

# Electronic Bulletin: no.1/2018

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## **OVERVIEW ON THE JOINT OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME ROMANIA – UKRAINE – REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA 2007 – 2013 – achievements and results**

The Joint Operational Programme Romania – Ukraine - Republic of Moldova 2007-2013, financed by the European Union through European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument has as main objective to improve the economic, social and environmental situation in the Programme area, in the context of safe and secure borders, through increased contact of partners on both sides of the borders, by three priorities:

**Priority 1. Towards a more competitive border economy**, concentrating on improving the economic performance of the border area through the diversification and modernisation, in a sustainable manner, of the border economy.

**Priority 2. Environmental challenges and emergency preparedness** supporting long term solutions to the environmental problems faced by the border areas, particularly those associated with environmental emergencies where a coordinated approach is essential.

**Priority 3. People to people cooperation** promoting greater interaction between people and communities living in the border areas.

After two calls for proposals and the implementation of selected projects, managed by 491 partners from all three participating countries, the Programme achievements and results show how people and organizations in the border area interfered, helping to overcome border barriers, restrictions and other factors which can lead to separation in the border areas.

The below mentioned results are covering important themes like improvement of the economic performance, environmental challenges and emergency preparedness, and small scale initiatives for a better interaction between people and communities living in the border areas.

Through projects supporting *long term solutions to the environmental problems in association with environmental emergencies*, 11 water and waste technologies were jointly implemented in the border area, 7 solutions were developed for fighting soil erosion, 18 collaborations were established on common problems of environmental protection and 11 solutions and networks contributing to risk prevention and early warning and emergency response were established.

In order to *improve the economic performance of the border area in a sustainable manner of the border economy*, 1,436 SME's benefitted from business facilities, 542 partnerships between universities, research institutes and business/local authorities were concluded, more than 2,000 people graduated training courses, 15 joint integrated tourism products were created.



Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova  
CROSS BORDER COOPERATION

By implementation of “*people to people*” actions, interaction between people and communities living in the border areas was promoted and realized and 359 bodies were involved in these initiatives, 119 joint cultural events/ networks promoting regional CBC identity, including awareness campaigns for environmental protection in the area were organized, 34 information campaigns for citizens and rehabilitation courses for victims of people trafficking, 388 exchanges and joint events for young people and 191 trainings/ meetings for professionals were developed.

## LARGE SCALE PROJECTS FINALIZED IN 2017

### 1. The prevention and protection against floods in the upper Siret and Prut River Basins, through the implementation of a modern monitoring system with automatic stations – EAST AVERT, MIS ETC 966

Communities in the cross-border region Romania - Ukraine - Republic of Moldova are benefitting from different types of flood protection investments made in the upper basins of the Siret and Prut rivers.

The investments were made between November 2013 and December 2017, through the trilateral Large Scale Project EAST AVERT financed within the Joint Operational Program Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013.

As a result of this project, a modern integrated monitoring and warning system to protect localities and population living in the border areas of Prut and Siret River Basins has been settle. The safety of the Stanca - Costesti dam was strengthened by modernizing the information system and the power supply and by replacing the pump system. A Joint Action Plan against floods, ice, drought, hydrotechnical accidents and accidental pollution in the cross-border area of the Siret and Prut basins was developed. The warning system has been improved through a common system of forecasting and modelling procedures. The effectiveness of the warning / alarm system has been enhanced through:

- improving the accuracy of forecasts, both with regard to flow variations and flood propagation times;
- improving the monitoring of quality parameters;
- improving the response time for extreme events by upgrading the methods how data and information are retrieved, processed and transmitted.

Various interventions to reduce the effects of floods were done by the 8 partners involved in the project. The works for the overflow system safety of Stanca - Costesti dam and the consolidation of the left side of the dam, both affected by the strong floods on the Prut River in 2008, have to be underlined.

It is important for citizens to be informed about the danger of floods, therefore, various communication activities have been carried out during the implementation of the project, aiming at increasing citizens' awareness of flood risk areas in extreme events situations.



