



MOCK Case Study

AD5 - Audit



Participant Information

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

This exercise should be considered as an example of case study that could be used in the EPSO Assessment Centre. The problems have not been fully elaborated, but give a global overview of the type of problems you could be confronted with in a real assessment centre.

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EPSO - EN-INT - MockCS - AD5 Audit - EX - 060810 - V01.05

ASSIGNMENT

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

This is a fictitious document only produced for the purpose of this exercise. All references to existing states, international organisations, private companies, departments, their representatives etc. should be considered as mere examples. They do not represent any position of these bodies or persons.

Participants are therefore advised to rely solely on the information presented in the exercise and not on any prior expertise when responding to questions.

For this exercise you will assume the role of desk officer at DG Enlargement within the Unit responsible for the Balkan Region. The documentation you need, is integrated in this booklet. You will find in it a certain number of e-mails, reports, articles and other documents that you will need to analyse and integrate in order to be able to properly deal with the assignment given to you. This is your first day in your new job.

It is important that you accept the simulated situation as it is presented to you. Although in a real life situation you would have access to other sources of information and would be able to consult your colleagues, in this exercise you are limited to the information contained in the exercise documents. You are, however, allowed to make logical assumptions where information is missing or incomplete.

You may rearrange the documents in any order you wish and add remarks or make notes as necessary. However, remember that the assessors will base their evaluation exclusively on what you write on the lined paper that has been put at your disposal. Therefore, be sure to record on these sheets all the information on which you wish to be evaluated and be sure to explain the reasoning behind your ideas.

The Case Study aims at assessing the following competencies: Analysis and problem solving, Communicating (drafting skills), Delivering quality & results and Prioritising & Organising.

In addition to the general competencies, it assesses your ability to apply specific knowledge to a particular situation in your domain.

Your concrete task will consist of answering questions concerning the situation described in this booklet:

- Make an executive summary of the situation: what are the key issues observed in the Balkan Region?
- Which potential solutions do you see to resolve the key problems in the Balkan Region?
- What would be your recommendations for the longer term, taking into account the different parties involved?
- Please include your suggestions to improve the audit process in the future.

In total, you have 90 minutes for this Case Study. Please answer as precisely as you can and write as clearly as possible.

Please note:

Today is Friday, 29 June 200X
Last year was 200X-1, next year will be 200X+1

ABBREVIATIONS USED

CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation
COUNCIL	The Council of the European Union
DG ELARG	Directorate-General for Enlargement
EC	European Commission
ECA	European Court of Auditors
EP	European Parliament
ERDO	European Reconstruction and Development Office
EUJA	EU Justice Affairs
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

**MAIL MESSAGE**

From: Evie Christoffelsen, Head of Unit, Directorate for the Balkan Region, DG ELARG
To: <Your Name>
Cc:
Date: 29 June 200X
Subject: Welcome!

Dear (your name),

Welcome to our team!

As mentioned on the phone yesterday, my assistant has prepared the necessary documentation and information for your first assignment within DG Enlargement. The information consists of some basic background information, but most of the documents relate to a recent audit carried out in the Balkan Region. As you know, the Commission is responsible for the implementation of the financial instruments in the Balkan Region under IPA and we have to pay particular attention to projects that do not work out well or that were not sustainable for some reason.

I would like you to read everything in detail and to draft a report summarizing the situation, proposing some potential solutions and making recommendations for the future. I would also like you to use the available information to make recommendations about how to improve the Audit process in the future.

Many thanks in advance. I will be back from an international conference on 6 July, but please feel free to contact me or any of your colleagues, should there be any problems or questions from your side. My assistant can give you my mobile number.

All the best and see you soon,

Evie

Published: 15.04.200X-3



EUROPEAN RECONSTRUCTION
AND
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

EUROPEAN R&D OFFICE NEWS

ALWAYS SURPRISING

SPECIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE EUROPEAN RECONSTRUCTION & DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Following the conflict in Former-Yugoslavia the EU established the ERDO in 200X-8. In doing so the EU demonstrated its determination to respond to the needs of the Balkan Region: to rebuild after the damage caused by conflict, to stabilise the region and to support governments with democratic reforms.

