

CEED – Romania Annual Report 2013

CONTENTS

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
B. KEY PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES	5
Project briefs and status.....	5
Entrepreneur in the Third Millennium	5
RAF loan for project implementation	8
DACIE - Entrepreneurial Development for Competitiveness by Innovation and Eco-efficiency - South Romania Top Class	8
Green Entrepreneurship - Social Enterprises for Sustainable Development	10
RURAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION and DEVELOPMENT (REED)	11
Networking Learning & Market access events	13
The 7th CEED Regional Conference, Zagreb, Croatia on May 20 - 21, 2013 ...	13
The IT Bridge Connect Event, Izmir, Turkey, March 19-20, 2013.....	14
Official launching of CEED Moldova, June 19 th , 2013	15
Networking Learning Events within projects	16
C. PARTNERSHIPS	16
D. SUSTAINABILITY	17
E. OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACT	18
Activities and results	18
Impact	18
Success stories.....	19
Networking events that make the difference.....	19
Access to funds for farmers.....	19
F. ACTIVITY FORECAST FOR 2014	21



“Faster business growth through know-how and networks”

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout the year of 2013, The Center for Entrepreneurship and Executive Development - CEED Romania continued to pursue its mandate to carry out the legacy of USAID assistance in the country while contributing to economic growth through developing human resource capacity and viable partnerships in business.

The Center strengthened its sustainability based on its profile of a reputable training & business consulting provider in support of the SMEs community in Romania, and guided by the strategic goals related to organizational consolidation and expansion of the client base.

The services provided in 2013 included: consulting, training, mentoring for SMEs and would-be entrepreneurs, as well as provision of support to join the CEED international network, integrated support for start-up and development of green social enterprises, and training & consulting services to economically active farmers throughout Romania.

Consolidation

CEED Romania continued to consolidate its position on the Romanian market due to a broad strategic approach toward the improvement of both the quality and applicability of the Center’s support services provided to the Romanian SMEs community and other target clients such as NGOs and farmers. This enabled CEED to maintain its responsive and targeted presence throughout Romania and to further expand the network of key local partners.

The above approach was put in practice by an integrated service package which include specially tailored training seminars, targeted advisory services, access to International and local networks, access to IT-based solutions for business management, and mentoring support. Our services were provided mainly under the auspices of two EU co-funded strategic grants and two projects funded by RAF. In addition we carried out a number of contracts on a commercial basis.

In order to expand our network and provide our clients with networking and market access opportunities, CEED Romania staff and clients participated in various regional conferences, workshops and international networking events.

During 2013, CEED Romania continued to nurture its previously established relationships with various financial institutions, entrepreneurs associations and business support organizations.

Cooperation with the Romanian American Foundation, our key strategic partner, continued for the mutual benefit of our projects and target clients, and enabled both organizations to successfully advance their missions.

Thus, CEED further consolidated its position and brand as a significant regional support network, devoted to promotion of economic development through economic education. CEED Romania gained recognition among other institutions connected to supporting entrepreneurship, and it was able to show its unique / innovative capacity building and practical approach.



“Faster business growth through know-how and networks”

Expansion and diversification of the client base

In 2013 the Center prepared and delivered an impressive number of training seminars in various locations throughout Romania, combined with participation in various networking and regional market access events, as well as increased provision of coaching, mentoring and advisory services. Our trainers delivered 69 training and 41 networking events for 1817 clients throughout the year 2013. Since the establishment of CEED Foundation in Romania, there were as many as 718 CEED events, attended by 13,079 clients. In addition, over 1700 clients obtained advisory services. The clients were mainly high growth potential small and medium enterprises, but also social entrepreneurs, would-be entrepreneurs, farmers and public servants.

Client feedback was highly positive thus confirming the expanding recognition of the CEED model. Many of our clients have benefited from more than one of our events, thus becoming part of the CEED community of entrepreneurs and SME supporters.

In addition to the core activities – training and networking events addressing fast growing SMEs – CEED Romania provided advisory & consulting services to private clients and other groups to facilitate development of management and other human resource skills, improve access to European grant schemes, foster job creation and economic development. The Center was successful in applying our practical approach to SME development to the social sphere, by assisting social entrepreneurs and various initiative groups in the establishment and management of social enterprises. We also assisted almost 400 economically active farmers from 20 communities throughout Romania.

Impact

The most notable tangible outcomes of the Center’s activities in 2013 are:

- Over 1000 clients (employees, managers, entrepreneurs and farmers) were trained on various business-related areas;
- Over 500 clients benefited of advisory, mentoring and coaching support services to start or develop their business / farm;

As a result of the above:

- 139 new businesses or independent activities were established;
- At least 30 existing businesses have good chances to develop;
- At least 170 new jobs will be created.

The above results demonstrate that CEED Romania has the capacity and honored its mandate to carry on its legacy of USAID assistance in the country as a valuable regional support organization, devoted to promoting economic development through strengthening entrepreneurship and developing viable local and regional partnerships. Through enhancing local managerial skills and empowering leaders in the region by including them as new members in the regional CEED network and helping them access funds, CEED brought a measurable contribution to the economic progress in Romania.



