



Information
on the activities within the framework of the Canada-Ukraine Partnership
Project for Regional Governance and Development (RGD)
in February 2008

- From February 12 to February 14, RGD project held a **learning exchange mission to Ivano-Frankivsk** oblast. The purpose of this mission was to learn about the experience of other Ukrainian oblasts in developing and implementing regional development strategies and programs, and the institutions established by them for this purpose. The focus was on sharing experience in areas related to RGD pilot oblasts' strategic priorities, such as planning and development of tourism, investments attraction, etc. The participants of the mission were Ihor Sanzharovskyi, RGD Senior Technical Advisor, Iryna Lekh, RGD Zaporizhzhia Oblast Project Manager, and Oleg Luksha, Zakarpattia Oblast Project Expert.

During the mission, the delegation participated in two round table meetings with representatives of Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, rayon and city authorities, and local businesses and civil society. They also visited the Ukrainian-Canadian Business-Centre in the city of Ivano-Frankivsk, which was established in framework of the "Small Business and Economic Development in Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast" (SBEDIF) project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and met with representatives of the Association of Economic Development of Kolomyia. As a result of this meeting, RGD participants learned that Ivano-Frankivsk oblast developed and implemented its strategy by establishing a permanent coordination council and working groups responsible for strategic priorities. The oblast uses the annual socio-economic development plans as the key mechanism for strategy implementation. RGD representatives also learned about Ivano-Frankivsk oblast's vision and approaches to attracting investments and tourism development.

RGD participants also learned about the work of Association of Economic Development of Kolomyia region. This organization is responsible for attracting investments, and initiating and implementing various local development projects. The operation of the Community Fund of the city of Kolomyia, through which the city raises funds from the private sector for implementation of social development projects, and the role of the local government authorities in attracting foreign investments were other useful experiences shared with RGD representatives. The knowledge and expertise received during this mission will be applied during further work on implementation of regional strategies in RGD pilot oblasts - Zaporizhzhia and Zakarpattia. More detailed information on the learning exchange mission to Ivano-Frankivsk can be found online on the RGD project website at: http://www.rgd.org.ua/en/latest_project_news/study_tour_ivano_frankivsk/

- RGD project continues to support the **formulation of operational plans** at the regional level. In February, a number of working group meetings for each of the priorities were held in Zakarpattia.
 - On February 12, meetings of the working groups on priorities "Human Development and Improvement of the Quality of Life" and "Spatial Harmony and Environmental Protection" took place. The meeting of the working group on "Human Development" focused on developing an action plan for the operational goal on social security. Guest participants of this meeting included regional government representatives responsible for social policy and psychologists. Ihor Sanzharovskyi, RGD Senior Technical Advisor, also participated in the meeting. The participants of the meeting of the working group on "Spatial Harmony and Environmental Protection" were representatives of the regional government departments for environmental protection and ecological assessment, and NGOs working in the sphere of environmental protection. During this meeting, the participants evaluated and prioritized activities identified in the action plan for this priority.

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- On February 19, another meeting of the working group on the priority “Human Development and Improvement of the Quality of Life” took place. During this meeting, the action plan for implementation of this priority was prepared, and the actions identified in this plan were prioritized. Representatives of government authorities provided written proposals of projects for implementation within this priority. These proposals will be reviewed, elaborated and included into the action plan. At the end of the meeting it was decided to prepare the final version of the action plan document prior to the following meeting.
- On February 21 and 28, two meetings of the working group on the priority “Development of Tourism and Recreation Industry” took place. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Department of Tourism Development of the Oblast State Administration, the Association of Zakarpattia tourism companies, and NGOs operating in the tourism sector. Development of green tourism was the focus of discussion. The participants agreed that it is important to develop a database of all operational resorts in Zakarpattia to allow visitors to choose a place that best suits their needs and interests. This database would be accessible through the websites of major tourism operators in Ukraine. It was also agreed that it is important to engage state support to develop regional infrastructure in order to stimulate tourism development. The participants proposed to choose two pilot rayons with successful experiences in developing green tourism. All of these ideas were included into the draft action plan for implementation of the priority "Development of Tourism and Recreation Industry."

As a result of these working group meetings, it was decided to prepare a document with the final action plan for each priority. This would be presented at a joint meeting of the working groups and regional government at the beginning of March.

- On February 15, a Regional Forum entitled “**Business and Government – Partners**” was held in Zaporizhzhia. The purpose of this event was to engage the private sector into the implementation of Regional Development Strategy of Zaporizhzhia oblast until 2015. The participants were asked to identify the most important activities needed to realize the strategic objective “Reforming and improving of the licensing system in the sphere of economic activity,” which is a part of the Operational Plan within the Innovative Investment Development Priority. Zaporizhzhia oblast government leadership, presidents of business enterprises and associations, and community organizations attended the forum. In total, almost 70 people were present, most of whom were men. Irina Lekh, RGD Project Zaporizhzhia Regional Manager, also participated in the forum.