The ERDO quickly gained a reputation for efficiency. Its mandate was progressively extended to the whole region.

This newsletter celebrates the 5th anniversary of the agency!

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

Since 200X-8, the ERDO has been entrusted with a €2.85 billion investment portfolio. To date, more than €2.58 billion (or >90%) of that amount has been contracted and €2.24 billion (or ca 78%) paid out.

As needs quickly evolved, the EU's support shifted from early emergency work to projects designed to support the reform and modernisation of public institutions. The past five years, the ERDO has provided assistance in virtually all areas of public and business life, from government administration and economy, to justice, civil society and the media.

SMALL REVOLUTIONS

Reform processes are not merely words bandied about by bureaucrats in Brussels, they do make a real difference on the ground. Reform is about improving the everyday life of thousands of people. It is about improving working methods, fostering co-operation and augmenting the care and education of the population.

FUNDING

Achieving the Copenhagen criteria is mainly done through provision of technical assistance, twinning and similar activities, which are funded under the CARDS Programme and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance. While this has already made a significant impact, grant funding alone is only part of the answer. Attracting foreign direct investments from International Financial Institutions and others is crucial.

UNIQUE APPROACH

The ERDO has a unique approach to providing assistance in the different countries involved:

- Fast & flexible.
- Based in the field.
- Encouraging local ownership.
- Co-operation with EU governments and other donors.
- Governance and co-operation with the EU family (ERDO is accountable to the EP and the Council of Ministers).
- Ethics & accountability.

SUCCESSES CELEBRATED

Here are but a few of the highly successful projects managed by ERDO.

To relieve the overcrowding and inhumane conditions in prisons a new facility was constructed in 200X-5 to accommodate 500 people. This project was successful and aligned with the overall judiciary strategy for the country.

A court house was renovated in 200X-7 to improve on the existent facility which was considered to be unsafe and lacking the appropriate infrastructure. That country's government has since allocated separate funding to renovate other court houses throughout the country.

Local police forces were trained over a two year period to strengthen the authorities' law enforcement capacity. Local police proved able to manage this autonomously.

In 200X-6 an asylum centre was set up across the border with EU funds. The project had a positive impact on the region. Since then, other countries in the region have co-operated in establishing cross-border asylum centres and providing the required equipment.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

In two countries changes in staff resulted in the near complete failure of one of the projects, as staff who had been trained to lead the change projects were replaced within 18 months following the elections.

Some countries received funding for institution-building activities such as drawing up strategies, action plans and the corresponding legislation; a monitoring visit halfway through the project revealed that the budget was in fact used to finance works to a local court building.

MOVING FORWARD

Proactive involvement in trade facilitation, investment mobilisation and continued policy dialogue with local authorities constitutes the cornerstone of ERDO's work for the whole region.

These 5 years do not celebrate the existence of the programme in itself. Above all the projects and their objectives should gain support from local civil society organisations, so that activities are based on local demand rather than purely accession-driven needs. This strategy provides more sustainable results.

HR

**MAIL MESSAGE**

From: Evie Christoffelsen, Head of Unit, Directorate for the Balkan Region, DG ELARG
To: Frederich Gastona, Manager, Audit Unit, ECA
Cc: Elody Gaindy, Sr Auditor, Audit Unit, ECA
Date: 20 November 200X-1
Subject: RE FW: Audit Commission projects Balkan Region

Dear Frederich,

As you know, I have been there several times myself in my previous function as auditor and I encountered similar problems. They are probably slightly understaffed and I would suggest postponing the audit by 3 months, as it will prove less useful to visit projects when they are not yet complete, and risk having only a limited time with each of the Task Managers because of their workload.

Kind regards,

Evie

—— Reply by Evie.Christoffelsen@eca.europa.eu on 20/11/200X-1 08:46 ——

**MAIL MESSAGE**

From: Frederich Gastona, Manager, Audit Unit, ECA
To: Evie Christoffelsen, Head of Unit, Directorate for the Balkan Region, DG ELARG
Cc: Elody Gaindy, Sr Auditor Audit Unit, ECA
Date: 19 November 200X-1
Subject: FW: Audit Commission projects Balkan Region

Dear Evie,

What is your experience with this kind of issue?

