

REPORT

ON THE RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS

'Modernisation of Local Public Services in Republic of Moldova' Project

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Registered offices:

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
65760 Eschborn, Germany
T +49 61 96 79-0
F +49 61 96 79-11 15
E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de

Bonn and Eschborn, Germany
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 40
53113 Bonn, Germany
T +49 228 44 60-0
F +49 228 44 60-17 66

Author(s):

Stela Corobceanu
Michael MacDonald

Developed within:

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Abbreviations

CPA	Central Public Authority
CSO	Civil Society Organization
NFRD	National Fund for Regional Development
LPA	Local Public Authority
MRDC	Ministry for Regional Development and Construction
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NSRD	National Strategy for Regional Development
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RDC	Regional Development Council
RDS	Regional Development Strategy
RSC	Regional Sector Commission
RSP	Regional Sector Programmes
RM	Republic of Moldova
RSWG	Regional Sector Working Groups

Executive Summary

The initiative to strengthen RDCs' capacities is driven by the new challenges in regional development, which appeared due to developments achieved in the Republic of Moldova and inevitable step into a new evolution stage. Thus, the National Strategy for Regional Development (NSRD) was approved by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and provides for the change of RD paradigm through a more efficient aggregation of efforts of main actors at regional-national; interministerial; regional-local levels as well as of resources synergy. At the same time, the draft Law on RD is under development and focuses mainly on strengthening the role and broadening the scope of RD institutions. Considering these circumstances, it is necessary to set out a clear vision on the mandatory changes at institutional level aiming at ensuring process' stability and their inclusion into methodology circuit.

From the functional point of view, it seems there is a need to intensify RDC activity in the role of: (i) facilitator of regional and intermunicipal cooperation; (ii) advocate of regional development mutisectoral approach; (iii) champion of large-scale projects and complex projects clustering; (iv) exponent in the dialogue with development partners to diversify funding sources of RD projects; (v) responsible for control and evaluation within an integrated information system.

The regional development policy is a series of activities planned and promoted jointly by the public administration authorities in partnership with various actors (public and private, national and external). It is important to professionally orchestrate the efforts and strengthen evenly the capacities of all actors involved. This way, strengthening capacities of RDCs, which have as their component part representatives of LPA I and II, civil society and private sector, is brought to the fore and requires greater attention.

This report seek to assess the functionality of Regional Development Councils and aims to determine in a participatory manner the capacity building measures and their role. The following chapters will give a description of the methodology approach resulting from identified challenges, perception and expectation of main actors involved in regional development, generalisation of findings and generating solutions for RDC activity improvement. The recommendations to come will be discussed at the next RDC meetings to ensure taking of decisions necessary for addressing the identified issues.

The assessment was undertaken because of concerns about the capacity of RDCs to lead development processes within their respective regions. The assessment is based on previous studies and the findings of recent focus group discussions conducted with nearly a third of all RDC members. It is also draws upon a series of consultations with MRDC and RDA staff throughout much of 2016.

Many RDC members perceive little value in their participation in council meetings. They do not feel sufficiently involved in the oversight of RDA activities within their region. The fait accompli nature in which information is presented, the lack of capacity to make informed decisions and rigid procedures due to the size of councils reduce their motivation to participate. To make matters worse, the costs of their participation in council meetings are not compensated.

In addition to other measures for improving the effectiveness of RDCs, the surveyed members also expressed the majority opinion that establishing Regional Sector Commissions (RSCs) could

address many of these challenges. RSCs could consist of members selected from the RDCs based on their knowledge, experience and territorial interest in the sector. Their smaller size would permit more constructive debate and greater consensus. They would function as technical sub-committees to the RDCs. RDCs would remain responsible for final approval and coordination of regional sector strategies. Potentially RSCs would be supported by technical sector representatives from rayon administrations, secretariat services from RDAs, and targeted technical assistance.

RDAs also recognized the value of establishing RSCs as platforms for sector governance. There were, however, legitimate concerns about the resources, time and effort that would be required. RDAs also recognized that a comprehensive capacity development programme would be required to establish RSCs. They also suggested to consider a pilot approach. New regulations governing the RSCs will need to be drafted and approved by the RDCs.

In order to make RSCs workable, a range of steps are recommended:

- RDCs should approve the establishment of RSCs
- Sector ministries should delegate a representative to RSCs as co-presidents
- Regulations for RSCs should be drafted and approved by the RDCs (see Annex 4)
- In case RDAs will provide secretariat assistance, additional resources should be provided to RDAs to provide secretariat services to RSCs, if necessary
- Design a comprehensive capacity development program for all stakeholders (see Annex 5)

In addition to addressing other operational issues, RDC capacity could be strengthened by:

- RDC members should be compensated for the cost of participation in meetings both for the Council and Regional Sector Commission meetings
- Qualified candidates for RDC President should be nominated by and elected through a transparent method from RDC members.
- The length of the term served by RDC Presidents could be reviewed.

1. Introduction

This report provides an assessment of Regional Development Councils (RDC) in the Republic of Moldova. The assessment was undertaken because of concerns about the capacity of RDCs to lead development processes within their respective region. A 2013 study¹ recognised that RDC members are most active during the process for identifying proposals for investment projects to submit to the National Coordination Council for Regional Development. The study also found, however, that RDCs are largely inactive between the calls for proposals. They rarely intervene in the development of regional policies and do not participate in the planning of RDA activities.

This report identifies reasons for inertia and highlights the important role which RDCs can play. The Background section includes a brief description of the legal framework, a summary of important institutional characteristics, initial observations and comments on the relevance of RDCs. The Study Methodology section describes how key stakeholders were consulted in each region. RDC and RDA perceptions of problems and proposed solutions are presented in the Findings section. The report concludes with a series of recommendations to revitalize the operations of Regional Development Councils and increase their ownership of regional development processes in the Republic of Moldova.

Basic principles put in the foundation of the study are:

- Participatory Principle - the methodological approach ensures consideration the views of all interested parties, which were collected in focus group interviews, consultations or debates;
- The principle of self-determination - decisions on amending the CRD structure and decision-making processes is done by the body which has this deliberative function and approved in plenary session;
- Sustainability - ensured through reflection of all decisions in documents regulating the activities of institutions and their approval, considering the adjustment of the information flow and decision-making process to the new configurations.
- Transparency - at all stages of analysis results are made available to all stakeholders consulted and presented in plenary sessions CRD.

2. Background

Legal Framework

The original Law on Regional Development was passed in December 2006². Regulations governing the operation of the RDCs were developed in 2008.³ RDCs approved their own regulations have been operational since 2010. Given the circumstances, the regulations focus mainly on institutional aspects and procedures of legal administrative nature. Nevertheless, the tasks defined by RDC Regulation approved by Annex no.2 to Government Decision no. 127 are fairly well targeted and currently are not fully exercised by RDC.

¹ GIZ MLPS (2013), "Concept of the RDCs' capacity development programme".

² Law no. 438-XVI of 28.12.2006 on regional development in Moldova

³ Government Decision no. 127 of 08.02.2008 "On measures to implement the Law no. 438-XVI of 28.12.2006"

As a regional level decision-making body, RDC's responsibilities are de facto more focused on approval of regional development strategies, operational plans and projects during the calls of proposals, monitoring of RDA activity, though the number of tasks is much larger.

The mandate of RDCs, as specified in the regulations, includes:

- a) Monitoring the elaboration regional development strategies;
- b) Mobilizing regional resources to ensure sustainable development;
- c) Defining socio-economic development objectives and priorities within the region;
- d) Coordinating the implementation of the regional development strategies.