During the forum Oleksandr Berezhny, First Deputy Governor, described the main achievements in terms of economic development in the oblast in 2007, and presented the Regional Development Strategy, explaining that the most important government activities until 2015 are outlined in this document. He stressed that cooperation between the government and the private sector is important for achieving the goals identified in the strategy. Representatives of the private sector also articulated their vision of possible cooperation with the government. Both parties were satisfied with the results of the dialogue, despite the tension around certain issues and the length of the discussion, which lasted for over three hours.

As a result of the forum, several important decisions were made. It was decided that these kinds of forums should be held on a regular basis. Meeting minutes and a report should be prepared after the event. The government agreed to participate in joint activities. This forum demonstrated real changes in regional governance in Zaporizhzhia oblast. For the first time residents of the oblast, in this case businessmen proved that they want to and can take part in regional development, and their voices were heard by the government. This is a result of the effectiveness of the participatory strategic planning process introduced by the RGD Project in the region, which allowed uniting the government and the private sector towards achieving common goals. The event was widely covered in local mass media including the official website of Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration.

- On February 20, a **meeting of the Regional Working Group** was held in Zaporizhzhia. The purpose of the meeting was to **approve the final draft of the Regional Development Strategy**. The main developers of the Strategy were present – representatives of the Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration, RGD Project, community organizations and Zaporizhzhia Classic Private University, which was given the responsibility to draft the Strategy on the basis of the tender. The number of men and women present at the event was almost

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equal. Oleksandr Berezhny, First Deputy Head of Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration, chaired the meeting. Other members of the panel were Leonid Anisimov, Deputy Head of the Zaporizhzhia Oblast Council, Ella Slepian, Head of the Main Department of Economy, and Svitlana Kruglyak, Deputy Head of the Main Department of Economy. During the meeting, Svitlana Kruglyak provided a brief overview of the results of the internal and external expert assessments of the Strategy that were conducted by Oleksandr Lyakh and Kostantyn Zhezhdrin, RGD Project experts. Following this introduction, Kostantyn Zhezhdrin discussed the results of the internal assessment in more detail, focusing on weaknesses in the operational plans and monitoring indicators. Lyudmyla Sergeiyeva, Head of the Faculty of Economic Cybernetics and Statistics at Zaporizhzhia Classic Private University, and Head of the Academic Working Group for the development of the Regional Strategy, presented the final draft of the Strategy document. After the discussion, Leonid Anisimov noted that the final draft of the Strategy will be presented at the Oblast Council session on March 20, 2008, and the draft needs to be submitted to the oblast deputies 15 days before the session. At the end of the meeting, the members of the RWG approved the final draft of the Strategy by a majority vote. Oleksandr Berezhny concluded – “This is a historic moment for Zaporizhzhia region – for the first time we have developed our own strategy.” The RWG meeting was widely covered in local mass media including the official website of Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration. More detailed information on the RWG meeting can be found online on RGD Project website at: http://www.rgd.org.ua/latest_project_news/rwg_zap/

- On February 21, the Department of Culture and Tourism of Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration held a meeting to review results achieved in 2007. Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration and Zaporizhzhia Oblast Council leadership, heads of the appropriate departments of Rayon State Administrations, directors of libraries, museums, theaters etc., participated in the meeting. There were almost 100 participants present at the meeting. Mykola Frolov, Deputy Head of the Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration, chaired the meeting. Larysa Sizintsova, Head of the Department of Culture and Tourism, presented the work accomplished by the Department in 2007. She noted that the key problems in the culture and tourism sector were a lack of financing and a shortage of human resources. She also focused on the successes, including the fact that development of tourism has become one of the priorities for strategic development of the oblast. As a result of this important decision, financing from the oblast and state budgets has increased in comparison with the previous years. She also emphasized the role of civil society organizations in the development and implementation of the regional strategy. Irina Lekh, RGD Project Regional Manager in Zaporizhzhia region, delivered a presentation about cooperation between the RGD Project and the Department. She spoke about the Specialized Working Group established to develop an operational plan for the Regional Development Strategy, about the assistance of Ukrainian and international experts in action planning, preparing background studies, and RGD Project support in developing priority projects, which allowed to develop partnerships between businesses, government and the community. She stressed that without close cooperation of the RGD Project and Oblast and Rayon State Administrations, these results would have not been achieved. The chairman thanked the RGD Project for the assistance and expressed hope for further successful cooperation. The event was widely covered in local mass media including the official website of Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration.
- During the month of February, a number of events were held within the framework of the **informational and educational campaign in Zakarpattia oblast**.
 - On February 26, a press conference on strategic planning process and Regional Strategy implementation was held. William Pardy, Community Economic Development Expert, and Oleg Luksha, Regional Strategic Planning Expert, participated in the press conference. The main topics of the discussion included working group activities, results achieved up to date in the regional action planning process, and further steps towards Regional Strategy implementation. The experts emphasized the importance of the actions plans for the implementation of the strategy. Another point discussed during the press conference, was the regional agreement between Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and Zakarpattia Oblast State Administration. The experts stated that this is closely related to the strategic planning process, because the agreement will be based on investment proposals from the region.
 - On February 29, Oleg Luksha, Regional Strategic Planning Expert, participated in the program “Good evening, Zakarpattia” on the regional TV channel “Tysa 1”. The discussion was about the results of the activities of the working groups. Oleg Luksha spoke in details about the achievements of the working groups, in particular on the priority “Human development”. He described how the working groups operate, what results have been achieved, and the expected next steps in the regional action planning process.