Many thanks,

Frederich

—— Forwarded by Frederich.Gastona@eca.europa.eu on 19/11/200X-1 09:35 ——

**MAIL MESSAGE**

From: Elody Gaindy, Sr Auditor, Audit Unit, ECA
To: Frederich Gastona, Manager, Audit Unit, ECA
Cc: Frank Pascob, Odile Verdoris, Brigitta MacMorran, Auditors, Audit Unit, ECA
Date: 18 November 200X-1
Subject: Audit Commission projects Balkan Region

Dear Frederich,

I think this is really unacceptable. We were supposed to leave for an audit in Usitania in two weeks and suddenly the Commission Delegation in Usitania has asked us to postpone our audit. They are saying that some of the Delegation members will be unavailable as they are currently very busy with the annual contracting, and because some projects are not entirely finished.

I would propose that we simply refuse this request as the audit was announced 3 months ago.

Would you agree?

Thanks,

Elody



BRIEF REPORT ON THE AUDIT MISSION

- BALKAN REGION - USITANIA

19-28 MARCH 200X

The Delegation: the local EC Delegation
The Auditors: Elody Gaindy (Sr Auditor and rapporteur)
Frank Pascob, Odile Verdoris and Brigitta MacMorran (Auditors)

Usitania: 19-28 March 200X: 19 projects (reduced to 12 eventually)

A. Short overview of process difficulties encountered

19 March

When arriving in Usitany, capital of Usitania, it seemed that all but one of the Task Managers responsible for projects had been sent on leave by the Head of Delegation, because of the significant overtime hours they had accrued in the preceding weeks. As a result of the contracting deadlines and the pressure upon the Task Managers, not all of the relevant audit documents had been sent to Luxembourg in advance, as requested. In addition the Auditors did not receive the completed audit questionnaire in advance in all cases, which had also been requested. So the Auditors went through the questionnaire to clarify unclear points or short answers. This clarification exercise could not be carried out in some cases due to the absence of the Delegation Task Managers. Also, project files were not always well organised and in some cases it took quite some time to locate the relevant information.

20 March

The kick-off meeting with Delegation management was not constructive. The Sr Auditor expressed her disappointment regarding the absence of the relevant staff and she underlined that in her experience the Heads of Delegation usually cancel, not grant, staff holidays in the event of the Court's visit. The Head of Delegation apologised, but added that because of the lack of staff and the large amount of money to be contracted under the complex EU procurement rules and procedures, he had already had to cancel some of his staff's holidays. Also he said that when facing the contracting deadlines, he had to ask his staff to work extra long hours. Nevertheless, he stated that his remaining staff would be entirely at the Court's disposal.

Originally there were four auditors to audit 19 EUJA projects in Usitania. Due to the unavailability of the Delegation staff, the number of projects to be audited was reduced to 12. This meant that each auditor was assigned three projects to report on.

21-28 March

During the mission, the Court examined 12 projects with 15 contracts in all the four of the EUJA sub-areas, i.e. asylum and migration, integrated border management, judiciary and police. 18 meetings and 11 on-site visits were carried out. The Sr. Auditor also met the President of the Usitanian Audit Institution.

During the audit, Delegation files were examined and interviews were conducted with Delegation staff, EU monitors, relevant Usitanian authorities and project beneficiaries. On-site visits were carried out to all of the projects pre-selected for audit, but for one. The principle of the audit was to visit the projects on site, where the project really begins to take shape. However, because of the extra time needed to go through the Delegation files and the additional time pressure, the Sr. Auditor decided not to visit one of the project sites. The border was simply too far from Usitany and the on-site inspection was skipped.