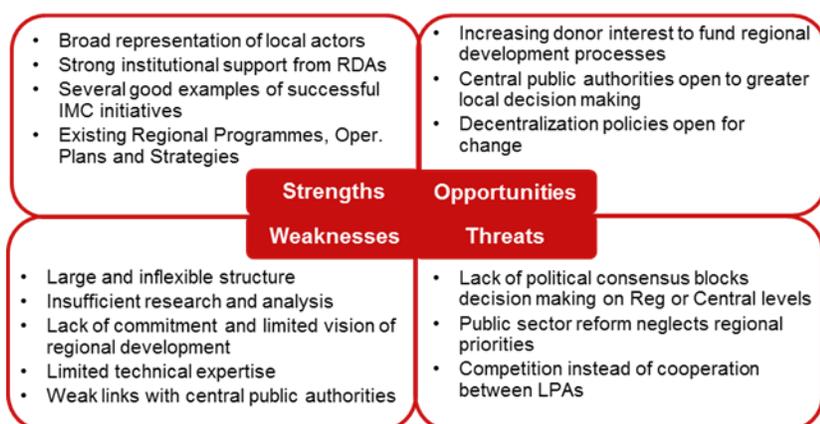
In 2016, a National Strategy for Regional Development (NSRD) for 2016-2020 was approved by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. The strategy focuses on the promotion of greater coordination between various of levels of government including national ministries, regional bodies and local institutions. A new law on Regional Development is under development which aims to establish clear institutional roles and responsibilities. This initiative is potentially subject to broader public sector reforms currently being considered at the national level.

Expanded competencies are currently envisioned for RDCs within the new NSRD. Implicitly, they will be expected to facilitate intra-regional cooperation and inter-municipal cooperation. RDCs will be expected to promote a multi-sectorial approach to development within the region. They will be expected to promote large-scale and complex project clusters. RDCs will be expected to lead dialogue with development partners to diversify the sources of funding and they will use a results-based management approach for monitoring and evaluating regional strategies and operational plans.

Institutional Characteristics

RDCs were established based on partnership and include presidents of rayons, one mayor of each

Figure 1: SWOT Analysis of current situation in RDC



rayon and one representative from private sector and NGOs from each rayon (following the public sector parity: private and voluntary). Thus, every rayon which is part of a certain development region is represented by four persons, the role of which is to act in the interest of the region and not only of the rayon they come from.

The fact of observing the public/private and consensus principles in the composition of

RDC has led at the same time to an oversized structure and has automatically reduced their efficiency. In addition, the issue of efficiently using the powers and qualifications of representatives from the private and voluntary sector is not solved and their expectations as to the motivation to participate as members of RDC are not reached. Thus, the RDCs are large. They include four

representatives from each Raion. As such, the RDC Centre has 52 members, RDC North has 48 Members and RDC South has 32 members. The newly established RDC in Gagauzia has 7 members. Existing regulations encourage diverse representation by specifying that the representatives should include the Raion President, one selected mayor, one selected person from the private sector, and one selected person representing CSOs. Regional council meetings are supposed to occur on a quarterly basis. Meetings are organized by the RDAs. The RDAs are also responsible for preparing and distributing documentation to enable RDC members to vote on issues presented to them. RDCs and RDAs are meant to complement each other.

Regional Development Councils have the task of ensuring the link between regional/local level and national framework, including in the strategic planning and decision taking. In the context of holistic planning at the level of development regions, the local public administration authorities are insufficiently prepared and under excessive administrative fragmentation the role of RDCs and of RDAs is very valuable in order to further implementation of an equitable development policy promoted on regional scale.

RDA should not be the only regional institutions endeavouring to attract additional resources to the regions for the implementation of large-scale projects. The main disadvantage is that the local authorities are usually focused on achieving results and carrying out projects at local level within the administrative boundaries of the Rayon, in respect of which they have clear expectation and which bring them more rapid results unlike in case of systemic and large projects. The concept of RDAs in Moldova was not to diminish or to take over the role of other institutions and organisations or active initiatives, but to make synergy of their activity. The key tasks: (i) approval of strategic directives; (ii) mobilisation of regional actors and, (iii) promoting and facilitating the funding of development needs of the Region – can not be carried out efficiently if RDC is not involved in all these activities, also at the stage of developing the pipeline and careful monitoring of its further implementation. Moreover, RDCs' aim is to generate strategic vision and provide strategic guidance to all development region institutions, including RDAs.

It should be noted that a regional development project means a certain initiative which should mobilise the efforts of several regional actors. In this case, RDC will act as a natural promoter of partnership as this is an extremely hard work which is currently facilitated exclusively by RDA. The positive experience has already showed, that to a certain extent a working environment was created in which local administrations (both rayons and rural, and urban municipalities) cooperate in a way previously not practiced and launched sustainable inter-municipal cooperation processes absolutely necessary during balanced regional development, keeping in mind the existence of a fragmented administrative-territorial system.

Therefore, RDC has the role of a governing body and the Regional Development Agencies are executive structures, responsible for implementation of regional development strategies (RDS). Relevant ministries in RD (as for ex. Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Road Infrastructure) are not directly involved in the process of formulating regional strategic visions and of their funding and do not hold a clear vision as to the regional size in implementing policies in their reference fields. RD should not be regarded as a sector in itself, but rather as a tool for implementing state policies in the regions.

RDC members continue to be most active in the period prior to a Call for Proposals. During this time, many members are primarily concerned with lobbying for investment projects which will benefit their locality. RDCs vote on which projects are put forward for national funding. However, in some cases, RDCs vote for an entire package without prioritization to avoid conflict between council members. The package is subsequently evaluated by the Inter-ministerial commission and a final decision is taken at national level. This process can generate resentment and frustration amongst unsuccessful project proponents at local levels.

Including civil society and private sector representatives was originally intended to broaden participation and incorporate different expertise and perspectives in council deliberations. Instead of being “invited” to present suggestions or regional policy proposals, they were given permanent seats at the table. There is some merit to this approach and it may have been well justified when the councils were originally created. However, it does implicitly place limits on the diversity of civil society and public sector representation.

Representatives from civil society and the private sector lack motivation to participate in RDC meetings. In some instances, there is very little cooperation between the LPA officials and civil society representatives on the councils. It is also important to note that civil society organizations were originally expected to apply for NFRD funding. However, in practice, NFRD selection criteria have discouraged applications from civil society.

In 2010, the OECD published a report on ‘Regional Development Policies in OECD Countries’.⁴ It contains a systematic comparative analysis of OECD member countries’ regional development policies. It also provides a conceptual framework which covers key issues such as problem recognition, objectives of regional policy, legal/institutional frameworks, urban/rural frameworks, budget structures, and governance mechanisms. While there is some measure of consistency across OECD countries with regard to problem recognition and objectives of regional policy, approaches to legal and institutional frameworks and governance mechanisms tend to vary significantly.

In many countries, the remit of Regional Development Councils is confined within existing territorial and administrative boundaries. This can have a profound effect on the relationship with central government institutions. However, in the case of Romania and Moldova, the remit spans several territorial and administrative boundaries. Yet, even where these similarities exist, there can be significant differences in the institutional arrangements for regional development as highlighted in Table 1 below.

