

STUDY ON ROMA INCLUSION UNDER THE EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

Study Report

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List of abbreviations	1
Executive Summary	2
Introduction	7
1. Purpose and Objectives of the Study.....	7
2. Approach and Methodology	7
3. Limitations of the Study	8
4. Structure of the Study.....	9
I. Contextual opportunities and challenges	9
1. Roma exclusion: key dimensions and challenges	9
2. The Political and Policy Context of Roma Inclusion.....	13
3. Civil society.....	15
4. Defining Roma inclusion	16
II. The Support to Roma Inclusion Projects under the EEA and Norway Grants (2004–2009)	
.....	18
1. General Overview	18
2. Results	22
3. Relevance	27
4. Sustainability.....	28
III. The New Role and Place of EEA and Norway Grants (2009-2014) in Support to Roma	
Inclusion Processes	32
1. Roma inclusion as a strategic priority	32
2. General Overview	33
3. Relevance of planned programs and projected outcomes in the field of Roma inclusion	40
4. Impact and sustainability prospects.....	44
5. Monitoring and evaluation systems.....	46
IV. The EEA and Norway Grants (2004-2009: Conclusions and Lessons from Roma Relevant	
Projects	48
1. Conclusions from 2004-2009	48
2. Lessons for future applications	50
V. Roma Inclusion Measures under the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014: Conclusions and	
Recommendations	51
1. EEA and Norway Grants (2009-2014): Will they make a difference for Roma inclusion?	
.....	51
2. Recommendations for the current program period (2009-2014)	54
3. Recommendations for future funding	56
Annex 1: Terms of Reference	59
Annex 2: List of respondents	62
Annex 3: References	67

List of abbreviations

DPP - Donor Programme Partner

CoE - Council of Europe

EEA - European Economic Area

FMO - Financial Mechanism Office

POs - Programme Operators

MoU - Memorandums of Understanding

M&E - Monitoring and Evaluation

NRIS - National Roma Inclusion Strategies

NFPs- National Focal Points

NUTS - Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics

OSF - Open Society Foundation

OSI - Open Society Institute

SDC - Swiss Development Agency

ETP Slovakia - Environmental training Project Slovakia

FRA – European Union Fundamental Rights Agency

Executive Summary

The Study

The task of this study was to provide a complete overview of all funding in the field of Roma inclusion under the EEA and Norway Grants in five of the countries with the largest Roma population: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic. Based on the retrospective analysis of the 2004–2009 Roma related projects, and on the prospective overview of the planned programs in the new period (2009–2014), the study is extracting results, lessons, and recommendations for future funding in the area of Roma inclusion. The report is to serve as a background for discussion of the EEA/N strategy for support of Roma inclusion.

The study was implemented in January - May 2013 by a team of CREDA Consulting Ltd. It involved in-depth documentary research and interviews with 140 respondents in the five countries.

Main findings and Conclusions

1. Support to Roma inclusion 2004-2009

- (1) *Roma inclusion was not an explicit donor priority and request for the implementation of the 2004-2009 EEA and Norway Grants.* For this reason, only a limited number of Roma relevant measures were funded under the general priorities of the past period.
- (2) *In total €13,782,088 or 3,4% of the overall EEA and Norway funding in the five countries was allocated to 75 projects that can be considered Roma relevant.* This included € 11,244,391 support to 14 individual projects in Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria and €2,538,147 in support to 61 subprojects under the NGO funds in all countries. Hungary had the highest level of funding for Roma relevant projects, followed by Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. The number of projects and the volume of funding were the lowest in Romania.
- (3) *Nearly 80% of the Roma relevant projects entailed direct work with Roma at the local level in over 70 localities in the five countries.* This by itself is a good result in regard to their direct outreach to Roma communities.
- (4) *The supported projects in their majority were relevant for Roma inclusion and achieved good results in their local setting.* They have contributed to: a/ *Roma empowerment*, by expanded access to service, community cohesion and development, human rights initiatives; b/ *growing more inclusiveness practice of local social and educational institutions* by advocacy, effective partnerships, training of their staff and approaches of work with Roma and c/ *building bridges between Roma and non-Roma* by a variety of initiatives for multicultural education, public campaigns and mobilizing volunteerism for solidarity actions. Still, the achieved immediate results on the ground can be considered just as small positive steps in the process of Roma inclusion. Sustained change will require much longer and consistent efforts than the timeframe of supported projects.
- (5) *The sustainability of project results will depend on the extent to which the project promoters and partnering local institutions will continue working for Roma inclusion in the long-term.* Based on the sample of visited projects at least 50% of the Roma related projects funded by the NGO Funds continue to work on the same or similar initiatives. The majority of the individual projects in Slovakia and Bulgaria continue with funding from other sources, while in Hungary only 2 out of 8 individual projects raised funds for some follow up activities.
- (6) *The 2004–2009 funding period showed that NGOs that were the majority of Project Promoters have a very important role in regard to Roma inclusion.* Even though most projects were limited as size and duration, they included useful initiatives of benefit to Roma communities.

- (7) *The involvement of Roma NGOs or experts in the supported projects in the past funding period remained low.* Only 13 out of the 61 NGO sub-projects were implemented by Roma NGOs. Just a few of the project promoters of the individual projects had direct involvement of Roma experts or organizations in the project implementation as partners and managers. This low involvement may be due to a number of reasons - Roma inclusion was not a specific priority, pro-active outreach to Roma NGOs was limited, and many Roma NGOs lacked capacities to apply for and implement the grants.

Programmes in support to Roma inclusion 2009-2014

- (1) *Roma inclusion has graduated into a horizontal priority in the programming of EEA/N 2009–2014, backed up by new and expanding strategic partnerships.* The Council of Europe as a strategic advisor to the EEA and Norway Grants and DPP in 18 programmes in the region, and the Open Society Foundation which is providing strategic advice and feedback to the EEA and Norway Grants. In addition the Grants have close cooperation with the European Commission and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and has joined a number of formal and informal platforms of cooperation on Roma inclusion.
- (2) *As a result of the specific donors request for a focus on the improvement of the situation of Roma, 36 of the (2009-2014) programmes in the five countries will have Roma relevant components or aspects of work in 13 of the programme areas of the EEA and Norway Grants.* Romania has the highest level of funding and number of programmes (12) followed by Bulgaria (9), Slovakia (6), the Czech Republic (5) and Hungary (4).
- (3) *The total budget of the programmes that will accommodate elements of work for Roma inclusion is 340 M EUR. Based on the estimates developed by the NFPs in four of the countries and by us in the Czech Republic, plus the data provided by the FMO in June 2013, between 37,329,000 EUR and 44,471,374 will address more or less directly issues of the Roma.* The figure sums up the estimates, on the basis of (a) specific Roma targeted programmes and measures, (b) expected benefits for Roma as part of larger target groups in mainstream measures and (c) the indicative target of 10% planned for Bulgaria and Romania. For at least 13,841,241 EUR of this total amount, we could not find clear evidence of how exactly the relevant components and calls for proposals are going to actually reach Roma. At the same time, depending on the management of the programmes and the opportunities to increase the Roma focus in many of them, the maximum overall allocation for Roma can considerably increase.
- (4) *However, this is an indicative estimate and is still just a promise that needs to be substantiated and later – implemented.* This estimate includes both specific Roma targeted interventions , as well as the expected benefits for Roma as a part of larger target groups in mainstream measures. In many cases, the justification on how exactly Roma will be included is still quite vague at this point.
- (5) *Defining “Roma” as a priority area is both a significant step forward, and also a challenge. Introducing Roma inclusion was more evolving than strategic and driven by clear priorities and vision.* It faced several challenges related to timing, ownership, and clarity of strategic meaning. It was articulated quite late in the negotiation process. The countries were responding by technically adding projects and components here and there to already decided and designed programmes. This made the country programming on Roma inclusion fragmented and project-driven rather than strategic.
- (6) *The Roma specific concern was not clearly defined under the broad statement “improvement of the situation of the Roma population”.* Within the different programmes its content varies from a direct and explicit focus on Roma to focus on minority and/or vulnerable groups in general, which may (but not necessarily does) include Roma. Unless clear and defensible