One of the challenges of the audit was the lack of documentation on the (vague) performance indicators presented in the project files against which the auditor could evaluate the projects' results. In addition there was an almost total lack of statistics with which to evaluate the projects' success (i.e. before and after EU intervention) in the offices of the contracting authority (EC). In fact, most of the EU Task Managers were unaware of the true situation on the ground. So actually, it could be considered that the absence of the Task Managers was not crucial.

A member of the Delegation joined the audit team (consisting of 2 people) for each on-site visit. Due to the absence of the Task Managers, sometimes a secretary or translator would join the Auditors. Even though they were not always familiar with the audited project, they could provide valuable information regarding local conditions.

B. Some examples of the projects in Usitania**1) Examples of the inefficient distribution of EU funding:**

- The approved asylum project documentation allocated a budget of 1.9 million Euros to institution-building activities such as drafting legislation, strategies and national action plans. These actions were not implemented. Instead, a reception centre for asylum seekers was built.
- The opening of an asylum centre in Usitany was delayed by one year, because the authorities failed to provide the necessary equipment
- Some of the EU-financed motorcycles provided to the border police were barely used for the first 18 months, because the authorities did not provide the police with the necessary protective gear as had been agreed. The authorities have now launched a complementary equipment tender.

2) Example of the effective use of EU funding:

- At the border crossing point in Sourcias, Usitania, the new infrastructure and equipment made it possible to increase throughput and reduce waiting times.
- Usitany's prison system does not meet international standards, largely because prisons and pre-trial detention centres are heavily overcrowded. The construction of a new prison could therefore be considered a vital and relevant priority.

- The authorities of Trebisca, Usitania, lacked suitable facilities to enable them to try high-profile cases in a secure and dignified manner. Now, a modern court room has been built with EU funds and a dozen trials have already taken place.

FIRST OBSERVATIONS (ALSO FOR THE WIDER REGION)

1. Project results lack the following:


- Projects do not always comply fully with the EC's annual programme objectives;
- Investment projects do not always align with institution-building projects, i.e. EU assistance in the provision of equipment and infrastructure alone will not be enough to support change in the working practices of the people in question.
- Donor programmes active in the area, including those with the EC as the main donor, are not well coordinated, i.e. the procurement process for equipment is barely coordinated by the donor community.

2. Sustainability of results

Institution-building projects are only partially satisfactory and unlikely to be sustainable due to continued political weakness and lack of commitment (ownership) by the beneficiaries of funds. Indeed most of the reform initiatives do not originate within the region, but from the EC or other external stakeholders. The deficiencies we see are:

- Beneficiary involvement is quite weak, e.g. in the public procurement process;
- Some projects are launched without a sustainable plan, i.e. a plan for the longer term;
- The distribution and evaluation of the use of EU funded equipment and infrastructure is not monitored efficiently; also the implications of using EU funds should be clarified;
- Currently, the indicators used to measure results are almost non-existent, or are not made explicit; where they do exist indicators tend to be activity, rather than output oriented, e.g. number of meetings.
- The delivery of technical assistance is carried out by consultancy firms often in an efficient way, however this offers little incentive for institutional change.

**MAIL MESSAGE**

From: Morgan Trajkovski, Head of Audit Group Pre-accession Policies
To: Evie Christoffelsen, Head of Unit, Directorate for the Balkan Region, DG ELARG
Cc:
Date: 20 May 200X
Subject: Statistics and sponsoring coordination
Attachment:  Statistics Balkan Region

Dear Evie,

Hope you are well in these busy times!

I would like to share with you two things that have come to my attention the past weeks.

First, please find enclosed an updated table on the level of perceived corruption in the Balkan Region (Annex I). It shows once again that there is still a lot of work to do. We have just received the full report from Transparency@Global, so do feel free to contact the administration for a copy.

Second, via my network, I have heard that where we are auditing projects in the various EU regions and candidate countries there is somehow conflict concerning who is sponsoring what within a given country, region or city. This is not new, but I have the impression this has become more politically sensitive, and that coordination becomes all the more urgent. This is a topic we should discuss with our different partners, including the Commission before we launch any initiative. Do you have more details on reactions from external sponsors in 'our' region?

