



CZECH REPUBLIC
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Initial Project Proposal

Request number:
(Allocated by the Czech
Development Agency)

Title:

The extend of the project “Development of strategic planning in Moldova, region North” by elaborating a study on regional specialization of the North Development Region and implementation of the first and second branding scenarios

Partner country:

Republic of Moldova

Region/town/locality:

North Development Region

Expected Start Date of Implementation:

NA

Expected End Date:

NA

Estimated total financial allocation (EUR):

NA

Expected Czech ODA financial contribution (EUR):

Applicant / Partner Institution:

Name, type, mail and web address of partner institution; name and position of responsible manager, phone, fax, e-mail.

North Regional Development Agency (North RDA)

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director: Ion BODRUG, e-mail: bodrug_ii@mail.ru, phone: +373 69150152

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Other key partners:

Name, type, mail and web address of partner institution(s); name and position of responsible manager, phone, fax, e-mail.

NA

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Development problem:

Problem analysis. Please explain current situation, identify major problems and their real causes (problem tree), stating the baseline for the intervention. Please include cross-cutting issues in the problem analysis (identify the major problems from the gender perspective, with regards to environment etc.)

The sustainable regional development is an imperative assumed and the Moldovan Government confirmed its string commitment for equitable distribution of development opportunities throughout the country. The development in all policy areas tends to have a regional impact and it is important for Regional Development Agencies to find solutions and complementary integration of sector/regional policies to ensure consistency of development measures. Strategic planning is a key to effective and sustainable development of the region; it is the process of setting objectives and measures to achieve them, an effective instrument for identifying opportunities and risk prevention.

The effectiveness of each strategic document is determined by its influence on shaping the reality. In the case of regional development strategies and sectoral programs, methodological challenges are particularly difficult for several reasons. First of all, in the elaboration of

strategies and sectoral programs the same tools are applied to support the development of all regions without taking into consideration local characteristics, regional specialization and branding. As a result, regional strategies and programs have a similar form and contain similar provisions. In recent years, EU has given considerable importance to studying regions and identifying potential and regional specialties. According to these ideas, regions must demonstrate strengths and weaknesses and develop with particular emphasis on specialization and branding. In this regard, due to regional specialization, the region will concentrate resources on key priorities. Secondly, within the globalizing world, regions and their identities are subjected to great pressure. At present, places are engaged in a process of territorial competition in an integrated world economy. The identity of the region can be used as a starting point to brand a region and differentiate it from others. In the regional branding process, the region as a whole becomes a product or brand and offers a basket of regional products and services. Thus, regional branding is aimed at creating a more distinctive image or reputation, which helps to increase regional competitiveness. Regional branding stimulates the regional economy, creates added value for the regional products and services, and can break through existing restrictions of sector-oriented approaches to regional development.

At the moment, North Regional Development Agency, due to the financial help of the Czech Government, benefits from the projects "*Development of strategic planning in Moldova, region North*". The main activities implemented within this project are trainings in the field of Branding and GIS, the elaboration of a Branding Strategy for the North Region and a GIS Manual and arising warrens campaigns. Though in the project proposal there were foreseen elements on regional specialization altogether with branding, North Regional Development Agency decided to concentrate its efforts only on branding training and the development of 3 scenarios for the Region, because the time (4 days) dedicated for this activity was too little. However, regional specialization remains utterly necessary for the further development of the North region.

In this context, the extend of the project "*Development of strategic planning in Moldova, region North*" by elaborating a study on regional specialization of the North Development Region (focusing on the analysis of the industries and economy in the region) and implementation of the first and second branding scenarios developed during the above mentioned project, will bring an added value to the regional development of the North Region. The present project will further strengthen the long-term sustainability of the original project. If in the initial project branding is a part of the North Regional Development Strategy, this one will further deepen the stress on the development of tourist potential and will ensure that the original strategy and knowledge we received will not stay in a bookshelf, but will be fully taken advantage of.