criteria for “benefiting Roma” are articulated, the future reporting may be confusing. Some positive steps in this direction have just started with inviting the National Focal Points to submit concept papers on the methods planned to achieve the Roma inclusion targets in their programmes.

- (7) *Most of the programmes in the current period were defined in direct negotiations with the governments and they largely reflect the level of their willingness to address Roma issues. All programmes make reference to the National Strategies for Roma Inclusion. They are relevant by default to the needs identified there, as the strategies list extensively all possible needs with little prioritization. The question is whether the needs that will be addressed by the EEA/N programmes are the most pressing ones or of the greatest relevance to Roma inclusion. Programmes that had built on previous experience or had a consultative process with local stakeholders, especially Roma organizations and experts, – have more relevance and linkages to the priority needs of Roma.*
- (8) *The majority of the programmes in the five countries have a great deal of potential to generate meaningful Roma inclusion outcomes. Many of them intend to increase the empowerment of Roma by improving their access to services (social, health, education), assisting self-organizing and community development, human rights and advocacy action. At the same time only a few initiatives are specifically targeting discrimination and fighting racism – mainly in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic. The rest of the programmes lack clear communication strategy of working for overcoming public bias and negative prejudice.*
- (9) *The majority of the planned interventions are intended to be implemented at the local level, involving diverse local institutions and partnerships with local NGOs. This approach has a lot of potential for direct outreach to Roma communities, as well as for more inclusive institutional practices provided that sufficient time and resources are allocated for involving Roma partners.*
- (10) *The EEA and Norway Grants mechanism is becoming one of the few strategic donors with a strong potential to make a difference in the area of Roma inclusion. It is the only donor that is investing in Roma inclusion horizontally across programme areas. It has more flexibility and potential for innovation, as compared to the EU funds. As a multi-country mechanism, it provides for applying a consistent approach across countries. Bilateral cooperation can generate innovative approaches on Roma inclusion in both beneficiary and donor states. The EEA/N Grants mechanism is also one of the few donors investing in civil society. Thus, it can assist growth of local capacities and partnerships, and can support initiatives for Roma inclusion that were piloted to scale up and prepare for further funding by the structural funds.*
- (11) *Whether the potential for substantial contributions to Roma inclusion will be unleashed will depend on the effective implementation of the current programme period and the extent of (a) effective outreach to Roma communities; (b) development of common standards on “Roma targeted measures”; (c) exchange of information on who’s doing what in order to optimize interventions and investments and (d) clear outcome-oriented M&E frameworks related to Roma inclusion measures.*

Recommendations for the Current Programme Period (2009–2014)

- (1) *Vision and strategic clarity on the donors’ specific concern on Roma will help expand the effectiveness of 2009–2014 programmes towards Roma inclusion. We would suggest that **the donors’ concern is clearly defined as a Roma inclusion concern**, targeting positive change in the three interrelated outcome areas of Roma inclusion: increased Roma empowerment, inclusive institutions (policies and practices) and unbiased and non-discriminatory society.*
- (2) *Regular strategic review of the implementation of the Roma inclusion focus within and*

across programmes will assist expanding the in-country commitments beyond formal reporting. This needs to be a part of the strategic monitoring of programmes implementation in three directions: (a) progress towards expected Roma inclusion outcomes and impact, (b) possible leverages of different measures, especially at the local level and (c) relevance and sustainability of actions by the potential mainstreaming of emerging good practices.

- (3) *Robust and comprehensive information systems/databases of all planned and implemented activities related to Roma inclusion funded under the EEA/N Grants needs to be developed.* It will be of benefit to all involved in the process. At the national level it might be an integral part of the M&E frameworks generating important feedback on the implemented program and suggesting possible bottlenecks and/or areas of improvement. At the international level they might optimize the knowledge management efforts introducing methodological consistency in the approaches supported.
- (4) *The design and implementation of the calls for proposals will be critical for the success of the programmes.* Fine-tuning the selection criteria, targeted and proactive communication, and design of the project application process need to ensure the outreach to Roma communities, improve participation of Roma NGOs and the development of true local stakeholders' partnerships in the implementation of the programs.
- (5) *The capacity of Programme Operators and the National Focal Points for meaningful Roma inclusion needs to be further expanded* by adding experts on Roma inclusion, creating Roma advisory groups, and better coordination with specialized bodies related to Roma.
- (6) *All programmes need to develop specific communication strategies and/or components to address the negative and discriminatory attitudes of the public at large towards Roma.* Approaching the public at large needs to focus on the benefits of outcomes rather than just on the visibility of projects and inputs.
- (7) *The interventions need to be explicitly oriented at results. Developing of monitoring, evaluation and data gathering systems will be critical to ensure that the specific concern on Roma inclusion is followed through.* For that purpose the program operators and project promoters need to be provided with professional expertise and support for establishing at their program and project levels M&E systems. This can be assisted by strategic partnerships with international organizations and agencies like FRA that have a mandate and expertise in Roma targeted monitoring.

Recommendations for Future Funding:

- (1) *It will be critically important that the EEA and Norway Grants continue the support for Roma inclusion as a strategic priority in the long-term.* Situating the assistance in a longer term strategic perspective will provide a more appropriate time frame for sustainable change. Given the links and complementarities with EC funding frameworks, the FMO should have a vision until at least 2020. Such a vision might be the basis for developing truly strategic partnerships with major stakeholders involved in Roma inclusion at the European level.
- (2) *The future support needs to be based on visioning of where the EEA and Norway Grants can actually make a difference and what are the anticipated outcomes and future impacts that will be feasible.* Given its limited funding the EEA and Norway Grants may not be able to directly bring about dramatic decrease in poverty, exclusion and disparities. But it can contribute to it by investing in key actors, and key processes at key places that will work in the long term for Roma inclusion, thus reducing disparities and inequalities. It can also bring synergy among sector specific programmes financed by different donors (especially the EC).
- (3) *It will be good to keep Roma inclusion as a horizontal priority across programmes. But*

mainstream approaches need to be complemented by Roma targeted interventions that assist a direct focus on Roma communities and facilitate involvement of Roma organizations. Otherwise the effects will be minimal.