“Faster business growth through know-how and networks”

Plans

These achievements have set a sound and promising ground for further development of our future activity. We will pursue the CEED business integrated services model which was refined and developed in agreement with SEAF and other CEED centers from our network. We will provide a broad array of business support services that range widely from training through consulting. Furthermore, we will continue to widen and diversify our target clients, adding to our traditional clients, i.e. SME managers and entrepreneurs, other groups such as: representatives of various groups involved in social entrepreneurship, rural entrepreneurs, farmers, and public servants.

We are committed to helping our clients expand their businesses via our unique form of network supported and mentor led practical training, with demand driven follow-up services of ‘coaching,’ doubled by more sophisticated consulting services aimed to facilitate their market expansion and access to EU and/or commercial sources of finance.

During 2014 we will continue to focus on the following areas:

- Continue implementation of the ongoing projects;
- Pursue efforts for development of new projects and tender proposals on behalf of CEED and various partners to raise grant funds from various donors;
- Project development for private clients to obtain EU financing and other commercial activities.

With the regional CEED network already expanded into 14 countries of which the majority are located in South East Europe, combining EU and non-EU member states, CEED Romania became a trusted and well respected SME promotion institution built on the seasoned success of SEAF private sector experience and USAID assistance legacy.

We can safely state that we have confirmed the CEED brand promise and trade mark: **“Faster business growth through know-how and networks”**.

B. KEY PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Here is a complete list of projects and activities accomplished during the year 2012 with success cases, examples and testimonials, where applicable:

Projects under execution:

- Entrepreneur in the Third Millennium - closed in April 2013
- DACIE - Entrepreneurial Development for Competitiveness by Innovation and Eco-efficiency (South Romanian Top Class) – closed in December 2013
- Green Entrepreneurship - Social Enterprises for Sustainable Development – pilot program – ongoing until April 2014
- Rural Economic Education and Development (REED) – ongoing until September 2015

Networking learning & Market access events

- The 7th CEED Regional Conference, Zagreb, Croatia on May 20 - 21, 2013
- The IT Bridge Connect Event, Izmir, Turkey, March 19-20, 2013
- Official launching of CEED Moldova, June 19th, 2013

Project briefs and status

Entrepreneur in the Third Millennium

The project has been awarded a grant of approx. USD 3 million from the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development. The EU financing was provided from the European Social Fund. The project started execution on July 1st, 2010 for a 34 months period until April 30th, 2013. Activities were deployed in all 8 development regions of Romania.

CEED Romania – Lead partner (grantee) implemented the project in partnership with MBM Software & Partners – Partner, a private, limited liability Romanian company, established in 2005 and registering a fast growth in the area of creation and implementation of software solutions, advisory and training support in top network management areas for IT&C.

The general objective of the project is to develop the entrepreneurial and managerial skills through intensive use of IT&C in business in view of promoting establishment and development SMEs and generating jobs in Romania. The project contributed to improving managerial and entrepreneurial skills through practical training, advisory services and use of ITC technology in business and supported existing & new SMEs to increase their quality & productivity by providing access to ITC-based practical business management tools.

Specific objectives:

- The development of entrepreneurial culture in Romania;

- Improving managerial and entrepreneurial skills through practical training, advisory services and use of ITC technology in business;
- Support existing & new SMEs to increase their quality & productivity by providing access to ITC-based practical business management tools.

Beneficiaries: **1181** entrepreneurs, would-be entrepreneurs, managers and employees from towns and cities of 8 development regions of Romania.

Key project activities:

- Management training with a focus on use of ITC tools in business;
- On-line business advisory support and Access to ITC management tools to entrepreneurs through 2 ITC platforms (“*Virtual office for entrepreneurship support*”, and “*Virtual SME Demonstrator*”);
- Entrepreneurial training for start-ups and business management training (including CNFPA certified training for SME managers and project managers);
- Information and promotion events.

Key expected results:

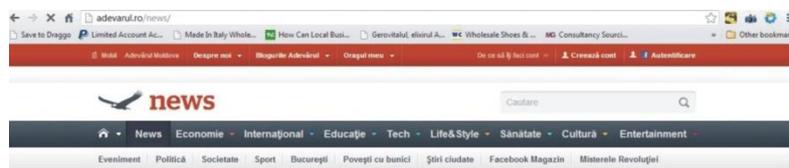
- 640 clients trained of which 60 ready to start their business;
- 1000 clients with improved management skills following on-line advisory support & use of ITC tools in business

Accomplishments by end of the project:

INDICATOR	ACHIEVED
Target group	1181
No. of persons trained for business start-up	391
No. of persons assisted for development of entrepreneurship and business start-up	652
No. of persons assisted for development of management skills	723
No. of persons who started-up their company	30
Percentage of trainees in business start-up who started-up their company	9,9%
No. of certified trainees	95

Outcome and impact:

- The number of clients trained in business start-up and business management using ITC tools was far above the initial targets;
- In addition, the clients improved their management skills following on-line advisory support & use of ITC tools in business via the 2 electronic platforms – “Virtual SME Demonstrator” „Virtual Office for entrepreneurship support” (there were over 350 users of the Virtual Demonstrator, and over 200 users assisted via the Virtual Office).
- Over 80 clients benefited of on-line and direct consulting services.
- 30 companies or sole entrepreneurs were registered
- These new commercial entities created approx. 40 new jobs.




