

North Regional Development Agency

Strategic Planning and Programming Department

Ion BODRUG

Director North RDA

The outcome

following the ongoing of the International Conference entitled

"Socio-economic opportunities of the North Development Region until the year 2020" held in Balti, from 21 to 22 May 2013.

1. The Conference

The International Conference entitled „Socio-economic opportunities of North DR until 2020" had its premiere on the 21st -22nd of May 2013, in Balti, North Development Region. As a result of the event, it was launched the participatory process of the elaboration of the midterm regional development policy.

The conference gathered together about 180 people: regional, national and international actors, who discussed the development opportunities of NDR, taking into consideration the national and international policies and local/regional needs.

The North RDA Partners: the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development from the Republic of Latvia, the West Regional Development Agency (Romania), the State University "A. Russo", AITT, AEE, PPA, ODIMM, MIEPO contributed significantly to the conference organization, and as a result of socio-economic analyses of the RDN situation, of the needs and region development opportunities, they presented their visions and development solutions in the plenary session. The topics discussed in the plenary and interactive sessions have interested regional actors from different areas: LPA, academia, entrepreneurship, civil society, media, etc, who had the opportunity to express their vision, views and opinion on development directions proposed for discussion, emerged from development policies stipulated in the National Development Strategy (NDS) "Moldova 2020", the strategy Europe 2020, the Development Millennium Objectives, etc.

In the concluding session, the national experts and moderators of the specialized panels reported their recommendations regarding the midterm development actions, measures, priorities and directions that will provide a key strategic base for the future in order to improve the quality of life and attractiveness of the North Region, thus offering their consultancy in the process of elaboration of socio-economic development strategy of NDR until 2020.

2. The Conclusions of the Conference Panels

Panel 1: Competitiveness of NDR human capital in the labor market of RM

- Structural modernization of the economy, performance and competitiveness capacity development can not be implemented without a significant increase in the level of

population qualification and the development of entrepreneurial and adaptation to economy market skills.

- NDR is characterized by many economic development opportunities, entrepreneurship being the basis for developing the economic potential of the region.
- Building a competitive workforce market is one of the most important strategic goals of local and state authorities.

Panel 2: Support and facilitation for business environment development

- Minimizing the interference of state control bodies in SME activity
- Increased export promotion from the institutions responsible for SME sector development.
- SME representatives training on legislation.
- The launch of new programs to support small and medium business (like PARE 1 +1, and so on).
- Improving legislation on fiscal incentives for newly established SMEs.
- Promoting successful stories in SME for new businesses created and potential businessmen.
- Promotion of local products on the internal/external market.
- Legal assistance in the creation and development of SMEs.
- Launching and promoting new production technologies on the internal market.

Panel 3: Innovation and technology transfer.

- Innovation and technology transfer is an area that requires special attention, since it is crucial for the economic growth both at the regional and national level. When the economic and financial crisis has affected almost all fields, the increase of the technological and innovational potential became an agreeable solution to stimulate the economy for many actors of society.
- The innovational activity in the Republic of Moldova is a profitable and successful one. Innovation infrastructure includes parks (currently, there are three science parks) and innovational incubators (at the moment there are 7 incubators). The possibility of developing regional investment represents a major strategic point for balanced, transparent, uniform and time-consuming economic growth.
- EU 2020 strategy places particular emphasis on innovation and research, which shows once again the positive impact and importance to sustainable economic growth at regional and national level.
- The innovational element has to be present in all development policies and local/ regional/ national priorities.

Panel 4: Public and private partnership

- The role of the public private partnership is to regulate the planning, financing, construction, operation, rehabilitation, development, lease and transfer of any public works, goods or public services that are carried out by this procedure.
- By means of public-private partnership, public institutions associate with private companies and form a project company. The strength is that the investor develops the infrastructure. Private partners can respond or not to recoup their investment. This partnership is a widely used process in many countries, representing advantages and benefits for both parties. Such a partnership is welcome to NDR, since it involves many actors and it is a generator of positive and beneficial results and resources.

Panel 5: Opportunities for NDR goods export promotion

- Boosting export is a priority in the market economy. Trainings and experience transfer constitute an effective model for national enterprises.
- A substantial importance is the investment support for training and development of staff, particularly specialists responsible for the products quality and marketing. Also, the efficient management of human resources should increase the satisfaction of employees; encourage business investment in employee development, thus increasing the enterprises competitiveness.
- It's necessary to learn to identify and argue for the product priority qualities before purchasing it.
- Another important point is the rethinking of the relationship between public administrations of all levels and enterprises in the territories administered by them.
- Thus, to obtain satisfactory results, the state authorities together with donors identify possibilities of organizing experience transfer processes for entrepreneurs in Moldova and NDR.