- (4) *A broader consultative process that involves different stakeholders – (NGOs, Roma communities, other actors on Roma inclusion) will be of benefit for defining strategic priorities. Creating a Roma inclusion advisory group at the FMO level will be beneficial to assist the strategy process, as well as the formative assessment and learning from the current period. It will assist expanding the capacity of the FMO to meet the complexity of Roma inclusion programming.*
- (5) *The development of Roma NGOs needs to be a long-term priority which is beyond the mere question for “absorption capacity” of the NGOs. It relates to the needed investment in citizen based actors that are able to influence the process and outcomes of Roma inclusion. In that regard, while it is important to continue with a mainstream approach of support to Roma NGOs as part of the NGO funds a more targeted strategy in this direction needs to be further discussed with strategic partners like the Roma Initiatives Office of OSF. This can bring more clarity on the substantial synergy of the work of the NGO funds in regard to Roma inclusion. A complementary option is to consider matching the efforts of OSF by creating a joint regional partnership fund that will support Innovative Civic initiatives to expand the community based and leadership capacity for Roma empowerment .*
- (6) *Local and Regional Initiatives for Reducing Disparities and Social Exclusion can be one of the main programme areas accommodating future Roma inclusion efforts. It can provide for in-depth work in regions where disparity is most obvious. It can seed initiatives based on an integrated approach to development that can be further expanded by the new EU instruments for integrated territorial investments. It can include initiatives related to social economy and income generation which are practically missing. Some of the good practices from the past period applying an integrated approach in multiple regions can serve as an example. Such approaches can easily be developed as block grants.*
- (7) *Donor programme partnerships in the area of Roma inclusion need to be strategically reviewed in order to maximize their potential for assisting Roma inclusion. The assumption that a core strategic partner like the CoE will be able to provide for strengthening of the Roma inclusion focus of the programmes in all areas faced challenges. While the CoE contributed for the better formulation of a Roma inclusion focus and measures in its areas of expertise, it could not provide all the expertise for addressing Roma inclusion as a complex developmental challenge. In future programming, diversifying strategic partnerships can expand the pool of expertise and approaches needed. In this, there needs to be a clear strategy of developing the partnerships so that there is enough time for discussion and joint work during the design stages.and ensuring that local expertise, especially of Roma experts, is also considered. Having more than one strategic donor programme partner can bring more diversity of expertise and approaches.*

Introduction

1. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The EEA and Norway Grants aim to reduce economic and social disparities within the European Economic Area (EEA) and to strengthen bilateral relations between the donor and beneficiary states. The EEA and Norway Grants are linked to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, which makes Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway part of the EU's Internal Market. Funds are made available to the 12 newest EU member states, and to Greece, Portugal and Spain.

A growing concern for reducing economic and social disparities is the drastic situation of Roma communities and their social exclusion in many countries in Europe. Though Roma inclusion was not an explicit priority under the EEA and Norway grants in the period 2004–09, some of the funding was targeted towards the vulnerable groups, and some projects supported Roma inclusion measures. However, a full picture of the supported measures to Roma inclusion in the past funding period (2004–2009) is missing as the reporting system from that period did not provide for it.

In the current funding period (2009–2014), the social and economic inclusion of Roma has become an important crosscutting horizontal priority, supported with allocation of funding to ensure that Roma inclusion measures are present in different programs. This resulted in targeted programs in the different countries that will include aspects related to Roma inclusion. Programs in the different countries are very diverse and at different stages of preparation and approval. In addition, a strategic partnership was established with the Council of Europe (CoE) to work together on issues of Roma inclusion. CoE is a Donor Program Partner (DPP) in 18 programs planned under the 2009–2014 EEA and Norway funding period.

The purpose of the Study is to provide a complete overview of all supported projects, sub-projects and programmes in the field of Roma inclusion under the EEA and Norway Grants in five of the countries with the largest Roma population: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic. The study had two interrelated tasks:

1. To identify results and achievements of the funding provided under the EEA and Norway Grants (2004–2009) and analyse their relevance and sustainability;
2. To review the programs with a focus on Roma that are planned and starting under the EEA and Norway grants (2009–2014) and analyse their potential in terms of outcomes and relevance.

Based on the retrospective analysis of the funding under the EEA and Norway Grants (2004–2009), and on the prospective overview of planned programs in the new period (2009–2014), the study had to extract results, lessons learned, best practices and provide recommendations for future funding. The report is to serve as reference material and background for discussion within the evolving strategy for support of Roma inclusion measures under the EEA and Norway funding.

2. Approach and Methodology

The Study combined both retrospective and forward-looking assessment objectives in three core areas – results, relevance and sustainability of provided and planned EEA and Norway funding relevant to Roma inclusion. Geographically, the Study covered five countries which are quite diverse as context, situation of Roma communities and level of Roma, history of EEA and Norway Grants presence, level and size of funding, and type of approaches applied.

This complexity of the task required a combination of methods and dynamic research approaches *based on close collaboration with the FMO* in two main aspects. First, the team worked closely

with the FMO expert doing the Mapping of Roma inclusion related projects and programs from the previous period. The results from the mapping were critical for the success of the follow up field work. Second, the team was in constant consultation with the FMO, and its representatives participated in some of the field work. The assessment approach also had a *strong focus on facilitating strategic reflections* of various stakeholders on expectations and perceived outcomes, as well as thinking forward on ways to increase the effectiveness in the area of Roma inclusion.

The Study framework was based on using mixed methods, combining documentary research, semi-structured interviews (individual and group interviews) and site visits to a sample of projects funded under the EEA and Norway Grants (2004–2009).

The Study was implemented in January – May 2013 by a team of CREDA Consulting Ltd. consisting of eight experts based in the five countries subject of the research. The work on the study involved:

(1) Extensive documentary research including: review of existing broader research on the socio-economic situation and issues of Roma inclusion, key policy documents related to Roma inclusion on European level and on in-country level; review of relevant EEA and Norway Grants program documents for each of the countries, evaluations and other publications that may have relevance to the objectives of the study; review of the results of the FMO Mapping of EEA and Norway Grants related to Roma inclusion (2004–2009) and selecting projects for field work.

(2) Semi-structured interviews (140 in total) with representatives of the FMO, the Norwegian embassies in the five countries, strategic partners, project promoters of Roma relevant projects; National Focal Points and Programme Operators of almost all programs with Roma relevance in the five countries (2009-2014), representatives of civil society, and international organizations. List of people who participated in interviews for this study are in Annex 2 of this report.

(3) Site visits and review of a sample of 31 projects funded under the EEA and Norway Grants (2004-2009), which is over 40% of all funded projects in the past period. This included the majority of the supported individual projects in the five countries identified based on the results of the FMO Mapping; and a sample of the sub-projects funded under the NGO funds 2004–2009 identified by the study team in cooperation with the NGO Funds operators.