UNEA EUROPEANĂ

GUVERNUL ROMÂNIEI
MINISTERUL MUNCII, FAMILIEI,
PROTECȚIEI SOCIALE ȘI
PERSOANELOR VÂRSTNICE
APROTEJATE

FONDUL SOCIAL EUROPEAN
PROIECTE 2007 - 2013

NAȚIONALĂ A EGALITĂȚII
OPORTUNITĂȚII
2007 - 2013

AGENCIILE REGIONALE DE DEZVOLTARE
REGIONALĂ PENTRU PODOL
REGIONEA BUCUREȘTI-ILFOV

Întreprinzător în Mileniul Trei.
Proiect cofinanțat din Fondul Social European prin Programul Operațional
Sectorial Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane 2007-2013.
Investește în oameni!

**Peste 1000 de membri ai grupului țintă au devenit utilizatori
ai platformelor software oferite în cadrul proiectului !**
www.dimmv.ro, www.e-birouvirtual.ro

Întreprinzător în Mileniul Trei
Consultanță gratuită pentru inițierea unei afaceri!
Consultanță on-line în managementul afacerilor și TIC!

- ✓ Peste 1000 de persoane au fost instruite în managementul afacerilor și utilizarea TIC în afaceri!
- ✓ Peste 500 de CD-uri cu materiale pe teme de management au fost difuzate!
- ✓ Un volum impresionant de materiale utile a fost postat pe pagina web a proiectului! www.im3.ro

CEED
CENTRUL NAȚIONAL
PENTRU DEZVOLTAREA
ȘI ÎNCĂLZIREA
AFACERILOR

M3M
SOFTWARE
SOLUȚII DE MANAGEMENT
PENTRU AFACERI

Această pagina conține un mesaj promotional, care va dispărea în 15 secunde
[Click aici pentru a accesa instant pagina dorita.](#)



“Faster business growth through know-how and networks”

RAF loan for project implementation

On December 23rd, 2011, CEED Romania obtained a USD 200,000 **credit from the Romanian American Foundation**, which has the aim **to support implementation of the EU funded program: “Entrepreneur for the Third Millennium”**.

RAF performed a thorough analysis of CEED organization, its past and current activities, achievements and impact, as well as of the specific details related to the project to be supported. The conclusion of the due diligence process recognized CEED’s organizational strength and its financial viability. The free of charge loan extended for a period of 20 months enabled to CEED cover its cash gap needs for the smooth implementation of the project.

After receiving the last reimbursement from the EU donor, CEED was able to fully repay this loan to RAF.

The RAF credit line available to NGOs is highly needed in Romania, it is innovative for Romania and it has all prerequisites for success both for the funding organization – RAF, and for the beneficiaries such as CEED Romania: it improves access of viable NGOs to EU funding thus providing a considerable leverage effect, it enables both lender and borrowers pursue their common missions, while ensuring their sustainable expansion in terms of organizations’ size and scope of their activities.

In addition to its immediate use, this credit contract is important to us as it strengthens the cooperation among the two organizations, which is a strategic choice for CEED Romania.

DACIE - Entrepreneurial Development for Competitiveness by Innovation and Eco-efficiency - South Romania Top Class

This 3 million Euro, ESF-funded project aims to support entrepreneurship development, managerial skills creation, and to enhance the innovative spirit of the entrepreneurs, managers, employees and all people interested in starting up a business in the South, South- East, South- West and Bucharest-Ilfov regions of Romania. The project promotes the establishment and growth of small business to create jobs in new, highly technological and eco-efficient sectors.

CEED Romania – Lead partner (grantee) implemented the project in partnership with IPA SA, a reputable research and design company focussing on automation equipment and processes, and Asociatia Forumul Tinerilor, an NGO involved in promoting youth activities.

Duration: 36 months: January 2011 - December 2013

Key project objectives:

- To strengthen the entrepreneurship in the perspective of sustainable development in the target regions by promoting a positive attitude towards entrepreneurs and developing a eco-conscientious culture.
- To improve the entrepreneurial and managerial skills of the businesspersons, managers and SME’s employees from the targeted

regions in order to help them establish independent activities, grow their companies and create new jobs.

- To create integrated, innovative, sustainable and replicable training, consulting and mentoring systems in view of promoting entrepreneurship and managerial development.
- To identify new business opportunities in modern, highly technological and eco-efficient areas, and to reinforce the abilities of local entrepreneurs, by helping them to materialize their business ideas into successful business stories.
- To develop abilities to promote partnerships and to assimilate the European procedures in entrepreneurship and competitiveness.