Table 1:

Criteria	Moldova	Romania
Representation	LPA 1, LPA 2, CSOs and Private Sector representatives	County presidents, mayors and chairs of county councils, local councils, town municipal councils

⁴ See: http://www.planejamento.gov.br/secretarias/upload/Arquivos/seges/arquivos/ocde2011/oecd_regional_countries.pdf

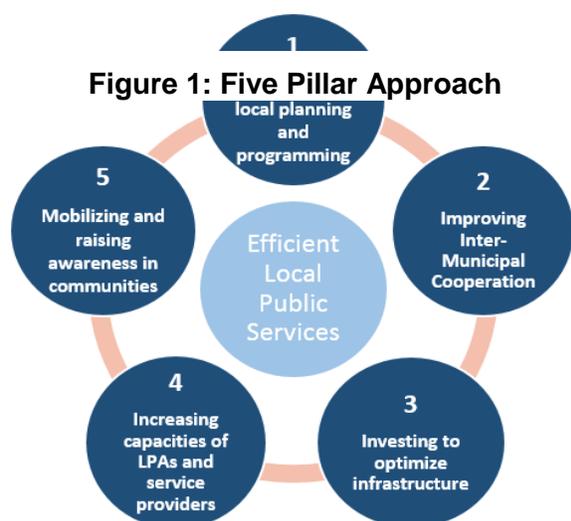
Structure	Currently no other active structures within the RDCs	Operational Committees of the Regional Development Council comprised of County presidents
Role of RDA	RDAs provide secretariat services to RDCs	RDAs provide secretariat services for RDCs and Operational Committees
Engagement of CSOs and Private Sector	RDC members with full voting rights	Invited to participate as guests but do not vote
Independence	RDA Directors appointed by Minister	RDA Directors appointed by RDC

Resolving these concerns, issues and differences in approach involves deeply political decisions. As such, they should be subject to open and constructive debate with all stakeholders. Upcoming discussions around the national strategy and new law for regional development represent an ideal forum to tackle these complex questions.

Relevance of RDCs

Despite the concerns and issues expressed above, RDCs have played and will continue to play an important role. Previously, regional institutions approved the establishment of Regional Sector Working Groups (RSWGs). The RSWGs provided useful coordination and oversight functions in relation to on-going local public infrastructure investments. They were also deeply involved in the development of Region Sector Programmes (RSPs). At the same time, Project Working Groups have been undertaken very important tasks of coordination and supervision of the capital investments projects in public infrastructure under implementation.

The importance of RSPs cannot be overstated within the current funding context. Donor partners have recently allocated funding of more than €120 Million for the improvement of regional and local roads, water and sanitation services, and increasing the energy efficiency of local public infrastructure. Their procedures demand evidence that local communities have been involved in



articulating needs and establishing investment priorities. Their procedures also emphasize a program approach over a project approach to ensure investments are planned and realized on a systematic and cost-efficient basis. In short, the additional €120 million of funding for local public infrastructure would not have been possible without the effort necessary to develop RSPs using a pipeline approach. The recent funding agreement with the EU to support water and sanitation and energy efficiency projects includes a series of mandatory conditions which must be met by RDCs. This includes the obligation to formally approve projects before the start of

project implementation, assure harmonization with local planning and programming documents, and effective monitoring of investment projects.

RDCs are essential partners for the success of the Five Pillar Approach to the delivery of efficient local public services shown in Figure 2. They have a fundamental role in harmonizing local plans and priorities. Since they also include representatives from local public authorities, RDCs are key forums for promoting inter-municipal cooperation. Through their responsibility to develop and approve regional plans and strategies, RDCs are meant to lead public infrastructure investment decisions within their region. RDCs also have a role to play in defining service provision standards and the oversight of local service providers. Finally, and most obviously, RDC decisions including the approval of sector programmes can have important implications for local citizens. Thus, RDCs are obligated to approve information and awareness raising activities directed toward local communities regarding local public services.

Consultations with stakeholders

A policy brief on the RDC study methodology was prepared and discussions around many of the issues with MRDC representatives have been held on several occasions throughout 2016. Presentations were also made at RDC meetings in three regions in August 2016 which identified potential initiatives to address constraints faced by councils. Many of the issues were also discussed directly with RDC Presidents and the decision to conduct an assessment including focus group discussions was taken in October – November 2016. It has also been coordinated with the main national and international partners of the MLPS project implemented by GIZ during Steering Committee meeting. Further, the idea of creation of the RSCs has been endorsed by three Regional Development Councils and initiative groups to facilitate development of the RSCs regulation were delegated from the RDCs. Round tables were conducted in all three Development Regions with participation of the RDCs and draft regulation has been developed in participatory manner.

Preliminary findings from this assessment were discussed at the National Coordination Council for Regional Development (NCCRD) in December 2016. The NCCRD has endorsed the establishment of Regional Sector Commissions (RSCs) as a key element of the plan to develop the capacity of RDCs. Through the NCCRD and other discussions, relevant central ministries have indicated their intention to allocate senior technical staff to RSCs to assure the harmonization of regional priorities with national programmes.

3. Study Methodology

This section provides a brief description of the consultation process. It started with focus group discussions with RDC members. RDC members then completed a standardized questionnaire. Initial findings were subsequently discussed with RDA staff. RDA staff were also invited to provide their concerns, opinions, and suggestions for how to improve the overall effectiveness of RDCs. Confidentiality was assured to promote open expression of views and opinions of all participants. Important features of the study methodology, schedule and profile of participants are presented below.

Study features

All participants were aware that the findings would be shared with MRDC and that any recommendations would be subject to formal approval by the RDCs. Other important features of the study methodology include:

- a) *Agenda of Focus Group Sessions:* Focus group discussions with RDC members were designed to take up to three hours. The facilitator presented a brief description of the main competencies of RDCs. RDC Members were invited to discuss their understanding of the extent to which councils performed each competency and the factors limiting their abilities. Discussions were then concentrated on developing potential solutions. In the final part of each session, RDC members were requested to complete a questionnaire.⁵
- b) *Questionnaire:* The purpose of the questionnaire was to quantify RDC member perceptions and capture qualitative assessments. Section A of the questionnaire was used to develop a profile of the participants. Section B was aimed at determining the perceptions of RDC members about the level of participation, transparency, efficiency, and coordination of council functions. Section C provided respondents with the space to express qualitative opinions about the motivation, key issues and proposals for improving the efficiency of councils.⁶
- c) *Format of discussions with RDAs:* Separate discussions were held with RDA staff following the focus group discussions in North, Centre, and South Regions.⁷ They were held separately to encourage both RDC members and RDA staff to express open and honest opinions. Discussions with RDA staff were structured around the preliminary results from the Focus Groups. RDA staff were also asked to consider what are the principal impediments faced by councils, the steps which might help overcome those impediments, and the additional resources they might require to serve the RDCs more effectively.

Study Schedule

Eight focus group discussions were conducted across the North, South, Centre and Gagauzia development regions between 26 October and 11 November. Two sessions were organized in each region. The was meant to assure focus groups were the correct size for constructive discussions. Holding sessions in different locations within each region was also meant to reduce travel burdens for RDC members and encourage greater participation. The schedule of focus group discussions and number of participants in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Schedule and Participants

Region	Date	Location	No. of Participants	No. of RDC members
South	26 October	Cimişlia	6	3
	27 October	Cahul	6	3
	11 November	Taraclia	6	4

⁵ See also Annex 1

⁶ A copy of the questionnaire is included in Annex 2. The tabulation of responses to the questions in Section B is provided in Annex 3.

⁷ The RDC in Gagauzia has just been recently established. Both RDC members and RDA staff participated in a joint session in Comrat to discuss lessons learnt from the operation of councils in other regions.