3. Limitations of the Study

The Study faced several challenges and limitations that can be grouped as follows:

- **Timing:** As outlined by several respondents, this study came a year late especially in view of the advanced stage of the programming for the 2009–2014 funding period. Most of the programmes and the Roma specific concerns for their components have been already the subject of long negotiations and are in the process of being finalized. From this perspective the Study cannot contribute to strategic outline and design of programmes and funding under the EEA and Norway Grants 2009–2014. It can contribute to fine-tuning some of its implementation, monitoring and evaluation aspects. However, the Study can also be of help for the discussions of the next programming period (2014–2019), which will be starting in the relatively near future.

- **Missing or fluctuating definitions of “Roma inclusion” and “Roma relevant” measures and projects.** The definitions used by the FMO, NFPs and POs accommodate quite different aspects and perspectives, some looking for initiatives with direct focus and involvement of Roma, others interpreting Roma measures as broader initiatives for vulnerable groups or minorities in general where Roma may be a part of the target groups. This was also part of the challenge for the mapping of the Roma related projects under the EEA and Norway Grants (2004–2009) done by the FMO, where some of the included projects had no relevance to Roma at all (e.g. the renovation of the synagogue in in Turnov, Czech Republic).

- **Fragmented and scattered information that may inform the Roma inclusion objective of the Study.** Information on Roma relevant aspects of supported projects was very difficult to find at the FMO level. This was due mainly to the fact that such information was not systematically gathered, as Roma inclusion was not a specific priority.

- **Delays in providing information which affected the consistency of approach of the Study.** The Mapping of the Roma projects had to be used by the study to organize the sampling and field work, but its timeframe was not realistic and it was delayed. It also did not cover the sub-projects of the NGO Funds, and this information had to be gathered by the Study team in the course of the field work. Another delay related to the information on the new programs of the NGO Funds - it came very late in the process (after the field work and the meetings with the NGO Funds' operators), as initially it was considered highly confidential.

4. Structure of the Study

In order to accommodate the complexity of the tasks and the diversity among the five countries the Study consists of two parts:

1/. **The Study Report** summarizing the main findings, conclusions and recommendations in the priority areas coming from all the five countries:

- The First Chapter focuses on the contextual opportunities and challenges. It outlines key issues within the complexity of Roma exclusion and the diversity of responses to these issues by international and in-country polices, by civil society and donors.
- The Second Chapter provides an overview of funded projects in the previous funding period that are related to Roma inclusion and analyzes their relevance, results and sustainability. It outlines examples of good practices and approaches that relate to key aspects of the Roma inclusion process.
- The Third Chapter provides an overview of what Roma inclusion measures will be supported in the new funding period (2009-2014) and a prospective analysis of the potential and challenges of planned programmes in regard to outcomes, relevance and sustainability.
- Chapter IV and Chapter V provide conclusions, lessons for future applications and recommendations in two aspects: possible actions that can contribute to increased effectiveness towards Roma inclusion in the implementation phase of the current programme period (2009-2014); and recommendations for future funding periods.

2/. **The Background Papers** is the second part of the Study. It provides for more detailed reference on a country level and on project/programme levels. They include five Country Background Papers with summary findings, conclusions and recommendations in the four priority areas in each of the countries, as well as two annexes outlining the mapping of projects in 2004-2009 and planned programmes for 2009.

I. Contextual opportunities and challenges

1. Roma exclusion: key dimensions and challenges

The past two decades surfaced the problem of the growing social exclusion of Roma which is the largest minority in Europe. This study focused on five countries in the region – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, considered with the highest share of Roma

population. Based on the official data from the last census in 2011, the number of Roma living in the five countries is 1, 354,961. Based on the data gathered by the Council of Europe¹, the average estimated number of Roma in the five countries is much higher – 4,030,000. The Table below shows the official and estimated number of Roma living in each of the five countries.

Country	Official number of Roma population (2011 census)	Average estimate (data of CoE) ²
Bulgaria	325,343	750,000
The Czech Republic	5 135	200,000
Hungary	315 583 ³	700,000
Romania	619 000	1,880,000
Slovakia	89,900	500,000

Table 1: Official and Estimated Number of Roma in the different countries

The geographic distribution of Roma population differs within the five countries. In Hungary and Slovakia, Roma people live predominantly in rural regions with underdeveloped infrastructure and high unemployment. In Bulgaria, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania Roma live in both rural and urban settlements, and in the Czech Republic, the Roma are mostly in the disadvantaged urban areas.

Social exclusion is a complex outcome of the interaction of *individual vulnerabilities* (or exclusion risks, like education status, disability, and minority status), the *exclusion drivers* (legal frameworks, norms, dominating values) and the *specifics of the local context* in which the individual lives (existence or absence of basic social infrastructure, accessibility, remoteness, isolation, lack of physical access).⁴

The “social exclusion chain” is entirely relevant to Roma who face a combination of individual vulnerabilities (low level of education, qualification, poor health and living conditions) augmented by the exclusion drivers (ethnic prejudice, structural discrimination) and the specifics of the local context (concentration of the Roma population in economically deprived areas, poor infrastructure in Roma settlements, territorial segregation). Roma face persistent deprivation in virtually all areas of life – education, employment, housing, access to healthcare. There is high interdependence of various vulnerabilities. While it is key to understanding and addressing Roma exclusion, this interdependence usually remains hidden or neglected.

The available data⁵ shows that the Roma are facing **multiple deprivations** compared both to the national averages as well as to the non-Roma living in close proximity (and sharing similar socioeconomic conditions). While the country findings reports provide more details on the local situations, down below we outline some of the key aspects characterizing Roma exclusion in the five countries covered by this study:

(1) Spatial segregation.

¹ An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, Brussels, 5.4.2011 (http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_en.pdf)

² *ibidem*

³ www.ksh.hu Central Statistical Office, Hungary (09.04.2013)

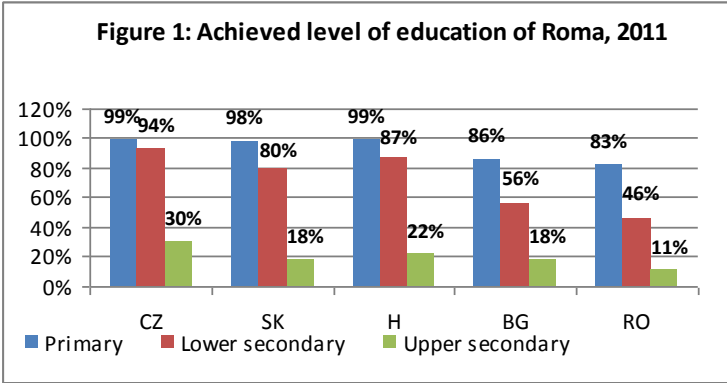
⁴ Beyond Transition – Towards Inclusive Societies. Regional human development report (Bratislava: UNDP 2011), <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/BCD10F8F-F203-1EE9-BB28DEE6D70B52E1>

⁵ A lot of research on the status of Roma has been done by UNDP, the World Bank, UNICEF, Fundamental Rights Agency, OSI. Most of the data is openly accessible for analysis. This section is based on the most recent survey conducted in 2011 by UNDP, the World Bank and the EC, <http://europeandcis.undp.org/ourwork/roma/show/D69F01FE-F203-1EE9-B45121B12A557E1B>.