### 2. Inventory, Assessment and Remediation of Anthropogenic Sources of Pollution in the Lower Danube Region of Ukraine, Romania and the Republic of Moldova, MIS ETC 995

The main purpose of the project was to reduce the environmental impact of chemical dumps and wastewater discharges in the Lower Danube region as well as enhance environmental monitoring of soil and water pollution and make the information publicly available.



People from Lower Danube region and the tourists in the region are all benefitting from the implementation of this project. The improved waste water treatment system in Vylkove created the premises for improving the wastewater collection for the population living there and put in place a new sewerage system for people living in the old part of the town.

Seven partners from the three countries were involved in this Large Scale Project carried out between April 2013 and December 2017.

Activities included, *inter alia*, GIS mapping of soil and water pollution sources in Lower Danube region, establishing a regional Centre for Ecological Studies in Kiliya, Odessa region (Ukraine) created for promoting the socio-economic and environmental development of the Danube region, solving the environmental problems of the Danube and its basin, achieving environmental safety, strengthening cross-border cooperation, designing a Centre for Management of Hazardous Waste in Chisinau (Republic of Moldova), assessment of risks for human and environmental health of sources of soil and water pollution, building the Vilkovo waste water treatment system, installing other pollution control equipment.

The most direct result of the project is the wastewater treatment and sewerage system - a vacuum sewer and equipment in the city of Vylkove, which can clean 900 m<sup>3</sup> per day and can extend the coverage from initial 1,200 to 8,200 people.

According to the results of the Project, the investment significantly improved the environmental and sanitary conditions in Vylkove and its suburbs, and also provided opportunities to reduce the operating costs of the existing sewerage system, being energy efficient.

The Vilkovo facility could be considered a model for clean-up and reduction of untreated waste water dumping and the improvement of the regional environmental aspect represents an important value added by this project.



### **SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECTS - what happens after EU financing is completed?**

Sustainability is a very common term in European funding area and a *sine qua non* condition for the success of a project.

The term of sustainability refers to the idea of lasting, environmentally friendly, and if we strictly relate to projects funded by European funds, sustainability concerns the results of projects that generate added value as a result of their implementation.

However, to be sustainable, the project once completed, should meet certain conditions, such as financial ones (e.g. the generation of income sources for future operations and maintenance actions, payment of salaries to employees, utilities, consumables, technical equipment, etc.), of a political nature (e.g., contribution to the improvement of legislation, codes of conduct, working methods, etc.), of an institutional nature (e.g. adequate investment of the institution / institutions, according to the standards in force in the field, preservation of the property / investment property, and last but not least, the ones related to the environment (e.g. protection, improvement of the environment).

Let's look at the example of the Chernivtsi Local Council and its recently completed project MIS-ETC 1535 "Improving the ecological situation of basins of Prut and Dniester by improving sewage treatment systems in Chernivtsi and Drochia".





By this project, waste water treatment plant of the town was upgraded. The financier (in particular the European Union) expects that, after the implementation, the project contributes to the improvement of the quality of the wastewater in the area targeted, to the reduction of pollution and to create better living conditions and utilities for the direct and indirect beneficiaries of that project. According to the project, the necessary funds and human resources for the functioning of the waste water treatment plant are to be ensured by the beneficiary.

Another example, a project with visible sustainability actions, in the field of culture, was the project "The libraries – open gates towards knowledge", MIS-ETC 727 implemented by Bucovina Library "I.G.Sbiera" from Suceava. The project aimed at developing cooperation between local libraries in the cities of Suceava and Chernivtsi, developing inter-cultural exchanges by promoting cultural and spiritual inheritance.

Thus, after the completion of the project, the following activities aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the project results were carried out: common meetings between the project partners on both sides of the border, as well as the development of new joint activities, the development of new projects, etc.; joint cultural activities promoted in local / regional mass media (e.g. Romanian Literature Salon in Bucovina, Romanian Book Salon, Celebration Event of the great poet Mihai Eminescu); literary meetings between writers from Suceava and Chernivtsi. At the same time, the partners ensured that the equipment purchased in the project (furniture, IT equipment) is used in joint events, exhibitions. The books purchased by the project in Romanian and Ukrainian languages are available for lending to the general public.

As a conclusion, sustainability is a key element which demonstrates that the positive effects of the project are ensured and maintained beyond the implementation period.



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*The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.*