Panel 6: Energy Efficiency

- Creation of secure, competitive and sustainable energy production from renewable local sources, especially biomass from the agricultural waste, is the most viable and available local source of energy.
- Promotion of opportunities and benefits of biomass energy use.
- Creation of a PPP and commissioning of at least one agro waste briquetting business.
- Attracting investment to finance various projects in the field of EE and RES which as a result will lead to lower energy intensity to the EU states average.

Panel 7: Polycentric urban development

- Sustainable and balanced urban development can only be ensured through an integrated approach of different dimensions such as economic, social, spatial and environmental.
- Understanding the importance of urban development and its prioritization in the framework of sectoral policies.
- For a lasting polycentric urban development it is necessary to implement integrated urban policies and planning.
- Correlating sectoral policies, coordination of funding from national funds and external sources, of the primary public services and improved access infrastructure, generation of local identity, changing of attitudes and reforms continuity.
- For a lasting balanced urban polycentric development we need the elaboration of strategic planning documents based on promoting a policy of positioning, differentiation and growth attractiveness, promoting public-private partnerships, promoting the city as a business center and, the least but not the last, reducing the funding share from public funds and the growth of private investment.

3. General conclusions regarding socio-economic development of NDR until 2020

By organizing this event, North RDA demonstrated its commitment to accelerate and ensure the process of balanced and sustainable socio-economic development of RDN, by involving all stakeholders in the decision making process to reduce socio-economic development imbalances within the region, focusing on the priority directions:

1. Facilitating business development and export promotion.

2. Developing performance and competitive capacity of RDN labour force.
3. Promotion and stimulation of the public-private partnership creation.
4. Polycentric urban development.

Note: The element of innovation and energy efficiency must persist in all the measures, priorities and policies for regional and local development.

4. Partnerships established at the conference

Following the conference, partnerships were established in order to elaborate new midterm regional policy with the support of the international experts: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (VARAM) from the Republic of Latvia, based on a *Common Plan of Regional Policy Elaboration*; West RDA, Romania, that offered to assist RDA North in this process, coming up with a TWINNING project proposal; national profile institutions that will participate as experts in specialized working groups according to new development priorities, identified in NDR.

Also, as a result of the visit to the implemented projects, the mayor of Corjeuti, the rayon of Briceni was invited to participate in a study visit to Latvia, to establish partnerships with a similar community in Latvia, to promote the export of local products, to develop socio-economic and cultural relationships, etc.

5. Regional Projects Fair

During the conference, the *Regional Projects Fair* was held, presenting the portfolio of under implementation and implemented projects, managed by North RDA. Also it was launched the "Projects Portfolio", approved in the RD policies, projects requiring extra funding. The event was attended by **national officials:**

- representatives of the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Transport and Road Infrastructure

and **international structures:**

- representatives of the EU Delegation in the Republic of Moldova, representatives of Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia, the West Regional Development Agency (Romania), representatives of the EU project "Technical Assistance for Sector Budget Support Programme - Economic Stimulation in Rural Areas (ESRA)," the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the General Consulate of Romania in Balti, USAID, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA), etc..

Following the event, the regional investment potential has aroused the interest of national (Ministry of Environment / WSS projects) and international participants: ESRA, USAID (business projects), who were sent the requested information after the event.

The Regional Projects Fair still continues online, the projects link being posted on the official RDA North site: <http://adrnord.md/slidepageview.php?l=ro&idc=444&> .

5. Promotional materials

In order to promote the NDR and North RDA, a number of promotional materials were elaborated by the Agency specialists:

- The summary of North RDS in 3 languages;
- The brochure "Welcome to the NDR", which presents the regional socio-economic potential;
- The photo album "North Development Region" on regional touristic patrimony;
- The brochure "Projects Portfolio", which reflects the RDA activity of the implemented projects as well as the investment potential included in North ROP;
- The Compendium of Studies "Regional Policies through the Prism of Sociological Analysis ", elaborated in partnership with the State University "A. Russo", based on sociological studies conducted in the NDR during 2011-2012, targeting WSS, SWM, human capital areas and APL ability to plan and to attract investment in the locality;
- CD on contact details of all institutions and enterprises from NDR, developed in partnership with the Businessmen Association „Manager Club " etc.

By elaborating these materials, it was intended to familiarize the event participants with the socio-economic and investment potential of the region and the work of RDA North.