Key project activities:

- Managerial training programs focused on introduction of innovative management techniques;
- Entrepreneurial training programs to stimulate business start-up including self-employment;
- Business consulting services to improve management and introduction of new technologies in existing companies and for start-up of new enterprises;
- Mentoring support to entrepreneurs; Access to national and European networks of SMEs.

Accomplishments by end of project:

- 1684 beneficiaries improved their awareness on entrepreneurship;
- 1481 managers/employees/businessmen/ would-be entrepreneurs were trained, of which 525 were trained in entrepreneurship and 965 in business management to improve innovation and eco-effectiveness;
- 249 persons (from 173 companies) obtained personalized management consulting services; 61 business growth plans were prepared;
- 200 beneficiaries obtained business start-up consulting, of which 112 finalized their business plans;
- 30 mentoring partnerships were established;
- 75 entrepreneurs were assisted to join national or European networks of SMEs.

Impact:

- 109 companies or sole entrepreneurs were registered
- and thus approx. 130 new jobs were created.



“Faster business growth through know-how and networks”

Green Entrepreneurship - Social Enterprises for Sustainable Development

CEED Romania is a partner in the pilot “**Green entrepreneurship**” program funded by Romanian American Foundation (RAF). The 3-year program started in February 2011 and will close by end of March 2014. The lead partner is the Foundation for Partnership (FP).

The pilot program is aimed to support the creation of 7 social enterprises in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development. The program will offer the necessary financial and know-how support for the establishment of social enterprises through start – up grants and capacity building.

CEED Romania is responsible with the capacity building component, more specifically training and consulting activities for program beneficiaries. The implementation of such a program also means linking social, environmental and economic interests – in fact real sustainable development – through a medium term approach.

The impact expected at the end of the program will include the improvement of the economic results of the small producers and service providers in the regions targeted by the projects and an increase of the financial sustainability of the beneficiary NGOs. At the same time it is envisaged that the program will contribute to the sustainable development of the regions where implemented, and it will enable the choice to stay local for the members of the communities. The program is expected to support initiatives related to ecotourism, food processing, organic/sustainable small scale farming, etc.

The consistent training and consulting program carried out during the first year was concluded with 7 business plans for the social enterprises, that were evaluated and approved by the evaluation panel including RAF, FP, CEED representatives and independent advisors. Each social enterprise obtained a grants worth up to USD 50,000 for start-up and operation during the first year.

The recipients of grants were:

- „The Association Eco-tourism Romania” for a environment-friendly tourism operation to be implemented in the Danube Delta in partnership with „Ivan Patzaichin” Association, under the auspices of the social enterprise RawMania;
- „The Association Agent Green”, for a social enterprise entitled Wild Time Green Tours providing eco-friendly tourism services in the Natural Park of Retezat Mountains;
- „The Center for protected areas and sustainable development Bihor”, to promote and provide tourism services around the Meziad cave;
- „The Ecologic Association” Maramures, providing eco-tourism services in the Gutai Mountains natural park and surrounding rural communities;
- „The Association of fruit-trees collectors and processors” in Odorhei, for a social enterprise aiming at processing wild fruits and mushrooms from woods;



“Faster business growth through know-how and networks”

- „The Association of Vine-growers and fruit-tree growers in Hilita” to create an organic fruits processing center;
- and „ProPark” Foundation, for protected areas’ management services.

In 2013 the activities of CEED experts focussed on two types of technical support, i.e. monitoring the business plans’ implementation and coaching & business management consulting support, at request. The consulting services were useful according to the clients’ feedback, as they met their concrete needs and their specific requests.

Impact:

- 7 social enterprises were created by 7 NGOs;
- These enterprises created approx. 10 new permanent jobs and generated income opportunities for at least 175 members of the rural communities where they operate (at least 100 roma minority members in Odorhei are hired as seasonal workers to collect wild fruit; at least 25 rural B&Bs in the Danube Delta, Maramures, Retezat, Meziad also benefit of increased tourism activities; at least 50 members of Hilita association and other community members obtain additional income).

RURAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION and DEVELOPMENT (REED)

The REED project is a key component of the **program Rural Development through Entrepreneurship and Association**, an ample development plan through entrepreneurship and association for rural areas in Romania, initiated and funded by the **Romanian-American Foundation**. The program aims to encourage rural entrepreneurship by enabling small and semi-subsistence farmers to acquire business and management skills and to gain access to capital. This goal is being addressed by providing business development support to farmers, by piloting four rural associations and by contributing to the elaboration of the 2014-2020 Romanian National Plan for Rural Development.

Rural Economic Education and Development (REED) aims to develop the entrepreneurial skills of small farmers in Romania, leading to job creation and development of human capital and businesses in rural areas. The project provides **training, advisory support services and networking opportunities** to economically active farmers from 40 communities throughout Romania. The selected communities will start from the proposal of Microfinance Institutions and will be done by CEED based on rigorous criteria, including the number of active farmers, their interest in business development and growth potential, the support of local authorities, pursuing a balanced geographical distribution.

Expected result:

800 economically active farmers will be trained, and 1500 persons will be assisted via direct, individual advisory services to improve the economic results of their farms and to access microfinance or other sources of capital for farm development. In



“Faster business growth through know-how and networks”

addition, they will have networking opportunities with their peers from the target regions that will enable them to expand their horizon, learn about and replicate best practices.