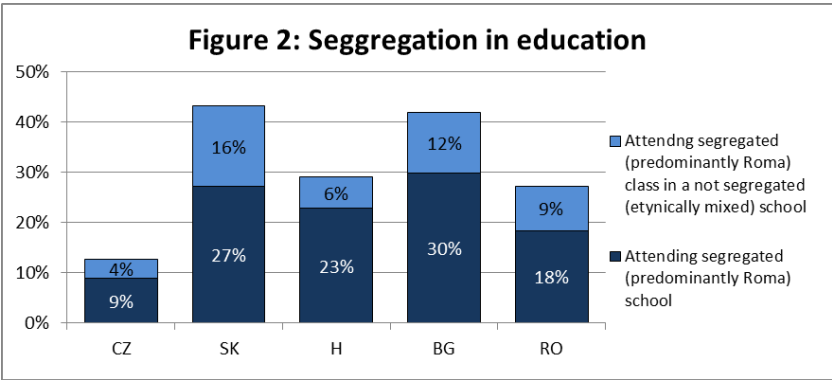
This is a major driver of exclusion from employment opportunities, social services, and most of all, of normal interaction between Roma and non-Roma living in the same area. In most of the countries Roma people live in segregated and ghetto-like areas within the limits of cities or villages. The highest level of special segregation is in Slovakia where the Roma are often totally isolated in settlements, sometimes kilometres away from the “normal” villages. There is a tendency towards a growing concentration of Roma in marginalized areas in countries like the Czech Republic.

(2) Reduced access to quality education

The educational status of Roma is dramatically lower compared to the majority of the populations making Roma the least qualified labour force in the countries. Only a minimum percentage of the Roma children go to kindergartens. In most of the countries the majority of Roma children are completing primary education as it is compulsory. The real problem is with the transition from lower to upper secondary level.⁶ The majority of Roma youth do not complete upper secondary education – the lowest completion rate is in Romania (11%) and the highest is in the Czech Republic (30%). (See Figure 1). A very low percentage of Roma youth has the chance to study in universities– for example in Hungary this is 1-2% and in Slovakia – less than half a percent.



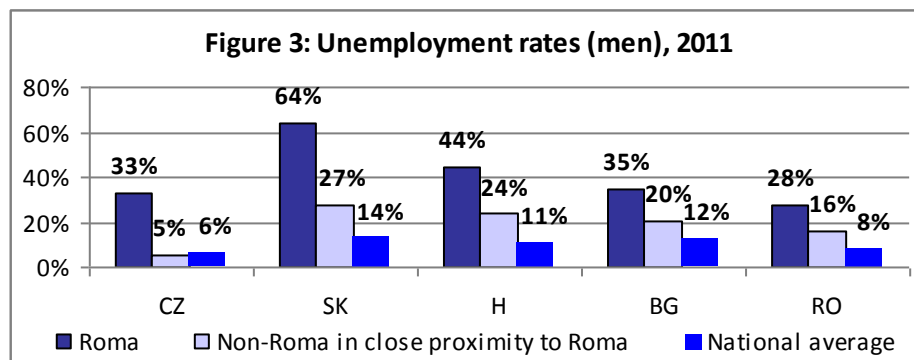
Attending school however, is not a guarantee for quality education yet. A high share of the children attend directly or indirectly segregated classes (Figure 2). Based on the data from the Study country background reports, despite some progress of equal treatment and desegregation policies in the different countries this tendency continues, also due to the “white flight effect” – where children from the majority move out of mixed schools with Roma.



⁶ Brüggemann, C. (2012). Roma Education in Comparative Perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011. Roma Inclusion Working Papers. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme. http://issuu.com/undp_in_europe_cis/docs/education_web/4#share

(3) Growing and long-term unemployment

Low education (as level of completed grades and as quality), translates into worse or no employment opportunities. *Figure 3* visualises unemployment rates for men. The gap in unemployment rates is similar for Roma women as well.⁷ Those with a job have it mostly in the informal sector with no contract and social security.



The real problem however, is with those who are unemployed – the majority of them have never worked (58% in Hungary, 65% in Bulgaria, 72% in Romania, 73% in Slovakia and 77% in the Czech Republic). There are families in which already the third generation is unable to find work since 1990. At the same time, engagement in income generation from an early age is a potent factor in early dropouts from education. Low employment rates and informality of employment inevitably translates into a high share of dependence of social transfers.

(4) Low incomes and poor living standards

This results directly from the insecure employment and sub-standard housing. One of the indicators is quality of housing and particularly, access to running water and sewage. The situation is relatively good in urban areas. In rural areas and small towns the lack of sewage in the Roma neighbourhoods constitutes a huge health hazard, with Romania and Bulgaria facing the most acute challenges. The share of Roma without access to improved water sources, especially in Slovakia, is unacceptably high for an EU member state. The houses where Roma live are often illegal and their ownership is unresolved. In some countries whole neighbourhoods and settlements are out of the regulation plans of the relevant municipalities. Infrastructure in the settlements is very poor with missing street lighting or paved roads. A significant problem is the irregular collection of garbage, and in many cases the rubbish dumps are located next to the Roma settlements.

(5) Access to social and health care service

The health conditions of Roma are worse than that of the majority of the population. The rate of Roma suffering from chronic diseases is high and the life expectancy of the Roma people is 10 years shorter than the non Roma's. The majority of Roma do not attend the obligatory health screening, and a number of children do not get the needed immunizations. The poor health conditions are related to low level income, poor housing and living conditions, as well as to low health literacy. Though health service is formally available for Roma, it is not always accessible due to geographic distance and low income, as well as to the high level of discrimination in the health care systems.

⁷ O'Higgins, Niall. (2013). Roma and non Roma in the labour market in Central and Eastern Europe. Roma Inclusion Working Papers. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme. http://issuu.com/undp_in_europe_cis/docs/roma_employment.

2. The Political and Policy Context of Roma Inclusion

2.1. International level policies and frameworks

With the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 and 2007, Roma exclusion is increasingly becoming an European issue and not only an issue in each of the countries. The first major attempt to seriously address the issue of the Roma was the Decade of Roma Inclusion. In 2005 it brought together governments who pledged their commitment to make tangible progress in Roma inclusion.⁸ The Decade put the issue firmly on the political agenda of European policy-makers (both national and EC). It made Roma inclusion “visible” and articulated at the EU level.