Given that the North Regional Development Agency (North RDA) is responsible for the elaboration of two Regional Sectoral Programs on Tourism and on Business Infrastructure for the period 2017-2020 and its strategic planning and programming specialists began the process of de the developing them at the beginning of 2016, expertise in the field of regional specialization and implementation of the first branding scenario would be a major plus. According to the Action Plan on the elaboration of regional sectoral programs, the team should finish the elaboration of these 2 regional programs no later than the middle of 2017. In this regard, the extend of the project "*Development of strategic planning in Moldova, region North*" aims at helping in the elaboration of these regional sectoral programs. The regional specialisation approach will analyse the economic potential of the North Development Region and will offer recommendations regarding which industries to develop and this approach will be included in the Regional Sectoral Program on Business Infrastructure for the North Development Region. This approach in regional specialization will allow a more efficient support in development, which is particularly important in the case of economic difficulties

and limited financial means. It will try to answer to the questions: Have patterns of regional specialization changed over the period? What are the determinants of regional specialization and industrial concentration patterns? How specialized/diversified are the cities in the region? What is the relationship between regional specialization and economic performance?

The Branding Strategy, already developed in the project “Development of strategic planning in Moldova, region North” contains 3 development scenarios. Both, the strategy and the scenarios will be included in the Regional Sectoral Program on Tourism for the North Development Region. The implementation of some elements of the 1st and 2nd scenario will bring great benefits to our region, increasing the visibility of the Region at both national and international level and attracting tourism visitors.

Additional research is therefore needed for a better understanding of patterns and changes of regional specialization and branding in the North Development Region. As a result, regional specialization and branding will increase the attractiveness of the North Development Region as a place for working, living and spending free time, creating a more distinctive image or reputation and increasing regional competitiveness.

Key stakeholders and beneficiaries:

Analysis of key stakeholders and beneficiaries. Please define stakeholders who have significant influence or importance for the solution of the problem given above. Also, specify groups (e.g. women, men, girls, boys of different age, education, economic status and other categories) who shall directly benefit from the intervention, and those who will benefit indirectly. Please provide gender disaggregated data on both the stakeholders and the beneficiaries, if relevant.

The target group of the project will be the specialists of the North Regional Development Agency who will be responsible to implement and take part in all planned activities.

At the same time, the Working group of the Project will include local public authorities, academia (Balti State University) NGO-s and entrepreneurs.

Expected outcomes:

Analysis of objectives. Please describe the vision of an improved situation (including change of behaviour and attitudes), including key measurable and qualitative outcome indicators (disaggregated by sex if relevant), and their current value.

The following outcomes are previewed:

- Regional specialization developed and brand awareness of the north region
- Promotion of the brand of the region
- Improved strategic planning of the North Development Region
- North Regional Development Agency Staff trained and informed
- Facilitation of the communication between the regional actors – North RDA, North Regional Development Council, Local Public Authorities

Expected outputs and/or required specific services, supplies or works:

Please describe the concrete outputs when required, including baseline and target indicators, and technical specifications if relevant.

The following outcomes are previewed:

- 1 analysis in the field of regional specialization for the North Development Region with a set of recommendations for regional specialization included
- 10 people trained in the field of regional specialization
- 1 Creative brief
- 1 brand manual
- Brand development with stakeholders
- New brand communication via PR and lobbying
- On-line communication (social media)
- Photography and visual imaginary
- On-line communication (own website)
- PR campaign
- Brochures and catalogue
- Press trip for journalist
- Promotional video

Possible strategies:

Analysis of strategies. Please compare different options to address the given situation, and then chose the most relevant and feasible strategy according to clear criteria (incl. national development plans, time and economic limits, civil society and women/gender groups strategies etc.).