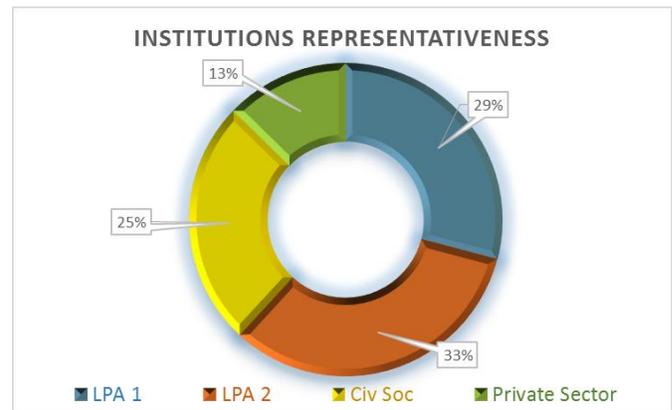
North	03 November	Edinet	13	9
	03 November	Balti	9	4
Centre	08 November	Ialoveni	6	6
	09 November	Rezina	13	9
Gagauzia	11 November	Comrat	11	4
Totals			70	42

The total number of RDC members that participated in focus group discussions represents about **32% of the total RDC membership** across the four regions. As such, the findings presented in Section 4 can be considered as indicative of the entire councils in each region.

Profile of Focus Group Participants

A total 55 participants completed the questionnaire.⁸ The basic profile of participants was:

- 62% of respondents were members of regional councils
- 2/3 of respondents were representatives of local government: LPA1 (29%); LPA2 (33%); Civil Society (25%); and Private Sector (13%)
- 46% of respondents were women
- Age: Under 30 (13%); 31-50 (44%); over 50 (45%)



4. Findings

Findings from RDC Focus Group Discussions

The perceptions of RDC members presented in this section have been derived from minutes of focus group discussions and responses to questionnaires. It includes highlights of positive perceptions, a summary of key challenges, and practical ways to overcome issues from the perspective RDC members.

Positive perceptions

Nearly all RDC members recognized the relevance of the regional planning architecture for improving socio-economic conditions within their region. They understand councils are meant to be a forum for discussions and provide a bridge between spatial and sector planning perspectives. More than two-thirds acknowledged the importance of transparency in decision making processes and agreed that investment projects generally respond to regional priorities.

There are some differences in the opinions expressed between representatives from LPA 1 and LPA 2. On average, representatives from LPA 2 in each region were 10% more satisfied with participatory processes than representatives from LPA 1.

⁸ Due to time constraints, not all questionnaires has been validated.

In summary, more than two-thirds of RDC members recognize the role regional councils can play in assuring the local participation in regional development processes. As such, RDC members have expressed clear demands to see regional councils function more effectively.

Key Challenges

RDC members also recognized that there are several barriers to overcome. The discussions revealed large discrepancies between what RDCs are supposed to do according to the regulations and what they do in reality. Many RDC members feel that there are clear limitations on their decision-making power and they have doubts about the impact of decisions they might take. This is attributed to the *fait accompli* nature in which information is often presented to them by the RDAs.

Many RDC members also feel they do not receive appropriate information sufficiently in advance of meetings. This lack of appropriate and timely information impedes their capacity for informed decision making. Part of the problem is related to the fact that many RDC members lack sector-specific technical expertise. Another part of the problem is related to turnover in RDC membership. New RDC members often lack understanding of regional planning processes and detailed knowledge of existing regional sector programmes.

RDCs were designed to be large to encourage broad participation. However, their large size is also recognized as an impediment to constructive debate. With as many as 50 people involved in general council meetings, it is necessary to follow strict administrative procedures. However, these procedures limit the time available for generating true consensus. Thus, instead of focussing on broader initiatives which could advance the socio-economic development of the entire region, RDC members often remain preoccupied with projects which are limited to their specific locality.

In summary, many members perceive little value in their participation in RDC meetings. They do not feel sufficiently involved in the oversight of RDA activities within their region. The *fait accompli* nature in which information is presented, the lack of capacity to make informed decisions and rigid procedures due to the size of councils reduce their motivation to participate. To make matters worse, the costs of participation in council meetings are not compensated.⁹

There is widespread agreement within RDCs and RDAs that regional councils currently do not have the capacity to fulfil their entire mandate. Some longer-standing RDC members noted the challenges related to the lack of continuity and limited understanding of institutional roles and responsibilities when new members joined the councils after election.

Concerns have also been expressed about the selection of RDC Presidents. It has been suggested that nomination and selection procedures should be reviewed to promote greater downward accountability and responsiveness to local communities. It has also been suggested that the selection process should be based on secret ballots to encourage more democratic freedom and avoid potential intimidation or vote transparency.

Issues around the selection, participation, and motivation of private sector and civil society representatives have also been identified. It has been suggested that the size of RDCs could be

⁹ This was consistently viewed as a major impediment by civil society representatives.

cut in half by eliminating the private sector and civil society members. While solving one issue, however, this could create another by reducing the overall transparency of RDCs.

Practical Steps

RDC members agreed that establishing Regional Sector Commissions (RSCs) could address many of the key challenges described above. RSCs would consist of members selected from the RDCs based on their knowledge, experience and territorial interest in the sector. Their smaller size would permit more constructive debate and greater consensus. They would be responsible for making recommendations to the RDCs. RDCs would remain responsible for final approval sector programmes, regional strategies and operational plans.

RDC members supported the idea that RSCs should become the focal points for sector coordination including inter-municipal cooperation, articulating local needs to central government and be a main conduit for communicating national policies to local public authorities. Similarly, they could take the lead in identifying national and international sources of funding for their specific regional sector programmes.

RDC members also recognized that it is more feasible to build detailed capacity of smaller RSCs comprised of 3 to 5 members. Each Raion administration would also be expected to delegate a technical representative. RDC members agreed that sector ministries should delegate one representative the RSC to assure harmonization of regional and national sector plans.

RDC members are aware that an intensive programme to develop the capacity of RSCs is required. This could include short-term technical experts to provide training in key areas such as inter-municipal cooperation, training on regional and sector planning processes, and other topics as necessary.

RSCs would be expected to meet in advance of the general RDC meetings. They would require additional secretariat support from the RDAs. It was suggested that RSCs be established on a pilot basis beginning with those sectors which require the most amount of inter-municipal cooperation.

Finally, RDC members strongly suggest that the direct costs of participation in RDC and RSC meetings should be compensated.

In particular proposals received during the discussions in the South Development Region outlined RSCs competences. It is proposed to allocate concrete tasks: studies, analyses of the information submitted by RDAs; sectors planning relevant to the implementation of the regional strategy; developing project portfolio; evaluation of projects submitted to ADR; monitoring project implementation; presentation to the RDCs of the proposals to improve the legislative and regulatory framework; coordination of assistance provided by specialized experts in the sector. At the same time attention was drawn to the motivations for creating committees, namely major goal of streamlining expenditures for development and promotion of regional projects and in identifying sources of funding.

In North Development Region, it was also backed the idea of creating RSCs, specialized in certain priority sectors. Thus, it was said, the commissions will promote the application of a systemic approach in drafting and, by extension, the development of the region and ensure more actively attracting sectoral expertise in regional development. LPAs representatives will contribute to

strengthen partnerships and members will be more actively involved, including civil society organizations it will also ensure more efficient use of their capabilities in regional planning.

At meetings in the Central region was emphasized that in the RDCs activities, the line ministries should be more actively involved in order to identify opportunities for resource mobilization

(especially financial) and this should be reflected in the structure of sectoral committees of the RDCs . Many topics of regional importance should be discussed in advance within RSCs and LPAs representatives.

