthened capacity of the Financial Department in the County Council.

Process management

The multi-year budgeting and project co-financing issues were introduced in the Constanta County Council through training activities organized for civil servants. Including the Director of the Financial Department of the Constanta County Council in the project activities positively influenced project implementation by awareness building in modern financial techniques. This project also facilitated writing of further project proposals for two important stakeholders, namely the Autonomous Body for Roads and Bridges Constanta, and, the Autonomous Body for Constanta Water. Project management knowledge and skills acquired by the representatives in the local authorities are enabling them to better address local needs and priorities in project proposals designed at the county level.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Establishing twinning partnerships with foreign local authorities that have acquired experience and expertise in similar local issues;
- Have local authorities who benefited from capacity building to further initiate partnerships with other entities that could enable access to other project funding sources (European Union Structural or Cohesion Funds);
- Facilitate an active dialogue with all partners involved.