You will see in Annex II that I have included a table on the different sponsoring parties for the Balkan Region, recently released by the World Bank and the European Commission.

Thanks in advance and looking forward to catching up soon.

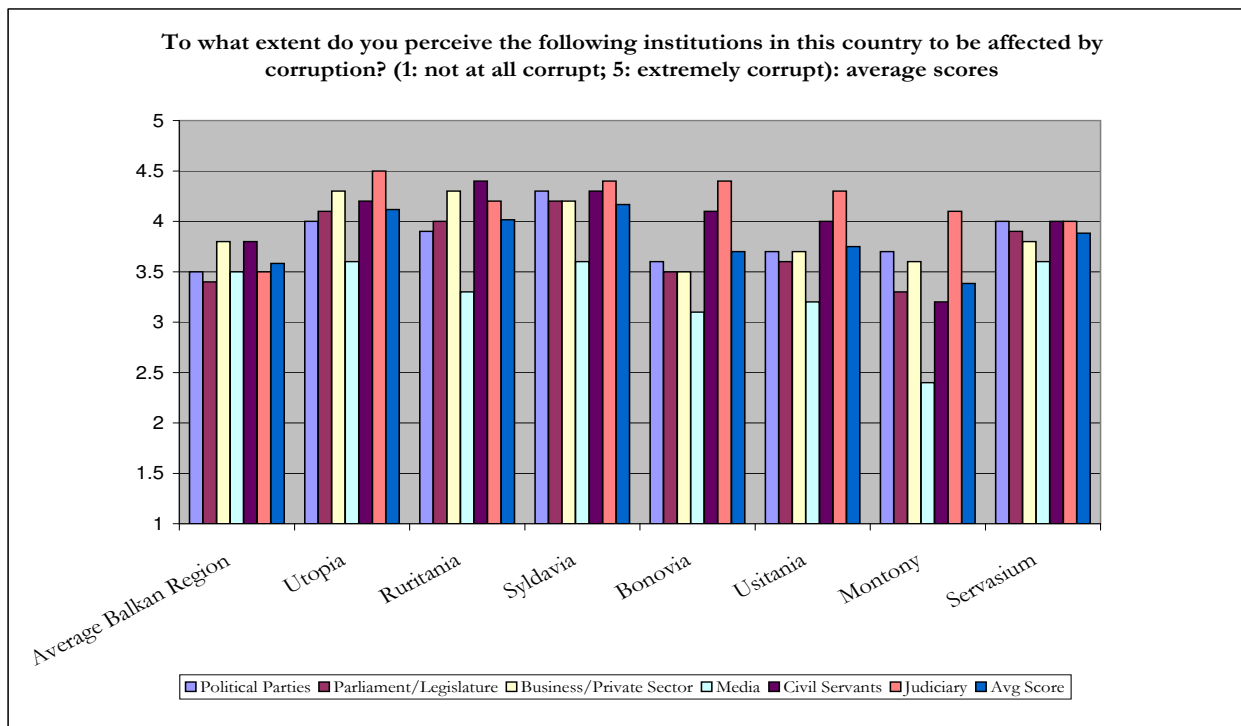
Kind regards,

Morgan

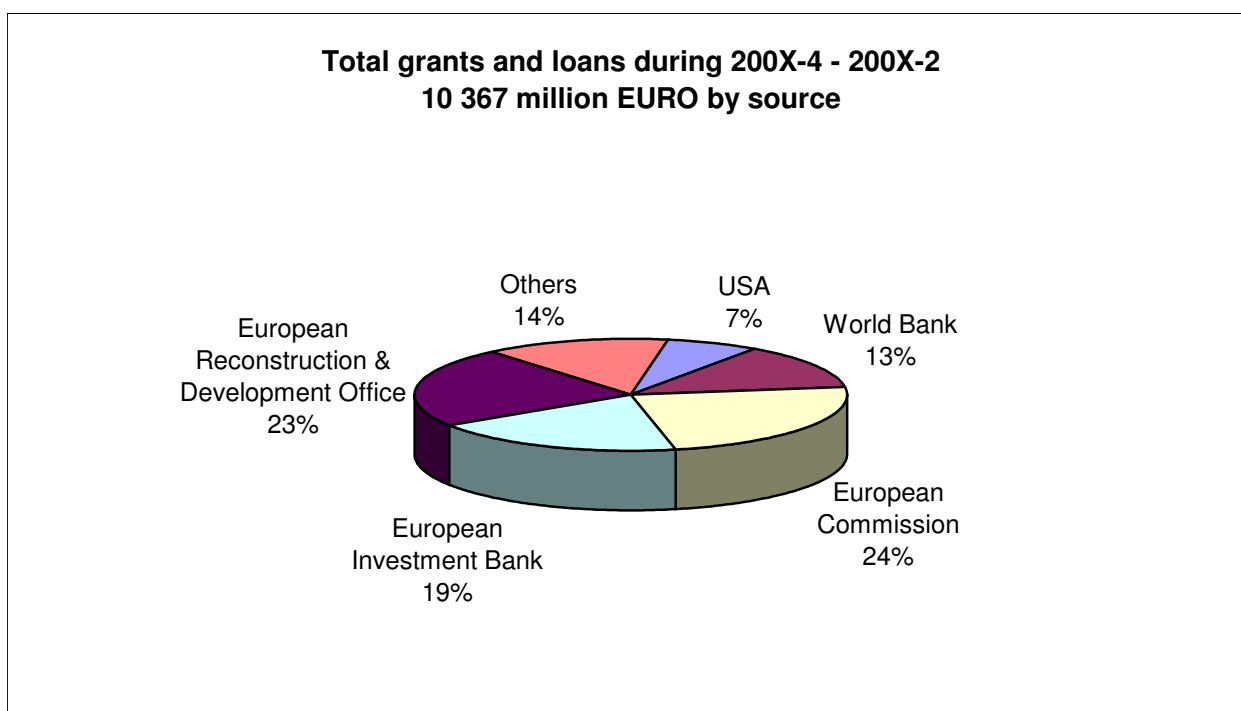
ANNEX I

LEVEL OF PERCEIVED CORRUPTION IN THE BALKAN REGION

Questionnaire carried out among at least 100 citizens in each country – December 200X-1



ANNEX II



**MAIL MESSAGE**

From: Jonas Leaway, Coordinator Programme Implementation IPA, DG ELARG
To: Evie Christoffelsen, Head of Unit, Directorate for the Balkan Region, DG ELARG
Cc:
Date: 27 June 200X
Subject: FW: Donor Conference in Former-Yugoslavia

Dear Evie,

Please see the message below from Karl Vanderpe, a colleague I met a couple of years ago at an inauguration event in Vindiass. Even though I am no longer coordinating the activities of ERDO, I would like to be kept in the loop about any follow up you are considering in the Balkan Region.


In my opinion, so that we can still do preparations this Autumn it would be useful for us to discuss a strategy for going forward, and not to wait too long. I believe there is a lot of potential here which could be beneficial for all IPA funded projects in that area. We should even consider involving other stakeholders, but let us first touch base on this, as I know you have also experienced these kinds of obstacles before.

Thanks, hope to hear from you soon,

Jonas

—— Forwarded by Jonas.Leaway@elarg.eu on 27/06/200X 10:31 ——

**MAIL MESSAGE**

From: Karl Vanderpe, Sr. Auditor European Investment Bank
To: Jonas Leaway, Coordinator Programme Implementation IPA, DG ELARG
Date: 26 June 200X
Subject: Donor Conference in Former-Yugoslavia
Attachment:  Press Release

Dear Jonas,

First of all, congratulations! I hear that you are no longer responsible for ERDO Programme implementation, but that you are now active as a coordinator for the IPA Programme implementation. Sounds very interesting! How are you meanwhile?

I am contacting you, because if I remember well when we met in Vindiass in 200X-3 we talked about the usual lack of coordination when it comes to sponsoring actions. We discussed the case of the two donor organisations who were both paying for the provision of police vehicles for one of the

municipalities, without any knowledge that another party was also providing financial support to the self same project. There is also the case of a donor organisation having paid to equip a Court building, without the equipment having been delivered due to “discussions and misunderstandings” at the Ministry of Infrastructure.