Figure 2: SWOT Analysis of Regional Sector Commissions



Focus -Grup discussions in Gagauzia were informative, since now it is premature to discuss the formation of the commissions in the newly formed RDC. However, the issue was debated with interest

and emphasized that the work and active involvement of RSCs in the processes of regional development is a prerequisite for creating a transparent mechanism, ensure participatory platform and raise the effectiveness of attraction of the funds for the implementation of large projects Regional. CRD members, participants in the discussion were very interested in replicating the positive experience of other regions in the CRD activity CRD Gagauzia. Draft terms of reference including a description of the mandate, structure and operation of Regional Sector Commissions (RSCs) is included in Annex 4.

Findings from the discussions with RDAs

The perceptions of RDC members were discussed with RDAs immediately after the focus group sessions. Discussions with RDAs included senior staff members and in one case the entire the RDA team from the region. The discussions with RDAs concentrated on the establishment of RSCs. This concept had been discussed with RDAs on previous occasions. There was a much clearer understanding of the concept amongst RDA staff that had been previously involved with RSWGs. As noted above, these RSWGs were essential for developing the Regional Sector Programmes which led to funding from the World Bank and EU.

Overall, RDAs recognized the potential value of establishing RSCs as platforms for sector governance within their respective region. It was suggested that having RSCs presenting initiatives and draft decisions to RDCs could improve relations between the RDAs and RDCs since RSC members would also be members of the RDCs.

There were, however, legitimate concerns about the resources, time and effort that would be required to support RSCs. RDAs also recognized that a comprehensive capacity development programme including the provision of periodic short-term technical expertise would be required to establish RSCs. They also suggested a pilot approach to establishing RSCs by beginning with one

or two sectors which require a significant level of inter municipal cooperation. It was suggested that the initial focus should be on the Water and Sanitation, Solid Waste Management, Regional and Local Roads, and Energy Efficiency sectors.

RDAs observed that current RDC regulations and procedures may also need to be revised and new regulations governing the RSCs would need to be drafted and approved by the RDCs. Technical assistance will be required to complete the revisions and develop new regulations. A basic SWOT Analysis for Regional Sector Commissions is provided in Figure 3.

Based on previous experience in developing regional sector programmes and strategies, RDAs recognized that the participation of representatives from sector ministries would strengthen the capacity of RSCs. Similarly, based on previous experience, RDAs suggested that this participation needs to be mandated by the respective ministry to assure attendance.

Finally, RDAs underlined the fact that their resources are already stretched. They will require additional resources to provide secretariat support for RSCs.

5. Recommendations

This report has identified specific limitations on the effectiveness and outlined the importance of RDCs. GIZ has expressed willingness to provide periodic independent technical expertise, assistance for drafting regulations, resources for secretariat support, and other additional capacity development measures.

A summary of key recommendations includes:

- **It is recommended RDCs approve the establishment of RSCs:** The findings of this report should be shared with RDCs and they should be requested to vote on the establishment RSCs. RSCs should be established on a pilot basis and focus on four sectors which require greater inter-municipal cooperation.
- **Sector ministries should delegate a representative to RSCs:** Sector ministries committed to delegating a representative to the RSCs during the NCCRD meeting in December 2016. They should be reminded of this commitment after the RDCs have voted to establish the RSCs.
- **Regulations for RSCs to be drafted and approved by the RDCs (see Annex 4):** The format of RSC regulations should be based on the existing overall RDC regulations. The new regulations should specify membership, roles, and responsibilities of key stakeholders with emphasis on the overall relationship with the RDCs and the support to be provided by RDAs.
- **Additional resources should be provided to RDAs:** The RDAs will require additional resources to provide secretariat support to RSCs. The volume of additional resources should be defined in close collaboration with the RDAs.
- **RDC members should be compensated for the cost of participation in meetings:** Additional funds should be allocated to the RDAs to administer compensation to RDC members. The additional funding should include amounts for participation in RDC and RSC meetings.
- **Design and implement a comprehensive capacity development program for key stakeholders (see Annex 5):** The introduction of RSCs should be accompanied by a comprehensive capacity development program which addresses individual and institutional needs while considering the overall enabling environment. The programme should address the

capacity development requirements of key stakeholders including RDCs, RSCs, RDAs, and MRDC. A draft outline of a Capacity Development Strategy is included in Annex 5. This plan should be developed further after RDCs have approved the establishment of RSCs.

In addition to addressing other operational issues, RDC capacity could be strengthened by:

- RDC members should be compensated for the cost of participation in meetings
- Qualified candidates for RDC President should be nominated by and elected through a secret ballot of RDC members.
- The length of the term served by RDC Presidents could be reviewed.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Focus Group Methodology Note

Annex 2: Sample Questionnaire

Annex 3: Tabulation of Questionnaire responses

Annex 4: Draft Terms of Reference for Regional Sector Commissions

Annex 5: Draft Capacity Development Strategy

Annex 1: Focus Group Discussion Methodology

Purpose: The purpose of focus group discussions is to identify constraints on the effectiveness of Regional Development Councils from the perspective of regional actors in the Development Regions.

Moreover, the discussions will serve to collect qualitative data for the baseline of an indicator in the foreseen governance programme on the prevalence of selected good governance elements in the process of modernising local services via the regional development architecture.

Expected outcome: Identify ways and means to improve effectiveness of Regional Development Councils to replicate it further into conceptual proposal of institutionalization of Regional Sector Commissions.

Additionally, to collect qualitative data on the perceived prevalence of selected good governance elements to complement quantitative survey data on the same topic.

Expected Outputs: Findings will be summarised and presented to MRDC and RDAs during coordination meetings and to the RDCs during RDC sessions. Before that, the common session with selected RDC representatives from all Development Regions is to be organized. Lessons from one region will be disseminated to other regions. The results will not be region-specific, in order to avoid miss-interpretations related to more critical situation or less objective perception identified during focus group discussions. Findings will contribute to the design of a formal Survey questionnaire to be distributed at RDC meetings as well as serve as a baseline for the main MLPS indicators. Findings will also serve as a basis for drafting regulations of the Regional Sector Commissions.

Participants: Existing as well as former RDC members will be consulted.

Schedule: It was proposed to organise two -three focus group sessions per development region to reduce travel burdens participants while assuring a higher level of participation. It was advisable that the two focus group sessions will be organised on the same day in each development region. Each session lasted for up to 2.5 -3 hours.

All Focus Group sessions were completed by the end of November 2016. Focus Groups were be conducted in four development regions (North, Centre, South and in a newly created Gagauzia). Additionally, the separate discussions will be held with representatives of Central Public Authorities (including State Chancellery, MRDC and some relevant line ministries), Civil Society Organizations and CALM.

Coordination: MRDC has granted approval to proceed with the Focus Group sessions. This approval has been communicated to RDAs. The need for organizing focus group discussions was communicated and agreed by the RDC members during the October 2016 RDC meetings.

Facilitation: GIZ Regional Advisors facilitated the dialogue between RDAs and RDC members and other actors (where applicable). GIZ Regional Advisors overseen logistical arrangements including identification of space to accommodate up to 15 people, and arranged PowerPoint facilities, pin boards, flipcharts, coffee breaks, etc. GIZ Regional Advisors recorded minutes of each session.