All services will be provided directly in the rural communities, are practical, hands-on, and adapted to the specific needs of the farmers. Several of the most active Microfinance Institutions in Romania have already agreed to support the project activities on-site, on a voluntary basis.

The services will involve 40 local resource persons that will be trained and coached so as to be able to continue providing similar services in their communities after the program closure.

It is expected that the local producers will be able to increase product sales, reduce production costs and improve product quality, thus increasing the sustainability of their farms, improving their access to markets, and creating new jobs. This will generate a beneficial impact in their communities.

The program is aligned with the mission of CEED Romania and it is closely in line with the mission of the Romanian-American Foundation to strengthen and promote conditions for a sustainable market economy and a democratic society that provides access to opportunity for all segments of the population in Romania. In particular the program promotes entrepreneurship, leading to job creation and development of human capital and businesses in rural areas of Romania. RAF financial support for this program has a leverage effect as it will help farmers successfully approach and effectively utilize various financial sources such as microloans and/or EU & government funds for rural development.

The pilot project started in September 2012 with the careful selection of the 40 target rural communities throughout Romania, and it will be implemented during the next three years. The selection took into account a balanced geographical coverage as well as Microfinance Institutions coverage for potential access to capital.

Accomplishments by end of 2013:

During 2013, the program activities were developed in 21 communities from all over Romania: Bucerdea Grânoasă, Ighiu, Șona, Mihalț - all from Alba County; Macea and Pâncota - Arad County; Diosig - Bihor; Lechința - Bistrița Năsăud; Budești - Călărași, Voinești – Dâmbovița; Matca – Galați; Ilia, Dobra and Gurasada – Hunedoara; Ditrău – Harghita; Târgu Frumos – Iași; Roman – Neamț; Izbiceni - Olt; Câmpulung Moldovenesc – Suceava; Belinț – Timiș; Ștefănești – Vâlcea și Huși – Vaslui.

The farmers from these communities were actively involved in an intense program of assistance that included **training, advisory services and exchanges of experience**. There were **23 training sessions** attended by almost **386** participants. The REED experts always adapted the training approach to meet the needs of information and business skills of the farmers, illustrated the information with relevant, concrete and practical examples and exercises.

253 direct, one-to-one, confidential and tailored **business advisory meetings** with the senior and local consultants of the program were provided to **222 farmers** to discuss their particular business questions, and find tailored solutions aimed to

enable them access to PNDR grants and/or to commercial funds for matching funds, to help them identify the most appropriate legal form and register as legal businesses, or apply various measures to expand their market, improve product quality, or increase their sales.

4 exchange visits involving 175 participants were also organized in the following communities: Diosig, Targu Frumos & Matca, Pancota and Gura Humorului. The participants were able to get in touch with their peers, exchange experience, visit various farms, agricultural research units, vine processing plants, etc.

Networking Learning & Market access events

The 7th CEED Regional Conference, Zagreb, Croatia on May 20 - 21, 2013

Traditionally, the international network of CEED annually gathers at the CEED Regional Conference. Approximately 250 entrepreneurs and investors from throughout Eastern Europe and the Balkans attended the conference with the theme *“Getting Over the Top — Raising Your Game for the Region and the World”*.

CEED Regional Conference is an annual, inspirational and a networking meeting of entrepreneurs, members of the international CEED network, investors and other business people from Eastern and Southeastern Europe. We were joined also by businessmen from the USA, the UK, Morocco, Armenia and Moldova. The theme of the conference enabled entrepreneurs to be inspired by two globally successful entrepreneurs – Bob Rosenschein and Jim Connor.

Bob Rosenschein is an American entrepreneur who lives in Israel and is the founder of **Answers.com**, which is among the 20 most visited U.S. web sites. He shared with us his view on how did Israel manage to gain the nickname “start-up nation” and became the country with the highest entrepreneurial activity in the world. He also shared with us advice based on its most useful business experience.

Jim Connor is an American entrepreneur, angel investor and also a board member of the prestigious angel network in Silicon Valley, **Sand Hill Angels**. Connor presented the key tips that he gives to those entrepreneurs into whom he invests. He also shared his knowledge on the business practice of Sand Hills Angels with the investors that were present at the conference.

As part of the segment *“Doing Business in the Region”* entrepreneurs gained valuable information on the markets of Southeast Europe, whereas in the segment *“Pitch your business”* some entrepreneurs had the opportunity to present their business ideas or products to foreign investors: Bob Rosenschein, Jim Connor, Richard Sheridan (director of SEAF) and Stephen Eastham, who commented on their business ideas and their potential to break into global markets.

The event concluded with a reception atop the Westin Hotel, overlooking the skyline of the Croatian capital. The CEED community gathered on those two days in May left with new insights, new friends, and a renewed energy, knowing they have what it

takes to make the most of all of the opportunities that this dynamic region holds for them.