Funding for these two projects has in the mean time been redirected to another area, but this is really something we need to avoid in the future, especially since it is not the first time that somebody discovers this kind of irregularities in the region.

However, in former Yugoslavia, I have come across an example of good practice (see press release enclosed): it would be worth discussing a similar initiative for all projects/countries in which official sponsoring takes place. What do you think? I actually find it a bit surprising that the Commission did not inform us of its initiative in this area. Or were you aware of it?

Thanks in advance!

Best Regards,

Karl Vantorpe

PRESS RELEASE: DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND FOREIGN AID OF RURITANIA

REPUBLIC OF RURITANIA
Department of Infrastructure
and Foreign Aid



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DG Enlargement

**COORDINATION AND CO-OPERATION WITH DONORS AND
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN RURITANIA**

The Department of Infrastructure and Foreign Aid of Ruritania and the European Commission are organising a joint conference on “Donor coordination in Ruritania”, that will take place in Rurovic on 2 October 200X. Around 100 stakeholders from International Financial Institutions, EU Member States, non-EU donors and representatives of Ruritania will share their opinions and ideas on a more efficient coordination of their donor activities.

The EU Special Envoy to the Balkan Region will open the conference, giving some more background on the Commission’s funding strategy, and more specifically on what can be expected from the Commission and DG Enlargement in the years to come. His address will be followed by the Ruritanian Minister for Infrastructure and Foreign Aid who will discuss the local situation and what lies ahead.

In the afternoon, debates will be organised into eight working groups, each working group investigating one of the cases presented by the workshop leader, or the international or local donor from a particular sector.

At the end of the day, conclusions will be presented in plenary session and a Joint Declaration will be developed.

This conference aims to discuss alternatives for the better use of allocated funds, time, and energy as well as increasing efficiency via improved administration, while minimising frustration and project delays.

One of the key objectives is the more efficient and effective coordination of external funding among all donors. An equally important goal is the alignment of donor objectives with respective national/regional/local strategic priorities, as well as a fine-tuning of the budgets at all levels.

Donor’s financial assistance to Ruritania amounted to some EUR 0.9 billion during the period 200X-4 till 200X-1.

DISCUSSION NOTE ON PROJECTS IN THE BALKAN REGION

EVALUATED IN 200X-2

- BY EVIE CHRISTOFFELSEN, MANAGER AUDIT UNIT, 20 DECEMBER 200X-2

Dear <your name>,
This is a note I wanted to put up
for discussion in my previous func-
tion, but I left a few months later
and nothing happened with it. It
was not finished, but my comments
are still valid!
Best regards,
Evie

Introduction

With this discussion note, I would like to invite the stakeholders (the ECA - our unit, the local authorities in the Balkan Region, as well as the local Delegations) to brainstorm about ways to improve the project continuity and effectiveness in the region. Below you can find a contextual outline of some projects that have been evaluated as critical or rather weak in the sustainability criteria. Each of the projects presents particular problems, however from our observations in recent years these issues can be extrapolated to the whole region.

Project 1: Agricultural preservation (February 200X-2 in Syldavia)

Objective: Improve rural people and organisations' agricultural capacities, income levels and quality of life.

Evaluation: The project has succeeded in building capacity in the local rural people, and has increased the self-sufficiency of this population. In order to measure the impacts of the project interviews were conducted with several employees and the owners of four small farms, and one large rural organisation (detailed list to be provided). An upward trend in income levels can only be evaluated in the longer term, as this will also depend on market fluctuations, the profile of the local economy and the long-term impacts of the knowledge and experience gained by rural organisations. Unfortunately, no indicators or baseline data on agricultural capacity, income, etc. were given, and this makes it difficult to evaluate the concrete impact and evolution compared to the pre-project phase. The auditor also concludes that it is not possible to evaluate any quality of life improvement without this data.