The agenda for each focus group discussion included several interactive sessions and one presentation:

	Agenda	Timing (2.5hours)	Materials used	Specific Outcome
1.	Welcoming coffee, registration			
2.	Welcoming words – GIZ MLPS representatives	5 minutes	Slide 1 on the screen	
3.	Round presentation of the participants	10 minutes	Slide 1 on the screen	
4.	Introductory presentation (+ confidentiality) S. Corobceanu	5 minutes	Slide 2 on the screen	
5.	Practical / interactive activity: What are the main RDC competences?	15 minutes	Slide 2 on the screen Colour cards used by participants	The participants become aware about the wide range of competences and how well are they performed by the RDCs (The participants are filling and pinning the cards / stickers). One or 2 participants are invited to comment and generalise group opinion.
6.	Presentation of the RDCs competences per the regulations: S. Corobceanu	25 minutes	Slide 3 on the screen Pre-filled cards with RDCs' competences	
7.	Practical / interactive activity: How well are these competences performed? What are obstacles?	20 minutes	Slide 3 on the screen Stickers – 5 per participant Green – satisfactory performed, Red – insufficiently, white – not very significant + One or 2 participants are invited to comment- (about 7 min)	
8.	Interactive discussion: How to improve the	20 minutes	Flip-chart Slides 4-7 distributed	The participants discuss and commonly agree on

	Agenda	Timing (2.5hours)	Materials used	Specific Outcome
	RDCs' effectiveness and efficiency?			range of solutions for RDCs' enhancement.
9.	Visioning exercise	20 minutes	Flip-chart	The participants formulate a View statement on perspectives of further RDC development (RD evolutions).
10.	Description of the questionnaires' role and structure, confidentiality etc.	5 minutes	Questionnaires distributed	Helps to identify more precisely and quantify: the degree of perceived transparency in decision making process, effectiveness and efficiency of coordination, planning and implementation of the regional development objectives within the region; Monitoring and evaluation role; gender mainstreaming.
11.	Questionnaires filled-in by participants	15 minutes		
12.	Q and A, closing remarks	10 minutes		

The discussion of key questions elicit Focus Group participant's views and opinions on the following:

1. Does the RDC cover the entire range of competencies according to their regulation?
2. Which competencies are most important but not performed well?
3. What are the ways to improve the functionality of the RDCs?
4. Visioning exercise about the perspectives of RDCs development and identification of needs for support.

These questions were be complemented with selected cross-cutting questions regarding the prevalence of good governance elements (e.g. "to what extent do you have sufficient and reliable data/report to make an informed decision in the RDC" → transparency).

Annex 2: Sample Questionnaire

Evaluarea activității CRD și a perspectivelor de dezvoltare

Obiectivul respectivului chestionar este de a evalua și de a cuantifica eficiența de îndeplinire a atribuțiilor Consiliilor Regionale pentru Dezvoltare și identifica scenariile de consolidare a capacităților CRD.

CONFIDENȚIALITATEA ESTE RESPECTATĂ ATĂT LA ETAPA DE COMPLETARE CĂT ȘI DE PRELUCRARE A DATELOR. NU ESTE NEVOIE SĂ INDICAȚI NUMELE DVS.

Datele de ordin personal, solicitate mai jos sunt necesare doar în scop de analiză și pentru identificarea percepției problematice în cauză de către actorii implicați în DR de diverse categorii.
Vă mulțumim anticipat pentru contribuția Dvs.

A. Informații generale despre respondent (marcați cu semnul [✓] rubrica adecvată):

A1) Sex: - Feminin - Masculin

A2) Vârsta: sub 30 ani peste 50 de ani 31-50 ani

A3) Sunteți membru al CRD:
 sunt membru al CRD
 ⇒ sunt membru al CRD re-reales în mai multe componente CRD
 nu sunt membru al CRD

A4) Ce instituție/categorie reprezentați?:
 APL gradul I Societate civilă
 APL gradul II Sector privat
 Societate civilă Sector privat
 - Alte

B. Principiile de bază în Dezvoltarea Regională

B1. În ce măsura sunteți de acord cu afirmația din enunț
 Marcați cu semnul [✓] coloana adecvată, astfel încât 1 reflectă nivelul de Acord Maxim iar 4 - Dezacord Complet.

Enunț	1 Absolut de acord	2 >	3 <	4 Dezacord complet	Nu pot răspunde
a. Procesul asigură principiul participativ de implicare a APL, a societății civile, și a altor actori importanți în procesul decizional	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b. Membrii CRD dețin suficientă informație pentru a aproba decizii fondate și transparente	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c. Procesul decizional în cadrul CRD este unul transparent	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d. Reprezentativitatea de gen și a părților vulnerabile este suficient considerată	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e. CRD asigură eficient coordonarea, planificarea și implementarea obiectivelor de dezvoltare regională din cadrul regiunii	<input type="checkbox"/>				
f. CRD și ADR respectă concordanța proiectelor și programelor regionale cu obiectivele strategice	<input type="checkbox"/>				

g. Monitorizarea și evaluarea rezultatelor DR (SDR, POR) are atribuție suficientă la ajustarea în perspectivă a proceselor	<input type="checkbox"/>				
h. Cooperarea cu alte consilii regionale în chestiuni de interes comun este suficientă	<input type="checkbox"/>				
i. Colaborarea cu organizațiile internaționale este suficientă	<input type="checkbox"/>				
j. CRD se pronunță cu inițiative de îmbunătățire a politici, legislației și a altor instrumente în vederea sprijinirii DR la nivel central și regional	<input type="checkbox"/>				

C. Perspectivele și deficiențele în activitatea CRD

C1. Va rugăm să Vă expuneți privind problemele cu care v-ați confruntat în activitatea de membru CRD și care necesită soluționare/ obstacolele în activitatea membrilor CRD

.....

C2. Ce Vă motivează să fiți / să deveniți membru CRD

.....

C3. Va rugăm să veniți cu propuneri privind metodele de optimizare a activității CRD

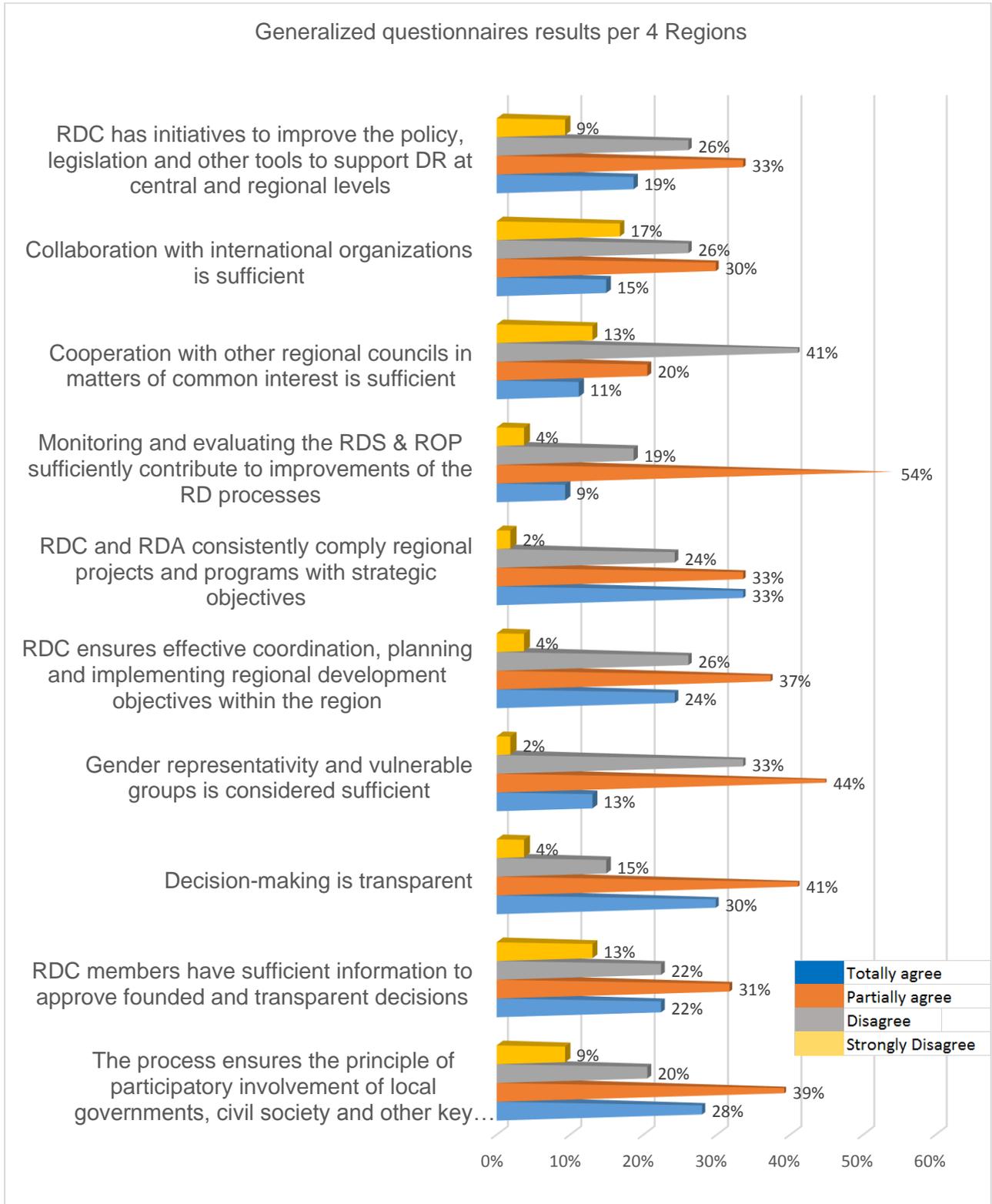
.....