Currently, the European Platform for Roma Inclusion is increasingly prominent in shaping up a concerted approach to Roma inclusion at the EU level⁹. While it is leading the process with relative success at the advocacy level, it is still with modest practical results and even less real answers to the question “what exactly to do about Roma exclusion and how?”

Two major changes mark the Roma inclusion policy context today. The first one was the recognition of Roma exclusion as *a human development challenge*.¹⁰ It has its human rights dimensions but without real development opportunities, the nominal rights may remain hollow.

The second change is the level of involvement of the EC and respectively, the political elevation of the issue. The EC is deliberately pushing for addressing the Roma inclusion challenges and the issue appears in practically all EC documents both programmatic as well as country progress assessments.¹¹ But it is doing so through existing channels – establishing (and strengthening) the normative framework that puts certain obligations on the governments (the regular Communications, the European Roma Platform, the obligation of the individual Member States to elaborate National Strategies for Roma Inclusion). Most probably, conditionalities for the future European Social Fund will be adopted as well (min. of 20% of structural funds devoted to social inclusion¹²) which might be benefiting asymmetrically the most excluded.

Unlike a decade ago, today a great deal of data on the status of Roma deprivation is available. A number of international organizations and national entities have been involved in developing a better understanding of Roma exclusion.¹³ The purpose of the data generation initiatives has not been building a qualitative picture *per se* (what is the exact share of Roma living in poverty or the exact share of those not completing secondary education) but understanding better **the causal links** between different dimensions of deprivation and identifying the areas of interventions that

⁸ <http://www.romadecade.org/about>

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/roma-platform/index_en.htm

¹⁰ Avoiding the Dependency Trap: The Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. (Bratislava: UNDP 2004), <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/62BBCD48-F203-1EE9-BC5BD7359460A968>

¹¹ Roma communities appear as explicit target group in most programmatic documents for 2014-2020. See <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=en> for the proposed rules that will determine how the ESF will work in the 2014-2020 or

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0609:FIN:EN:PDF> for the EC approach to social change and innovation or

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1093&furtherNews=yes> for a portal with links to related documents.

¹² <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=en>

¹³ A lot of research on the status of Roma has been done by UNDP, the World bank, UNICEF, Fundamental Rights Agency, OSI. Most of the data is openly accessible for analysis. This section is based on the most recent survey conducted in 2011 by UNDP, the World Bank and the EC, <http://europeandcis.undp.org/ourwork/roma/show/D69F01FE-F203-1EE9-B45121B12A557E1B>.

might break the vicious circle of exclusion.

Today the EC is increasingly affirmative about Roma inclusion but this goes hand-in-hand with fundamental capacity gaps on Roma issues. There is a genuine risk of repeating the situation from the current programming period of the structural funds when Roma inclusion evolved into a buzzword laundered of real meaning – but not of real funding. The calls from Roma activists for an audit of the Commission (or at least of the Roma-related funding¹⁴) outline some fundamental – and real – problems that may be exacerbated if not urgently addressed.

2.2. National level policy responses

In the past years, particularly the last three, there was a rapid growth of policies related to Roma inclusion in each of the five countries. They were developed in different “waves”, following the international policy frameworks and agreements. With the launch of the Decade for Roma Inclusion each of the countries developed relevant strategies and action plans for its implementation in different sectors and levels.

In 2012, following the requirement of the EC, all individual Member States have developed National Roma Inclusion Strategies (NRIS). In some countries, for example Bulgaria) they were developed with serious input from civil society organisations. The quality of the NRIS differs from country to country. A common deficiency is the lack of adequate implementation plans (national and local) backed up by respective budget allocations – thus the NRIS become of little practical use except for “EC reporting purposes”¹⁵.

While intensive policy development is a positive opportunity forward, there is much less progress in putting these policies into practice. Based on the documentation review and the concerns shared during the interviews within this study several main challenge areas can be outlined.

The first relates to the nature of the key policy documents. Strategies and action plans are “over-prioritized”. The list of priorities is so extensive that anything could fit as a “priority”. At the same time budget allocations from the national budgets for their implementations are often inadequate. Clear monitoring and evaluation system are missing. Predominant are output indicators designed to measure only the products from the activities and not the results (outcomes and impact). They are quantitative, linked only to specific activities and not systematized to measure the advance at a priority level or overall advancement in implementing strategies.

A second critical challenge relates to existing capacities. At the national levels despite the existing bodies related to Roma inclusion in some countries, the capacity for strategic coordination and communication is low or fragmented. There is a serious gap of capacity between the national and local levels. Especially in rural regions, civil society organisations that could apply for funding to realize social work or other integration measures are missing and the municipalities often lack the knowledge and skills to apply for funding and manage the realization

¹⁴ One of the most prominent advocates for scrutinizing the Roma inclusion efforts of the EC is Valeriu Nicolae who recently called for “independent evaluation of the EC mechanisms and bureaucracy working on Roma should be supervised by the European Parliament” –, <http://valeriucnicolae.wordpress.com/2013/04/29/roma-social-inclusion-measures-the-european-commission-can-and-should-take/>.

¹⁵ “The NRIS submitted to the Commission can only be regarded as first drafts, as work in progress. The documents are replete with weaknesses already evident in the Decade NAPs... Good intentions need to be bolstered by concrete targets and timelines, allocated budgets, the kind of data that allows for ‘robust monitoring’ of progress, and a recognition that national integration strategies cannot succeed without resolute and unequivocal action to combat racism and discrimination” – Review of EU Framework National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) Open Society Foundations review of NRIS submitted by Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, p. 1, <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/roma-integration-strategies-20120221.pdf>

of projects.

A third important challenge is the nature of funding support. If in the past the main issue was the lack of sufficient money for Roma inclusion, now EU funds for Roma inclusion are available, but they are designed and implemented in a way that cannot actually reach Roma. Another serious gap is with the missing small grants schemes that can provide genuine capacity development opportunities and can nurture community based actors at local levels in the most disadvantaged regions and communities where Roma live.

A fourth critical aspect is the new contextual dimension of the Roma inclusion agenda with the economic crises that hit Europe in 2009. All EU Member States are facing austerity, which directly impacts the public support for Roma inclusion and respectively – the government's level of commitment. Societies in the five countries have negative opinions of the Roma and are easily energized by populist anti-Roma slogans. The rising popularity of right wing parties and populist politicians is strongly correlated with the overall decline in employment opportunities and living standards. Anti-Roma sentiments are often exploited by populist politicians that build their career by demonstrating to be "tough on the inadaptable citizen" (a term that is often used in the Czech Republic in addressing the Roma as the "problematic" population).

3. Civil society

The critical importance of civil society to advance the social inclusion of Roma is present in almost all respective EU and national documents. In all the five countries there is a relatively large number of NGOs and civic groups (both Roma and non-Roma) dealing with the issue of Roma inclusion through human rights, service provision or advocacy perspectives. Part of the advancement in developing the policy frameworks in the area of Roma inclusion are also due to the advocacy efforts of civil society. NGOs were at the forefront in testing new approaches like school, health and employment mediators, new models of community development and community facilitation, new antidiscrimination and equal treatment legislation, etc.