Follow-up & first conclusions: Local actors will bid for funding to embed the sustainability gains and the positive effects that the project has had to date. The auditor has recommended to local actors, as well as to the delegation and authorities that lessons learned from this project be included in future project design. The initial conclusion of the auditor is that this project was a good start, but that funds could have been implemented more effectively.

Project 2: Judiciary training (March 200X-2 in Syldavia and April 200X-2 in Servasium)

Objective: Establish judicial training centres to improve the performance of judges

Evaluation: auditor evaluated two training centres in each country. In Syldavia, the EU experts' advice was overlooked when establishing the institution. The Ministry did not invite any of the international experts to participate in the draft law. As a consequence, the law was heavily criticised by donors because it was not compliant with European Standards. Furthermore, the curriculum for the initial 18 month training was reduced to 12 months, which limited its impact.

In Servasium, the training institute for judges lacked direction or a clear legal remit. The 'train the trainer' programme suggested the implementation of modern teaching methods, such as small training groups with a lot of group interaction. However, because no-one seemed to have the expertise to facilitate this, a traditional classroom based training was delivered. Some of the judges are very negative about the impact of the training and have called it 'a waste of time'. A few others claim they were able to share some practices with each other thanks to the fact that the judges were all brought together in one programme.

Follow-up & first conclusions: Clearly, both projects lacked expert advice. The question is how it is possible that these experts were not consulted in a pre-project phase, and why the authorities did not take any action when they concluded that a legal remit was lacking. The delegation and auditors could only conclude after the project evaluation and after the project funds had been spent, that a professional training centre was not set up and that the objective of neither project was achieved.

Project 3: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (June 200X-2 in Utopia)

Objective: Stimulate SME activity by capacity building at both central and local level in the application of new methodologies to foster long-term and innovative regional development.

Evaluation: The auditor visited 2 SMEs which received funding under this project budget line. They could not specify which new methodologies were used, as no indicators or baseline data on SME activity were available. They did apply some relatively new management techniques, however these were set up under a funding programme of the World Bank three years ago. Three other self-employed people, ranging from 2 to maximum 5 staff struggled to keep their business alive. First impressions were that they had to compete with the larger SMEs, run by professionals. There did not seem to be any centralised authority to steer start-ups towards more innovative products or services and to assist them by providing professional advice.

Follow-up & first conclusions: The auditor's first conclusions are that the goal of the project funding was not well-investigated in advance. In Utopia, there are only a few thriving SMEs, which flourish only because of continued sponsorship from the international community. Additional EC funding will support particularly those SMEs which are already successful. By distributing funds according to this system new SMEs receive less funding and fewer opportunities for funding. Another conclusion is that the project's scope was too wide and too ambitious. Every expert in the region will underline that regional development cannot be covered by one country, let alone one city. It is a pity these experts were not consulted by the local delegation and authorities before the project was selected for funding. An umbrella organisation alias knowledge and training centre is lacking. Such an organisation would support the growth and development of new SMEs and ensure the production of innovative products and services to the market instead of simply competing amongst themselves.

Project 4: Social Development (October 200X-2 in Montony)

Objective: Redress the balance in favour of women's access to literacy

Evaluation: The auditor attended a few women's group meetings, and day classes aimed at educating women (details to follow), in order to evaluate the extent to which the classes have contributed to higher rates of literacy among women, and to assess the customer satisfaction rate. A concrete evaluation of the number of literate woman was hard to establish as no indicators or baseline data on the participating women had been provided. Tests had been taken by some of the women, but his was not carried out in a consistent or transparent manner. On the other hand, all of the women interviewed by the auditor were very satisfied with the classes, in part because the lessons had given them the opportunity to liaise with other women in the same situation. They are positive that, over time, they will find jobs and be able to sustain their families financially.

Follow-up & first conclusions: The auditor is in general positive about the commitment and active participation of local women in working groups, meetings and classes to share experiences and to become literate. Social contact is important, however, the literacy objective must also be achieved. Ongoing efforts and funding initiatives are therefore required in order to achieve a sustainable positive impact in Montony. If this project were optimized in future, it could serve as a model for the whole region.