C4. Va rugăm să Vă expuneți cum pot fi replicate în continuare activitățile Grupurilor de Lucru Regionale (de ex. pentru CRD)

.....

Vă mulțumim pentru participare!

Annex 3: Tabulation of Questionnaire responses



Annex 4: Draft Terms of Reference for Regional Sector Commissions

1. Introduction

These draft terms of reference provide a summary of the rationale and recommendations for the structure, functions, task and responsibilities, and procedures for Regional Sector Commissions (RSC).

2. Rationale

The establishment of RSCs is intended to strengthen the capacity of Regional Development Councils (RDCs) to lead socio-economic development processes within their region. Since they are smaller and more flexible, RSCs can perform functions which larger RDCs are not suited to perform. This includes detailed analysis of technical options, weighing evidence, and examining expert opinions to reach reasoned conclusions.

RSCs are expected to be platforms for regional sector governance. They are intended to hammer out the details of regional sector strategies which reflect the prevailing needs of citizens in local communities. Members of RSCs are expected to be spokespersons for the sector policies approved by the RDCs and communicate regional perspectives and priorities to central ministries and funding partners. The work of RSCs is at the nexus of spatial and sector planning. As such, RSCs are meant to articulate local needs, seeking technically and financially viable solutions, and communicate the options to RDCs.

It is important to emphasize that RSCs do not replace RDCs. RSCs are intended to make informed recommendations to the plenary sessions of RDCs. RDCs will remain ultimately responsible for approving Regional Sector Plans and Strategies.

The existing regulations governing the RDCs permit the establishment of RSCs. RDCs can create any number of RSCs to examine common issues which affect various rayons with their region. Sectors which warrant the establishment of RSCs are usually those which require the greatest level of cooperation between rayons. This would include the following sectors:

- Water and Sanitation (WSS)
- Solid Waste Management (SWM)
- Regional and Local Roads (RLR)
- Energy Efficiency of Public Infrastructure (EE)

The WSS sector provides a clear example of the need for RSCs. Extending piped water systems to rural communities on a cost efficient and sustainable basis often requires legal and technical agreements across multiple rayons. Similarly, central government and donor partners need to fund coherent multi-year sector programmes rather than individual projects conceived in a haphazard manner. By identifying needs and helping to reach agreements across rayons, RSCs can consolidate the voice of local communities. The consolidated voice of several communities is substantially more likely to attract funding.

3. Structure

RDCs will select four members via a secret ballot to become members of the RSCs. The RSC members can include Rayon Presidents and Mayors who are also members of the RDC. The Rayon

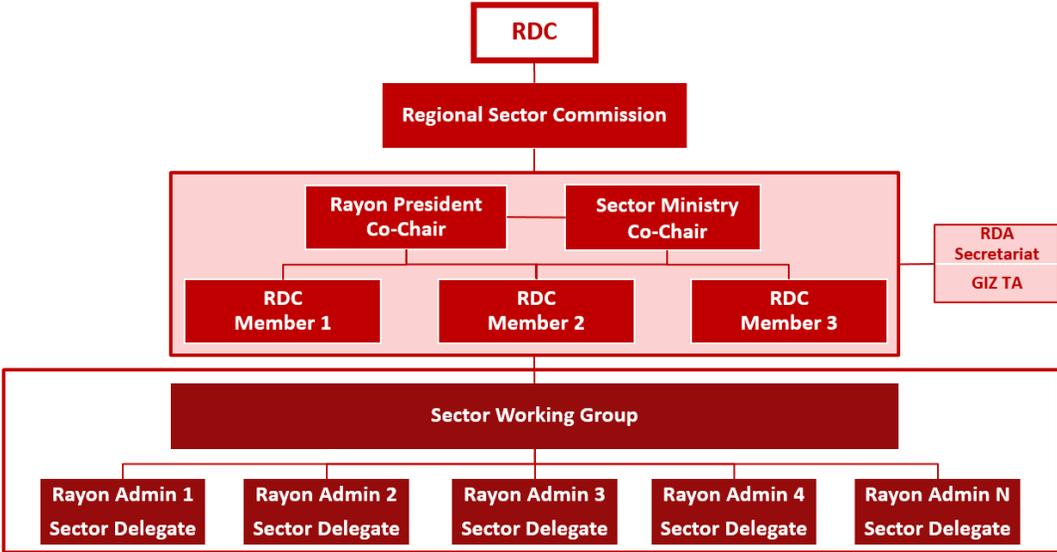
President or Mayor obtaining the most votes during the secret ballot will be appointed Co-Chair of the RSC. The other Co-Chair will be appointed by the relevant sector ministry. The purpose of having two Co-Chairs is to assure effective harmonization between regional priorities and central government policies.

RSCs have the mandate to develop and monitor sector plans and strategies and make recommendations to the RDCs. The RSCs will be supported through secretariat services provided by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). The RDA will appoint one staff member as Secretary to the RSC. GIZ will also provide extensive technical assistance for the establishment and operation of the RSCs.

The deliberations of RSCs will be supported by contributions from LPAs representatives. LPAs representatives will be delegated from each rayon administration. Each delegate must be technically capable of articulating rayon requirements. They must also be capable of reporting progress of ongoing sector projects, identifying bottlenecks, and proposing solutions to RSC members. GIZ can also offer technical assistance to each rayon for updating their respective SEDS sector chapter. (See also Annex 5 for a range of proposed capacity development measures for each key stakeholder that could be supported by GIZ).

The general structure of Regional Sector Commissions is presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1:



The RSC members will execute their functions on voluntary basis. They will be compensated for the cost of their participation in RSC meetings in accordance with existing Government of Moldova regulations. RSC members will be appointed for a period of one year and can be elected for more than one term.