The IT Bridge Connect Event, Izmir, Turkey, March 19-20, 2013

The Regional ICT B2B event was organized by the Turkish – South East Europe (SEE) and Black Sea (BS) Program, jointly with SEAF, together with a local partner Bati-BINOM (Western Anatolian Information and Electronics Regional Innovation Center). The event aimed to facilitate a powerful networking and B2B meeting between ICT companies looking for new market opportunities. This event intended to help strengthen SEE – BS – Turkish business contacts and highlight opportunities for increasing trade and investment. The combination of high added value, innovation, creativity, and extensive research is helping Turkish firms develop products, not only for local market, but abroad as well. The B2B event aimed to help entrepreneurs from the SEE and BSEC region get a better understanding of what it takes to do business in Turkey and conversely aimed to help Turkish entrepreneurs establish links with the new markets in South Eastern European and Black Sea countries.

The participants were 20 entrepreneurs from Armenia, Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Ukraine and 30-40 entrepreneurs from Turkey. They all were able to identify regional opportunities, discuss market trends in the ICT sector and catalyze active networking and business opportunities.

The event in Izmir gave the opportunity to 4 companies from Romania to establish good business contacts: Biesse solution LTD, BEIA Consult International LTD, ENEA LTD, and Motivation LTD. Everyone came out of the conference having met a few interesting business contacts and having learned more about cross border ICT business opportunities.



Official launching of CEED Moldova, June 19th, 2013

On June 19, CEED, together with its Moldovan affiliate partner ProConsulting, opened an office in Chişinău, Moldova.

In its first year of existence, CEED Moldova will offer CEED Grow and CEED Finance programs, and through this expose Moldovan entrepreneurs and managers to the know-how and networks they need to accelerate the growth of their businesses and to promote the entrepreneurial culture in Moldovan society and the broader region. This will be the 14th center in the network of CEED centers operating throughout the world.

Cristina Manescu attended the launching conference together with other representatives of the CEED global network. The event was an excellent opportunity to contact the business ecosystem from the neighboring country and to plan future joint activities.



Networking Learning Events within projects

Although not specifically organized as networking learning events following the typical CEED approach, there were several public events organized within various projects, which enabled our clients to benefit of networking opportunities.

During 2013 there were 41 NLEs organized within the EU-funded projects “*Entrepreneur in the Third Millennium*” and “*Entrepreneurial Development for Competitiveness by Innovation and Eco-efficiency - South Romania Top Class*”. They enabled over 200 beneficiaries of these project to share experience and best practices that will help them effectively solve the problems of their companies, and learn about new business opportunities.

- *Entrepreneur in the Third Millennium*: the final conference of the project was an excellent opportunity to disseminate information on overall project results and outcomes and collect direct, positive and encouraging feedback from the beneficiaries who attended the event.
- *Entrepreneurial Development for Competitiveness by Innovation and Eco-efficiency - South Romania Top Class project*: The series of entrepreneurial and awareness development events were organized, targeting management performance and modern technologies promotion towards increased business efficiency. The participants were introduced to essential principles and importance of entrepreneurship and project activities contributing to the promotion of modern business management.
- *Rural Economic Education and Development (REED)*: We highlight the value of the 4 exchange visits that enabled networking opportunities for 175 economically active farmers. Details are presented in the chapter on success stories.

C. PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership is the key concept of our approach. We placed a special importance on our active cooperation with ***our key strategic partners and supporters*** such as: the US Embassy in Bucharest, AmCham (CEED is a member since 2007), and last but not least the Romanian American Foundation. We endeavored to maintain relationship and further expand our cooperation with them. As a result, CEED was able to present its mandate and mission, prove its capabilities and skills and attract further support. Examples are the bridge loan granted by RAF to help us implement the EU-funded project and the two RAF-funded programs, Green Entrepreneurship and REED.

We maintained excellent relationship with our current and reliable ***business and project partners***: The National Association of Road Transporters in Romania - UNTRR (the partner with whom we implemented the project “*Adaptability and competitiveness in the road transport sector of Romania*”) MBM Software & Partners (our partner for project „*Entrepreneur in the Third Millennium*”), IPA and Forumul



“Faster business growth through know-how and networks”

Tinerilor (our partners for the project “*DACIE*”) and Partnership Foundation (for *Green Entrepreneurship*). We closely worked with all of them to implement these projects and also to generate new project proposals for our portfolio.

In addition, we cooperated with other organizations such as: Motivation Foundation, MFI Patria Credit, Patria Credit Foundation, and Relians RDP.

The cooperation with the five IMFs that are involved in the REED project also opens new opportunities to further expand our partnership arrangements.

We also investigated various opportunities for cooperation with new potential partners - NGOs and companies - for the projects that are under preparation.

As part of our strategy to develop a ***national network of experts, trainers, and professionals*** from various regions of Romania, who are our main partners in delivering the activities/services of the Center, will help us reach new clients, get more public and media exposure, share costs, and achieve synergies in similar activities targeting SMEs, we kept developing our network of professionals. We spent time to identify and assess new local partners to be involved in the implementation of our projects. We involved members of our informal network of local partners in delivering the training and consulting services within our projects.

