

Support to the implementation of The Roma Strategy

No.1

Newsletter of the Project "Support to the Implementation of the Roma Strategy" funded by European Union and implemented by BBI Consortium

Dear readers,

In order to ensure timely provision of information about the activities planned and implemented within the project *Support to the Implementation of the Roma Strategy*, the project team uses various information approaches. This newsletter, to be issued every four months, is designed and published to contribute to this aim. This first issue describes the activities implemented during the period February – September 2011.

From now on, this newsletter, together with other information on the project and a range of resource materials related to the Roma Strategy and Decade, and the Romani population in general, can be accessed on the project's web page on www.mtsp.gov.mk.



Participants in the training in *Project Cycle Management*, 19-21 July 2011, Skopje

**Supporting the
Implementation of
the Roma Strategy,
*Locating the
problems = finding
the solutions***



The project team, through conduct of research on different documents, desk review and discussions with relevant stakeholders, established a clear picture of the actual situation concerning the implementation of the Roma Strategy, the National Action Plans (NAP) and the Local Action Plans (LAP). This aims to serve as the basis for achieving the main goal of the Decade. In the course of the project's implementation, since May 2011 project experts have begun delivery of trainings for capacity building of the beneficiary institutions with reference to the implementation of the Strategy and the Decade. The trainings were preceded by an assessment of the training needs of all target groups of the project at central and local level. The assessment included face-to-face interviews and discussions, distribution of written questionnaires, and resulted in a training plan. The implementation of the training plan continued with



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four trainings and one workshop conducted as of the end of September 2011. All of these trainings were delivered to the staff of the Unit for Implementation of Strategy and Decade for Roma (UISDR) and the Cabinet of the Minister without Portfolio (MwP), and some of them included as participants also members of the National Coordination Body (NCB) and local-level representatives.



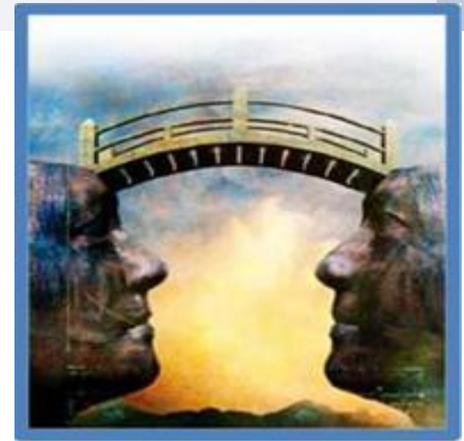
Training in Project Cycle Management, 19-21 July 2011, Skopje



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Through appropriate training for relevant institutions, expert analysis and technical assistance, the project provides maximum support for a fuller and more effective implementation of the Strategy for Roma.

Productive communication = effective working



One of the priorities at the beginning of the project was the creation of appropriate Communication Strategy as a basic tool for better quality of communication: inside the institutions, interinstitutional, and with the general public. The developed Strategy document contains also an operational plan for its implementation with some specific provisions on quantities of communication tools to be produced, responsible entities, budgets and time-line. The Strategy was adopted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The following three entities – MLSP with its UISDR, the MwP Cabinet as National Coordinator for the Strategy and Decade for Roma, and the NCB for implementation of the Roma Strategy – have the synthesising role for the coordination of the



Communication Strategy's implementation.

Assessment of the Roma Strategy



The 2004 *Strategy for Roma* provides a broad framework for the elaboration of operational documents aimed at improving the situation of the country's Romani population. The Strategy is also in line with the priorities of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

The key government institutions are dedicated to ensuring a high-quality implementation of the Strategy. The aim is to act jointly in favour of making the country a good example for others in the area of Roma inclusion. And some results are already visible: the Strategy for Roma inclusion is increasingly becoming more significant a factor! But there is still a lot of crucial things to be done such as:

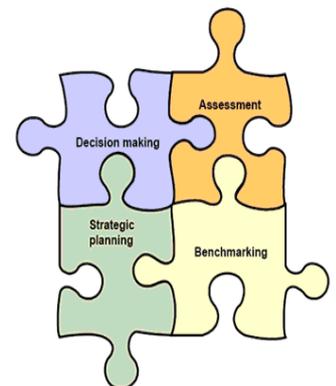
- capacity building of relevant institutions at central and local level;
- adoption of a results-oriented approach to the implementation of the Strategy and Decade priorities and related action plans;
- improving the communication among key stakeholders;
- institutional support to RICs' development and functioning.

a number of recommendations for improvement referring to:

+ Relevant documents (National and Local Action Plans)



+ Institutional arrangements



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



The Roma Strategy Assessment takes a snapshot of the implementation status of the Strategy by making specific references to the existing implementation mechanisms and providing

+ Monitoring and evaluation



Referring to the key documents creating a common understanding for



coordinated action is important, as far as making National Action Plans relevant and achievable. Institutions must ensure that documents adopted at municipal levels correspond to national priorities.

A single institution should be made responsible for coordination between the government and international institutions, among national-level institutions, and between national and local levels in relation to implementation of the Strategy and the Decade.

There must be established routine coordination within key institutions, funding allocations and transparency should be ensured. At last, but not less important, is the promotion of the continued development of Roma Information Centres.

- *Key government institutions are dedicated to ensuring a high-quality implementation of the Strategy, but still crucial changes are necessary*

- *There must be established routine coordination within key institutions, funding allocations and transparency should be ensured*
- *Institutions must ensure that documents adopted at municipal levels correspond to national priorities.*

Assessment of the Roma Information Centres and local action Plans



A thorough assessment of existing Roma Information Centres was conducted using desk review and field visits as methods for collecting data. The aim of this assessment was to provide background information on the situation of the RICs and their capacities and effectiveness in performing their role with a view to underline the options for ensuring better performance of their job and provide further support activities within the project. The Assessment was linked with other project activities, such as LAP assessment and support, communication activities, and most of all to the actual support to be provided to the RIC capacity building. The team of experts made assessment also of the Local action plans. This assessment was linked to the other assessments described herewith. Methods for data collection included desk review, gathering information through Letters of Request



sent to municipalities, and field visits for semi-structured interviews and group discussions with local stakeholders.

Following the LAP assessment, the preparation has begun for the revision of existing LAPs and the development of new LAPs. The focus is on three different groups of municipalities: 1) those with no LAPs at present; 2) those foreseeing to revise LAPs; and 3) those which did not return the questionnaire sent during the assessment. The selection of the target municipalities has just started.

The project will provide support to the implementation of existing LAPs. This support is planned to be implemented in the period December 2011 – May 2012.

21st International Steering Committee of the Roma Decade, 29-30 September

The implementation of the national plans and the Roma-related activities of the Council of Europe were main subject of debate among the participants in the two-day meeting of the International Steering Committee of the Decade for Roma inclusion.

On this meeting, organized under the country's Presidency of the Decade, national coordinators submitted their reports for implementation of the action plans for Roma inclusion for 2011.



21-st International Steering Committee of the Roma Decade, September 29-30, 2011

Participants in the meeting were the Minister without Portfolio and National Coordinator for the Decade, Nezhdet Mustafa, Amdi

Bajram- Member of the Parliament , Robert Liddell - Minister Counselor at the Delegation of the European Union to Skopje, Zheljko Jovanovich - Director of the Open Society Roma Initiatives, Budapest, and Mamta Murti - Director of the World Bank, Unit of Human Resources Development for Europe and Central Asia. The project expert team prepared the Roma Decade Presidency Programme through a series of consultative meetings with beneficiaries, and the Programme was adopted by the Government at its regular meeting on 18 May 2011. It contains a thorough planning of events to be organised in the period July 2011 – June 2012, **starting with this International Steering Committee Meeting.** It provides also for the necessary budgets organization of events with their responsible parties.



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