4. Functions

The RSC is expected to be a platform for sector governance within the respective region. The general functions of the RSC will include:

- Recommend sector objectives and priorities to the RDC
- Coordinate the elaboration of the regional sector strategies and operational plans;

- Mobilize resources to assure effective and sustainable implementation;
- Monitor and report on the implementation of regional sector programs to the RDC

Specific functions of the RSCs will include:

- Review and recommend regional sector plans for approval by the RDCs
- Assure the participation of civil society and private sector representatives in planning processes
- Assure the consistency and conformity of regional sector plans with national sector strategies
- Review and recommend project selection criteria where appropriate
- Prepare documents and recommend proposals to be included on the agenda of RDC meetings
- Monitor technical and financial progress reports produced by the RDA and request clarifications of any discrepancies
- Collaborate with other RSCs regarding issues or projects of common interest
- Collaborate with regional bodies from other countries and international organizations to promote greater knowledge and understanding of regional sector development
- Recommend sector policy initiatives to be considered by the RDC
- Perform functions delegated by the RDC

5. Tasks and Responsibilities

The **Co-Chairs** of the RSC will have the following responsibilities and tasks:

- represents the RSC at the RDC
- determines the date and set the agenda of RSC meetings;
- propose recommendations to the RDC regarding sector development;
- represents regional sector policies to central government agencies and funding partners

The **Regular Members** will have the following responsibilities and tasks:

- review sector plans and strategies
- comment upon and question evidence presented before the RSC
- propose solutions to bottlenecks in the implementation of regional sector strategies
- vote on recommendations which will be put forward to the RDC for final decision
- assure RDC decisions are reflected in the implementation of regional sector strategies

The **Secretary of the RSC** will have the following responsibilities and tasks:

- organizes and assures the convocation of the RSC meetings;
- elaborates and presents the working papers to RSC meetings;
- records the minutes of RSC meetings;
- assists the Co-Chairs and RSC members in between meetings as required;
- maintains a public record of all documents and other papers of the RSC;
- performs other activities intended to ensure the efficient operation of the RSC.

The **LPA representatives** has the following responsibilities and tasks:

- inform the RSC of sector needs within their respective rayon
- report progress of ongoing sector projects
- identify any bottlenecks in the implementation of sector plans and projects
- propose appropriate solutions to identified bottlenecks

6. Procedures

Ordinary meetings of the RSC will be conducted on a quarterly basis at least two weeks in advance of RDC meetings. The RSC can hold an extraordinary meeting:

- at the request of either RSC Co-Chair;
- at the request of the RDC;
- at the request of the RDA;
- at the request of majority of RSC members.

The invitation for the participation in RSC meetings and the relevant documentation will be forwarded by the RDA Secretariat to RSC members at least 15 days before – in case of ordinary meetings and at least 3 days before – in case of extraordinary meetings. The date, the hour, the location, the agenda and relevant documentation will be indicated in the invitation. The invitation and supporting documentation will be made available on the RDA website.

The meeting is deliberative if the majority of the permanent members of the RSC are present. In case of unavailability, RSC members can appoint another person from their respective institution or organization to represent him/her, with the right to vote. The appointment must be confirmed in writing and presented to the Co-Chairs before the beginning of the meeting. The confirmation will be attached to the minutes of the meeting. The RDA Secretary to the RSC does not have the right to vote on recommendations issued by the RSC.

The Co-Chairs of the RSC can invite representatives of public administration, donor organizations, civil society, private sector, experts and other interested people to take part in debates during RSC meetings. The people invited to take part in debates do not have the right to vote on recommendations issued by the RSC. The people invited have the right to receive the agenda of the RSC meeting and documents regarding the issues they have been invited to discuss.

LPAs representatives are delegated to the RSC by their respective Rayon Administration. They are invited to take part in RSC meetings but do not have the right to vote on recommendations that will be put forward to the RDC. LPAs representatives have the right to receive the meeting agenda and relevant supporting documentation. They are expected participate in discussions and respond to questions related to the sector within their rayon.

Annex 5: Draft Capacity Development Plan

The purpose of the draft capacity development plan is to enable RDCs to better coordinate regional development plans and strategies. The plan proposes to develop capacity of individuals and organizations, while strengthening the enabling environment. The following tables highlight the desired capacities for each key stakeholder. The plan is subject to approval by key stakeholders. Each bullet point represents an action item which should be defined in further detail after the desired capacities have been approved by key stakeholders.

Table 1:

Regional Development Councils	
Desired Capacities	1. RDC members have greater ownership of regional development processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that the overall support contributes to RDC members perceiving an increase in voice and control of regional development processes. ➤ Support the revision of RDC procedures and regulations to formalize RSCs ➤ Support the implementation of revised procedures and regulations
	2. RDC members are fully aware of roles and responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct a training needs assessment of RDCs; ➤ Support the development of induction training modules in close cooperation with RDAs (potential topics: general roles and responsibilities, sector specific briefings, etc.; potential training provider APA) ➤ Ensure the development of a sustainable model for training provision; ➤ Support the development of adequate information material (e.g. booklets, etc.).
	3. Coordinate and consolidate regional development processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support the introduction of a simplified Results Based Management system linked across different institutional levels. ➤ Support the effective implementation of the internal work procedure between RSC and RDC ➤ Apply a pipeline approach to the implementation of sector strategies ➤ Conduct information sessions via RDCs for LPAs to raise awareness on sector issues and availability of GIZ support for local planning processes (e.g. SEDs)
	4. Contribute to policy dialogue across different levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support the establishment of RSC as platforms for regional sector governance ➤ Support RDCs in promoting identified issues in the adequate forum (e.g. NCCRD)
	5. Mobilize resources for regional development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support the development of strategies for mobilization of resources from national and international funds (e.g. regional sessions presenting planning results to donors)

Table 2:

Regional Sector Commissions	
Desired Capacities	1. RSC members are fully aware of roles and responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct a training needs assessment of RSCs; ➤ Support the development of induction training modules in close cooperation with RDAs
	2. RSC members are aware of international standards and good practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organize in close cooperation target-oriented study visits and knowledge exchanges for each sector
	3. RSC have clearly established internal procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support the development of RSC procedures in close cooperation with RDCs and RDAs. ➤ ➤ Support the implementation of approved RSC procedures
	4. RSCs operate efficiently <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide demand-oriented technical expertise to support RSCs ➤ Apply a pipeline approach to the implementation of sector strategies
	5. RSCs report to RDCs on a quarterly basis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support RSCs to use the Results-Based Management system

Table 3:

Regional Development Agencies	
Desired Capacities	1. RDAs are capable of supporting RDCs and RSCs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct a training needs assessment of RDAs; ➤ Provide technical and financial support to RDAs in exercising the secretariat function aligned to the requirements of the RDC/RSC working procedures ➤ Support links with APA Regional Planning and Programming course ➤ Support the RDAs in exercising their role in ensuring continuous capacity development of RDCs/RSC members
	2. RDAs maintain simplified RBM system to support RDCs and RSCs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support the definition of RDC/RSC reporting requirements ➤ Support the identification of existing information sources and flows ➤ Support RDAs to define an adequate RBM system ➤ Support RDAs to implement RBM system

Table 4:

Ministry of Regional Development and Construction	
Desired Capacities	1. An adequate regulatory framework for RDCs and RSCs is in place <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Support a review of the existing framework (incl. law on regional development, government decisions, RDC regulations) incl. a focus on the incentives for participation (financial aspects, technical aspects, transparency);➤ Develop a concept on the foreseen role of RDCs/RSC regarding the flow of information/decisions within the overall regional development architecture;➤ Provide support to the formal approval of the regulatory elements by the competent institutions (i.e. Parliament, NCCRD, MRDC, RDCs).
	2. A framework for sustainable capacity development RDCs is in place <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Analyse the current situation and identify the necessary financial, administrative and logistical preconditions;➤ Support the respective institutions to change framework conditions for sustainable capacity development