Apart from the events organized by CEED directly and/or together with our key partners, we responded as much as possible to various invitations to relevant events. Such events were excellent opportunities to promote our image and capabilities, to network with business representatives, analyze the Romanian business environment and various developmental opportunities. They also helped us identify potential clients for advisory and consulting services and offer them our support.

D. SUSTAINABILITY

During the year 2013, we managed to maintain the sustainability of the Foundation, according to our strategy: The income obtained from various private and internationally funded projects, especially from the ongoing EU-funded strategic projects helped us maintain the Center’s financial sustainability. In addition to costs covered in a substantial proportion from the EU-funded projects, we also received various private donations.

We are constantly looking for new funding opportunities and we keep working to build a pipeline of paying clients that will generate a steady and reliable source of financial sustainability of the Foundation, in parallel to developing our pipeline of donor-funded projects.

During 2013 we prepared a number of new project proposals and tender proposals in partnership with key strategic partners of CEED. Such projects are built on our core values and our goals to contribute to fostering a dynamic SME sector. Once approved, they will also be instrumental in securing a sustainable growth of the CEED Foundation.

E. OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Activities and results

The table below gives a summary of our activities and results in 2013 and cumulative since inception to date:

Country Center CEED Romania	Annualized 2013	Cumulative (from program inception – 2006)
Quarterly		
<i>Events</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NLE's • Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 • 69 events, 83 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 202 • 516 events, 2371 days
<i>Participants</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NLE's • Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 808 • 1009 pers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5483 • 7596
<i>Advisory services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 524 clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1716 clients

Impact

The most notable tangible outcomes of the Center's activities in 2013 are:

- Over 1000 clients (employees, managers, entrepreneurs and farmers) were trained on various business-related areas;
- Over 500 clients benefited of advisory, mentoring and coaching support services to start or develop their business / farm;

As a result of the above:

- 139 new businesses or independent activities were established;
- At least 30 existing businesses have good chances to develop;
- At least 170 new jobs will be created.

The above results demonstrate that CEED Romania has the capacity and honored its mandate to carry on its legacy of USAID assistance in the country as a valuable regional support organization, devoted to promoting economic development through strengthening entrepreneurship and developing viable local and regional partnerships. Through enhancing local managerial skills and empowering leaders in the region by including them as new members in the regional CEED network and

helping them access funds, CEED brought a measurable contribution to the economic progress in Romania.

Success stories

Networking events that make the difference

1. The first exchange visit was hosted by the community **Diosig**, Bihor county. In May 2013, farmers from **Pincota** Arad county participated to the exhibition, conference and business forum entitled "*The future of rural areas in Crisana*", followed by the "*Diosig Wine Festival*". The guests attended presentations of projects and experience in agriculture of several Hungarian organizations, discussed on specific issues related to the implementation of local development projects of the LAG funded under Axis IV PNDR_LEADER, and participated to bilateral meetings during the business forum.

2. **Exchange visit to Matca commune, Galați county focusing on vegetable growing in protected areas:** In August 2013, 11 farmers from Târgu **Frumos**, Iași county traveled to **Matca** commune and visited 3 vegetable growing farms using protected areas. The guest and host farmers discussed issues of joint interest: technologic details of vegetable growing in protected areas, best practices in agriculture, optimal growing timing so as to increase profit from sales, how to increase product quality, transportation, storage, packaging, sales, product promotion, financial sources used for operation / modernization of farms.

3. **Best practices in viticulture at Pâncota, Arad County:** Farmers from Diosig aim to revive the wine production tradition in their area and to better exploit its viticultural potential, and there is a tradition and experience in Pâncota in this field. The exchange of experience focusing on examples of good practice in viticulture was held in Pâncota, Arad county, in October 2013. 49 farmers attended the event which was a good opportunity for the farmers of the four villages to know each-other better and to continue the discussions on topics of common interest, started in Diosig.

The topics of the presentations made by CEED senior consultants - Ms. Carmen Tarnovschi and Mr. Marius Vereș Dănciuț, followed by discussions between farmers were: capitalizing the production obtained; funding opportunities available; the benefits resulting from the association and the establishment of a group of producers in agriculture; taxation, and co - financing required for obtaining European funds; and the history and tradition of viticulture in Diosig.

Guests visited two wine farms with wine processing units, the weekly fair in Pâncota, a vegetable and planting farm in Macea, and the Research Vineyard Station Miniș. The hosts presented in detail each farm visited and answered farmers' questions.

4. **Multi-faceted exchange visit in Suceava county:** In November 2013 we organized an extensive exchange, which was attended by over 65 people: 11 vegetable growers from Târgu Frumos - Iași county, 13 farmers from Matca - Galați, 11 wine growers from Huși - Vaslui, 26 farmers and business owners from Suceava, together with the local experts of the 4 areas and the CEED senior consultant Mr Gabriel Nicolau. The participants had the opportunity to visit three private companies

in Suceava county that provided examples of good practice: a company from Arbore community where they pursued opportunities for direct sale of vegetables and horticultural products in the area, a vegetable farm in Milișăuți community - a farm where cabbage is grown, which is processed using traditional methods (pickles) and sold, and a trout growth farm in the community Frătăuții Vechi to provide an alternative production model.