However, the Roma and pro-Roma NGOs of today are facing a number of challenges:

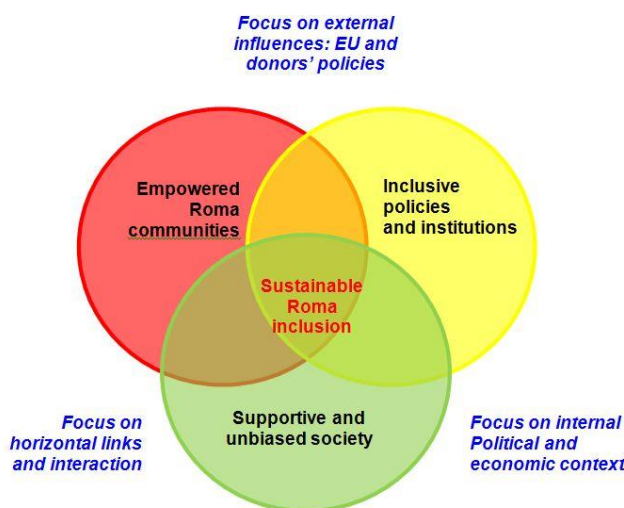
- Roma inclusion work is increasingly dominated by professional (registered) social service providers that are in a better position to access state and EU structural funding which comes predominantly for service provision. Only some Roma NGOs have managed to reach the status of a registered provider of social services, and very few – to have access to EU funding due to missing qualifications and administrative capacities as required;
- There is uneven development of Roma civil society. The most active and visible are mainly the big NGOs located in better developed cities. The community based NGOs are either not existent in some parts of the country, in particular at the rural level, or face capacity issues. With the withdrawal of most of the donors after EU accession, funding to support community based NGOs is very limited and many of them are on the edge of survival, even those that were a model for community based work in the past.
- Like the rest of civil society in the region, the Roma NGOs have a number of deficiencies related to limited constituency, internal democracy, resources and financial independence. There is a need of consistent investment in growing organizations that are rooted in their communities and can represent their interests, based on the direct practice of community work. Only very few donors like OSF are investing in the institutional development of Roma organizations, but their funding in this direction is far from sufficient.
- The development of Roma NGOs needs to be a priority which is beyond the mere question of "absorption capacity" of the NGOs. It relates to the needed investment in citizen based actors that are able to influence the process and outcomes of Roma inclusion. Another important

priority is growing new generations of leadership of Roma civil society. This will require consistent and long-term strategic investments.

4. Defining Roma inclusion

“Roma inclusion” has been adopted as almost an axiom but in fact the real meaning is not that clear. The term “inclusion” reflects complex patterns of relations between a minority and the surrounding political and social systems. It goes beyond “integration”. In the latter the social system **accepts** certain elements of diversity but this acceptance doesn’t entail change in the system itself. “Inclusion” on the other hand entails a dual track process in which both the minority and the system adjust – the former preserves the core markers of its identity (but not all) and the latter becomes **responsive** and **accommodative** to those elements of unique identity.¹⁶

Based on existing research, as well as on the interviews, we outlined **a dynamic framework to look at Roma inclusion** and respectively to assess the effectiveness of supported measures in this direction. This framework aims to capture the nature of Roma inclusion as both a process and an outcome. It implies three interrelated areas (pillars): *Increased Roma empowerment, Inclusive institutions (policies and practices) and Unbiased and non-discriminatory society at large.*



The three pillars of Roma inclusion

The three pillars illustrated in the figure above are mutually reinforcing. Each of these areas has multiple aspects and dimensions and the sustainability of the inclusion process depends on the strategic fit among them.

(1) Empowerment of Roma is leading for Roma inclusion.

It is both a process and an outcome. It is also a driving factor that will make institutions more inclusive. Roma empowerment is not a linear process and requires *diversified approaches* depending on the level of marginalization of the concrete groups within the Roma communities. There can be different levels of empowerment. *On the individual level*, it is assisting people to practice their basic rights and to expand their capacity (educational, qualification, etc.), thus decreasing individual vulnerability risks of social exclusion and dependency on social transfers. *On the community level*, it is linked to assisting people to get organized around community

¹⁶ Ivanov, A. (2012). Let’s make inclusion inclusive. Opportunities for Roma Inclusion – special issue of Development and Transition. Issue 19, June 2012.

http://issuu.com/UNDP_in_Europe_CIS/docs/undp_dt_news_19_web/3

problem solving. *On the civil society sector level*, it fosters organizing around advocacy for policy change; *and at the political level* – it is organizing to guarantee political representation of interests of Roma communities.

Civil society, and especially Roma NGOs that are based in Roma communities and speak for the community, are critical for the success of Roma empowerment. *Decreasing the territorial disadvantage* of the areas populated by the Roma is an important element in supporting Roma empowerment.

(2) Inclusive policies, institutions and practices are critical for Roma inclusion.

This requires consistent work with institutions to expand capacities, knowledge and skills in working for Roma inclusion. “Inclusive institutions” goes beyond just the theoretical adoption of concepts of good governance. It entails most of all putting in practice these concepts based on awareness of others’ specific problems, deficits that should be offset and capabilities that should be reinforced.

In this, the local level institutions are critical. This is the level where the national strategies for Roma inclusion are supposed to be implemented. Without capacity and Roma participation there, little will happen and strategies will remain on paper. This is also the level at which genuine political participation skills can be developed by promoting Roma communities’ self-organizing.

(3) Attitudes of society towards Roma are a third critical area for Roma inclusion.

Without change in the negative perceptions, and discriminatory attitudes and practice, Roma inclusion can hardly happen. There is a growing gap between Roma and the majority and their main “meeting point” is the media, which by default is not positive towards Roma.

There is a need of consistent work for communication with the majority involving a variety of actions: activities that are bringing together Roma and non-Roma, work with the media and special media programmes, public outreach and campaigns. *In practice, each project or programme can and should bring for educating the public at large* if it is linked with a consistent strategy for communication of the importance of Roma inclusion for the whole society.

II. The Support to Roma Inclusion Projects under the EEA and Norway Grants (2004-2009)

1. General Overview

1.1. The Mapping challenge

In the previous funding period 2004–2009 the EEA and Norway Grants allocated € 1.3 billion in support to projects in the 12 newest EU member states, and Greece, Portugal and Spain. The key areas of support included the environment, civil society, human resource development, cultural heritage, research and scholarships, social dialogue, and justice and home affairs.

The five countries that are subject of this research received in total € 442,7 million, with Hungary receiving the highest level of support (approximately € 135 million), followed by the Czech Republic (€ 110 million), Slovakia (€ 67 million), Romania (€ 98,5 million)) and Bulgaria (€ 37,1 million). The support was provided through individual projects, block grants and programs (like the NGO funds).