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He also presented a few examples of investment project proposals, which were developed as a result of the working group activities.

- On February 27, within the framework of **informational and educational campaign in Zaporizhzhia oblast**, the TV and Radio Company "Zaporizhzhia" held an interview with representatives of Zaporizhzhia RGD Project regional office, Orest Zakydalsky, Anastasiya Bevz and Nataliya Selyukova, Regional Mass Media Expert. During the interview, the following issues were discussed: goals and tasks of the RGD Project, the development and implementation of Zaporizhzhia Regional Strategy up to 2015 and other issues. Information about the RGD project's support of the implementation of the tourism development priority was also discussed. The interview was broadcasted on regional radio during the week.
- RGD Project continues to **support strategic planning on the local level in pilot territories of Zaporizhzhia oblast**. In February, the pilot territories began developing draft strategies based on the results of public surveys to define a vision and development priorities. RGD Regional Strategic Planning experts are providing support to this process.
 - *Tokmak city and rayon*. On February 1, the Tokmak Rayon State Administration hosted a round table for representatives of rayon and municipal authorities, NGOs and local businesses. They discussed draft Regional Strategy of Tokmak Rayon Development for the period of 2008-2015. Volodymyr Nazarenko and Kostyantyn Zhezdrin, RGD Project Experts, facilitated the meeting. At the beginning of the meeting Andriy Mamchak, Head of the Department of Economy of Tokmak City Council, presented the results of cooperation between the Tokmak city and Tokmak rayon in the development of the local strategy. Afterwards, Oksana Psyol, Head of the Department of Economy of Tokmak Rayon State Administration, presented materials developed through the strategic planning process in Tokmak rayon. During a discussion, participants provided feedback and suggestions with regard to the following areas:
 - revival and development of agro-industrial complex of the rayon;
 - creation of an attractive investment climate; and
 - development of tourism and services infrastructure.It was decided to finalize the document by incorporating all of the comments and suggestions received during the meeting, and to submit the Strategy to the Rayon Council in March.
 - *Energodar city*. On February 2, a public hearing about the strategic planning process was held in Energodar. The session was chaired by Olexandr Kulibov, the mayor of Energodar. There were more than 50 participants, representatives of the Energodar community. Leaders of specialized working groups on development priorities described the work that has already been completed, and presented strategic and operational goals, and action plans. The activities of the specialized working groups were facilitated by RGD regional experts Volodymyr Nazarenko and Kostyantyn Zhezdrin. Participants of the public hearing provided several proposals to the strategic plan, such as opening of a specialized shop for pensioners. As a result of the meeting, the following decisions were made:
 - to approve the draft Strategy, ensuring that all suggestions are incorporated into the final document; and
 - to recommend to the working group on strategic planning to submit the final version of the Strategy to the City Council for approval and begin developing a demonstration version of the strategy.
 - *Komunarsky rayon, Zaporizhzhia City*. On February 19, in Komunarsky rayon, Zaporizhzhia City, a meeting of the Coordinational Council on strategic planning was held. Members of the Coordinational Council are leaders of the Komunarsky Rayon State Administration, representatives of business association, NGOs and Zaporizhzhia Classic Private University. Irina Lekh, RGD Project Zaporizhzhia Oblast Manager, also participated in the meeting. Yuri Pelykh, Head of Komunarsky Rayon State Administration, chaired the meeting. During the meeting, the participants summarized the work accomplished during the last six months with assistance from Zaporizhzhia Classic Private University. Representatives of the local community formulated their vision of rayon development, carried out a SWOT analysis and selected strategic priorities up to 2015. These are: development of tourism infrastructure; attraction of external and internal investments; and strengthening of self-government. As a result of the meeting the following decisions were made:
 - to develop a draft Strategy of rayon development until 2015;

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- to hold public hearings on the Strategy in March 2008 with the assistance from the Zaporizhzhia RGD project office; and
 - to ask the RGD project to support the process of developing and publishing of a presentation version of the strategy.
- *Prymorsk rayons*. On February 20-22, a workshop entitled: “Development of the Concept of the Prymorsk Rayons Development Strategy” was held in Berdyansk. The state administrations of the four seaside rayons – Berdyansk, Priazovsk, Primorsk and Yakymivsky, were represented at the workshop. They presented draft strategic plans for their territories, defined a common vision and mission for all four rayons, conducted a SWOT analysis to select potential priorities for development, and defined projects for an action plan on further cooperation. As a result of the workshop, a draft Concept of the Prymorsk Rayons Development Strategy as well as a draft cooperation agreement were developed. Finalization of the Strategy document and signing of the Cooperation Agreement between the Rayon State Administrations and Rayon Councils is planned for March 2008. After this, both documents would be submitted to the Zaporizhzhia Oblast Council to be included into the Zaporizhzhia Regional Development Strategy until 2015.

More detailed information about Project events and activities can be found at www.rgd.org.ua.

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