Access to funds for farmers

In its second year of implementation, the REED project already registers progress and positive results, with impact on target communities. As a direct result of the integrated assistance - training, consulting and networking - at least 36 farmers have received microloans from various MFIs and banks to finance their own farm development through investment and others have submitted grant projects within different NRDP measures. As a result, it is expected that the local producers will be able to increase product sales, reduce production costs and improve product quality, thus increasing the sustainability of their farms, improving their access to markets, and creating new jobs. This will generate a beneficial impact in their communities.

Chimina Maftai from Dobreni village, Neamt county

The farmer Chimina Maftai deals with farming for more than 20 years, both in protected environment (greenhouse - an area of 10,000 square meters) and in an area of 9 ha field planted with roots in particular. Until this year the activity was conducted only through physical work, with the help of a few day laborers, and only the land preparation works (plowing, disking and partially planting) were mechanized.

He was assisted by REED experts to obtain a loan needed to buy new agricultural equipment. The value of the loan approved by patria Credit, one of the partner MFIs in the REED project, is almost 50 thousand euro, and the loan term is 59 months. The farmer has an excellent cooperation with the microfinance institution, and he is able to repay the installments in due time.

The machines that the farmer has purchased with the loan helped him replace the physical work and saved the quite high costs with day laborers.

The farmer from Moldova is already planning a new development of his farm: he wishes to buy more land and to build a primary processing unit to prepare vegetables for sale (cleaning, sorting, and washing).

Coțofanu Roxana Ștefana, from Strunga commune, Iași County

During 2013 the female farmer from the Moldovan commune obtained business consulting support in the framework of the REED project to prepare and submit a project funded by EU aimed to provide investment for the development of her farm.

The 3.5 hectares farm produces vegetables and melons. The produce is sold in the town nearby, Târgu Frumos.

Ms. Coțofanu is a trained farmer. She graduated in 2013 the vocational training course for vegetable growers, organized by The County Agricultural Chamber, Iași.

The REED expert analyzed the situation of the farm and concluded that it is eligible for funding under the EU-funded National Program for Rural Development, the measure 112 dedicated to „Setting up of young farmers”. The consultant developed the required project, which was submitted to the Local Action Group. As a result, the farmer will obtain a grant of Euro 40,000 for modernization of the farm. The financing contract was already signed in January 31st, 2014.

The project objective is to purchase 4.8 hectares of arable land. The expansion of the cultivated area will enable Ms. Coțofeanu to extend the range of crops and raise the farm income.

Chicoș Gheorghe, Matca commune, Galați County

Mr Chicoș Gheorghe is a 53 years old farmer, with 30 years of experience in vegetable growing. He has been working on his 6.5 hectares farm together with his family. Traditionally, they grow cucumbers, tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage, peppers, eggplant, and melons. The production is sold locally or in the neighboring town, Bacău.

The production costs are relatively high. The family expenses are higher during summer, when, in addition to production costs, the farmer has to buy various household appliances and renovate the house.

Together with the REED local expert, the farmer identified various measures needed to lower the costs and also the risks specific to vegetable growing in protected areas:

- use of resistant materials when building greenhouses;
- use of irrigation systems / installations drip;
- purchase of wood, sawdust late in the season;
- selling different products wholesale markets

The MFI approved a small loan (100,000 lei) with a 5 year term to enable the farmer start addressing these measures. The loan will be used as follows: to buy a specialized transportation vehicle that will be used to expand sales beyond the local market; to drill a well that will enable more uniform irrigation and increased water flow in the greenhouse.

F. ACTIVITY FORECAST FOR 2014

In 2014 we will pursue the CEED business integrated services model which was refined and developed in agreement with SEAF and other CEED centers from our network. We will provide a broad array of business support services that range widely from training through consulting. Furthermore, we will continue to widen and diversify our target clients, adding to our traditional clients, i.e. SME managers and



“Faster business growth through know-how and networks”

entrepreneurs, other groups such as: representatives of various groups involved in social entrepreneurship, rural entrepreneurs and farmers, and public officers.

We are committed to help our clients expand their businesses via our unique form of network supported and mentor led practical training, with demand driven follow-up services of ‘coaching,’ doubled by more sophisticated consulting services aimed to facilitate their market expansion and access to EU and/or commercial sources of finance.

The major activities planned for 2014 include:

1. Provide access to consulting, training, and networking services through the ongoing project funded by RAF Rural Education and Economic Development REED targeting economically active farmers from 40 communities throughout Romania
2. Focus on developing other projects and tender proposals in line with our mission, identify relevant partners and appropriate funding sources.
3. Provide assistance, on a commercial basis, to various groups: certified training, training at request and consulting to SMEs and other groups.
4. Organize networking events to foster network expansion for our clients.
5. Provide market access opportunities within the CEED regional South East Europe network:
 - 8th Annual CEED Regional Conference – Belgrade, 2014
 - Other International events of the CEED network

The calendar of events will be continually updated.