The following activities are planned within the present project:

1. Trainings in the field of regional specialization
2. Elaboration of the study on regional specialization. (with print included – 70 pieces)
3. Round tables on brand development
4. Training on marketing of a region, destination management
5. Implementation of the branding scenario:
 - Creative brief - Writing a compelling proposition which embodies the essence of the brand and clarify basic advertising ideas.
 - Brand manual - Its role is to help everyone to understand and explain what is the destination brand essence and values and how to express through tone of voice, type of imagery, design and specific colours.
 - Inside brand communication - Its purpose is to explain clearly to staff, partners and other stakeholders how to use the brand in their marketing communications.
 - Outside brand Communication - Communicate new brand visions through regional media. As a support you can use names of brand advocates (stakeholders). Push your brand ideas with using brand manual (its covered examples of use) to politics, to National Tourists Organization and others.
 - On-line brand communication - Create a profile on social media and contribute interesting content. This step is much more creative and consumer focused than steps above. You should be cool, open and friendly. You can also support this marketing activity with some kind of competition.
 - Photography and visual imaginary - High resolution photography making for different communication canals (on-line, print magazine and newspapers, billboards, leaflets, brochures,...) and for different target group and different season. It must respect the brand manual.
 - The destination on-line - Build up destination's website. There is useful information about destination assets, about services, about events. Social media profile should be integrated. Do not forget to analyse tracking, analyse web of origin (google, direct approach, social media link). The text should be optimised for SEO. Forwarding service – see 2.1 Brochures and catalogue
 - PR campaign - This include PR articles in life style magazine, press release, press conference, but also paid TV reports, radio competitions etc. Gala evening is great possibility how to communicate with stakeholders; you can also invite important well known persons or celebrities. These events help you to push your ideas to different type of media.
 - Brochures and catalogue, posters - Take together high resolution photography and visual imaginary which respected brand manual. Print different types for different use. Its means different in content (considering target segments), different size (pocket size for tourists, bigger one as a representative catalogue for fairs), different season content. Do not forget to maps. Establish new service for potential tourists on your web site. They can order print material for free
 - Press trip for journalists - Identify palette of destination's attractions and prepare one day trip

for journalists. Take them to destination's highlights, to interesting places and give them opportunity to move around on their own work way. Journalists really hate moving from one place to another without freedom to work. They need to look around, feel spirit of place, and taste it. You can also prepare thematic trips focused on local cuisine, to nature, to events.

- Promotional videos - Video created in different footage (5, 15, 30, 60, 120 sec.), in different resolution (TV, on-line, fairs, shopping mall), in different season. It is too important respect brand manual, target segments motivators. One version should summarize all together, another versions can be more specific for each target segment. It should be understandable without voiceover too
- Print advertisement- Buy a business space in specific magazine and newspaper determined by target segments. Take together right photos from your internal photo gallery and PR advices from journalists (1.4, 1.8. 2.2) and prepare advertisement (still respect the Brand manual). Most of magazines have own website. There you can advertise too.

Role of the applicant/partner organisation and roles of other key partners:

Please describe briefly the roles and responsibilities of key project stakeholders during project preparation, implementation and also their guaranties for ensuring sustainability of the benefits of the requested development intervention.

Taking into consideration the fact the activities planned to be realized within the project, with the assistance of Czech Republic (Czech Development Agency), the following division of roles is relevant:

- Czech Development Agency – Expertise in the relevant field, experiences and best practice transfer, Perform the regional specialization analysis and elaboration of a set of recommendations for regional potential and specialization, conduct the working group and round tables, implement the branding scenario.

- North Regional Development Agency - Participation at the agreed activities, participation in the working group, organize the round tables, promotion of the results, drafting new strategic direction in institutions' development, cooperation with different actors, coordination over all these actors.

Complementarity:

Analysis of other relevant development interventions executed by the government (or) in co-operation with other donors, complementarity of the requested intervention with activities carried out so far.

In the period 11 to 18 October 2014, the specialists in strategic planning and programming of all the 3 Regional Development Agencies took part in the study visit to Poland organized by the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction. The topic of the visit was "Development of national strategy and regional innovation strategies, support to entrepreneurship and the formation of clusters" realized as a part of the project "Support to Moldovan government in preparing for the implementation of projects that support the increase of competitiveness and potential regions growth ", financed under the program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland" Polish development assistance in 2014.

During the visit, RDAs together with MRDC benefited of the support in developing instruments and regional development projects that will contribute to increasing competitiveness and development potential of the regions, including promoting entrepreneurship, business development and investment support. At the same time, the delegation had to chance to better understand the importance of regional specialization and branding.