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1. INFO: [*presentation of MATRAbcd project and partners*](#)

The project RO 5871, "Building operational capacity for a decentralised government in Romania", financed by the Dutch Government through the MATRA programme, started in January this year and it will end in December 2005. Officially the project was opened with the signature on March 8th, 2004, in the presence of the Embassy of Holland of the Memorandum of Understanding by the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies in Rotterdam and the Ministry for Administration and Internal Affairs in Romania.

The project provides technical assistance on decentralisation to the Ministry for Administration and Internal Affairs represented by the Central Unit for Public Administration Reform (CUPAR) and is being implemented by the following organisations: the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, VNG International, the Netherlands, the Central Unit for Public Administration Reform from the Ministry for Administration and Internal Affairs Romania, the Federation of Romanian Local Authorities and the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies Romania Srl, Romania.

2. MATRAbcd: Project' goals and components:

The project goal is that the Network for Public Administration Modernisation (GMAP) at ministry and county level, led by Central Unit for Public Administration Reform (CUPAR) is able to effectively support local governments in the process of public services decentralisation. In this regard, the project shall assist CUPAR and GMAP in the elaboration of three decentralisation strategies based on performance indicators and a control and benchmarking system for decentralised public services.

The project consists in four components. Three of the components refer decentralised services for water supply, housing and social services (unemployment). These components

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are realised by three mixt groups compound of representatives from CUPAR, GMAP representatives from ministries (Ministry for Administration and Internal Affairs, Ministry of Transport, Constructions and Tourism, Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family), from counties (Prahova, Suceava, Timiș) and from City Halls (Ploiești and Suceava). The fourth component, realised in co-operation with the National Institute for Administration, focuses on the training activity and includes an e-learning course in the field of decentralisation.

3. The management structure of the MATRAbcd project:

The project is co-ordinated by IHS Rotterdam, as project leader, with the support of a Romanian national project co-ordinator, from IHS Romania, a local project manager, and a project officer from CUPAR. An Advisory Board compound of representatives of from the partner institutions monitors the project implementation.

4. Summary of the first seven months of project activity:

According to the project proposal activities were undertaken both in Romania and the Netherlands. These activities were oriented towards the accomplishment of result 1 of the project: CUPAR and GMAP are able to support RFLA, NIA and local administration with the reform and decentralisation process.

- Activity 1.1: Select 3 cities to pilot the benchmarks, strategy and e-course
- Activity 1.2: Select 21 participants for a workshop in Rotterdam
- Activity 1.3: Fact-finding missions to the selected counties
- Activity 1.4: Prepare the workshop
- Activity 1.5: One-month workshop in Rotterdam for 21 participants will be conducted
- Activity 1.6: Assist workshop participants to prepare a draft strategy on “Decentralisation and Local Empowerment in Romania”.
- Activity 1.7: Assist in the formulation of quality control benchmarks for selected public services
- Activity 1.8: Prepare e-learning courses on “Decentralisation and Local Empowerment’ and ‘benchmarking’
- Activity 1.9: Organise a management meeting with CUPAR, GMAP, RFLA and NIA to discuss the first draft of strategy, benchmarks and e-course

5. Activities planned until the end of the year 2004:

The activities planned until the end of 2004 are directed towards accomplishment of result no. 2 of the project, namely: in the three selected cities there will be measured the quality of performance for social services, water supply and housing and plan and implement improvements for these services; establishment of institutional linkages between the Ministry of Public Administration and Interior, RFLA, GMAP and city councils for ongoing support and feedback. To this purpose, the following are planned:

- Activity 1.10: Implement the e-learning program for 230 staff members of GMAP, NIA and RFLA staff
- Activity 2.1: Organise 2-day workshops in each county to prepare the benchmarking
- Activity 2.2: Assist NIA to apply the e-learning course for council staff

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Activity 2.3:

Conduct institutional analysis regarding the decentralised services

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