Roma inclusion was not an explicit priority and a specific donors request in the previous funding period. For this reason, no information was gathered systematically on whether and how Roma were reached out by the supported measures. A mapping of Roma inclusion measures funded under the 2004–2009 EEA and Norway Grants was conducted by the FMO during the first months of this Study to pre-screen and review all individual projects and NGO Funds sub-projects. The mapping was based on the information from the FMO database, which in turn had to serve as a basis for the Study. However, the FMO mapping covered only the individual projects. The database of the funded sub-projects was not at the FMO, but with the NGO funds' operators. Due to time constraints the study team had to do the mapping of the NGO funds sub-projects in the course of the field work.

Based on suggestions from the FMO, the mapping included 29 individual projects specifically targeted at Roma in 13 countries. *Out of them, 21 individual projects were suggested as Roma inclusion measures in the five countries of this study: Hungary (11), Slovakia (6), Bulgaria (1); Czech Republic (3).* A major challenge to the mapping was the lack of information gathered specifically on Roma as part of the target groups, as well as the absence of a definition about “Roma relevant project” or a “Roma inclusion measure”.

When reviewing the results of the Mapping we looked for Roma relevance of the projects in the following aspects:

- *Project design relevance:* to what extent the objectives, activities and results have some relevance to Roma directly or as a part of broader vulnerable, disadvantaged, or minority groups;
- *Territorial relevance:* to what extent the projects were implemented in the regions with a high share of Roma population;
- *Roma inclusion relevance:* to what extent the projects results may be contributing to one or more of the three key pillars of Roma inclusion – empowerment of the Roma community, inclusive institutions, and policies and non-discriminative societies.

Based on the review of the provided summaries and documents, as well as on the field work, *out of the 21 projects suggested by the FMO Mapping, the study team identified 14 individual projects that can be qualified as Roma relevant based on the above criteria.* Seven of the projects

suggested by the Mapping were not Roma relevant at all as neither the objectives nor the results were related to Roma¹⁷. One additional individual project that was not suggested by the FMO Mapping was identified in Bulgaria, based on the interview with the National Focal point.

1.2. Funded Roma inclusion projects

A total of €13,782,088 or 3,4% of the overall funding under the EEA and Norway Grants (2004–2009) in the five countries was allocated in support to projects that can be considered Roma relevant. This includes support to 14 individual projects and 61 NGO Funds' sub-projects. The table below illustrates how this funding is distributed among the different countries.

Country	Total EEA/N Support (in € million)	Roma Relevant Projects (total value and % of overall support)	Individual projects Number /total value	NGO Fund Number of sub-projects; total value; % of the fund
Bulgaria	€37,1M	€813,717 2% of the total EEA/N funding	2 projects €606,737	7 projects € 206,980 11% of the NGO fund
Czech republic	€105 M	1 209 317 € 1,1% of the total EEA/N funding	-----	25 projects 1 209 317 € 12% of the NGO fund
Hungary	€135,1M	€9,126,532 EUR 6,7% of total EEA/N funding	8 projects €8,507,853	17 projects, € 618,679 9,8 % of the NGO fund
Romania	€98,5 M	€151,486	-----	3 projects €151,486 3% of the NGO fund
Slovakia	€67 M	€2,481,036 3.7% of the total EEA/N funding	4 projects €2,129,801	9 projects €351,685 6,9% of the NGO fund

Table 2: Map of the Roma relevant funding under EEA and Norway Grants (2004–2009)

As can be seen from the table, Hungary had the highest level of funding for Roma relevant projects both as amount and its share of the overall EEA and Norway funds for the respective country followed by Slovakia. The share of this type of projects is much lower in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and is the lowest in Romania.

The nature of the individual projects and the NGO sub-projects was quite different in terms of selection, size of funding, sector and priority areas. The selection of the individual projects was managed by the National Focal Points. They organized open calls for project proposals, reviewed and short listed the best project applications with the assistance of expert committees, which were then systematically appraised by the FMO before the donor states made a decision on each application. The NGO Funds were managed by a foundation or an NGO or a consortium of non-profit organizations that were selected based on a tender. The NGO Funds operators' programs had their priority areas approved by the donor. Based on these priority areas specific calls for proposals were announced with a two phase selection process (expert appraisal and selection committees).

¹⁷ This includes 3 projects in Hungary, two of which were not related to Roma (this was also confirmed by the interviews with the NFP), and one was suspended; 3 projects in the Czech republic which were not related to Roma and two of the projects in Slovakia, that seemed related on Roma but based on the field work it turned out that in practice they did not include any Roma relevant activities

1.2.1. Roma relevant individual projects 2004–2009

Fourteen individual projects of Roma relevance were supported by total of € 11,244,391 in three of the five countries- Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia. This constitutes 81.5 % of all the Roma relevant funding in the previous funding period. Based on the above criteria, there were no Roma relevant individual projects supported in the Czech Republic and in Romania. The profiles of the individual projects are very diverse and can be grouped as follows:

- **By sector.** Half of the projects (7) were in the area of health and child care, followed by the “human resource development” sector (6) and one in the area Conservation of European Cultural Heritage;

- **By type of project promoters.** Half of the individual projects were managed by public institutions and the other half – by NGOs. The two Bulgarian projects were suggested and implemented by municipalities. In Hungary five of the 8 individual projects were managed by various public institutions¹⁸ and the other three by NGOs. In Slovakia the majority of the projects (3 out of 4) had NGOs as project promoters and the fourth was managed by a local authority, which hosted an informal citizen group suggesting and implementing the project;

- **By level of funding and duration.** The size of the grants is very diverse within and among countries and was in the range of €200,000 to €3 million. Seven of the projects were relatively smaller¹⁹ (below €500,000 with the majority of them below €300,000), four projects in Slovakia and in Hungary were in the range of between €500,000- €1million, and three of the projects in Hungary were with a considerable level of funding in the range between €1-3 million. *The duration* of the majority of the individual projects in all five countries was between 18-24 months, with only three of them that were about a year, and one that was 36 months;

- **By level of intervention.** The majority of the individual projects (8) were at the local level, three – were at the level of one or several (NUTS2) regions, two – were national and one international (the Roma Music college, based in Hungary);

- **By field of operation and type of activity.**

All the individual projects in Slovakia (4) and half of the projects in Hungary were focused on various educational and integration activities for Roma children and youth. The two projects in Bulgaria, as well as the other half of the projects in Hungary were focused on improvement of social service provision within state institution or centres for social services to children and very deprived groups, within Roma settlements, training for social workers etc. Only one project in Hungary was focused on job training and job placement.

Two of the projects (one in Slovakia and one in Hungary) had a more integrated approach tackling more than one field of exclusion and combining services and initiatives related to access to education, social service and employment, as well as community activation initiatives.

Half of the individual projects involved renovation of existing premises, construction of new ones and/or procurement of equipment which constituted a significant part of their budget and activities: the projects in Bulgaria included renovation of social infrastructure (orphanage and two centres for social services), four of the projects in Hungary – mostly school premises/facilities; one project in Slovakia included reconstruction and expansion of a building hosting an after school activities center. The other individual projects in Slovakia included mostly soft measures, and very few activities related to renovation.

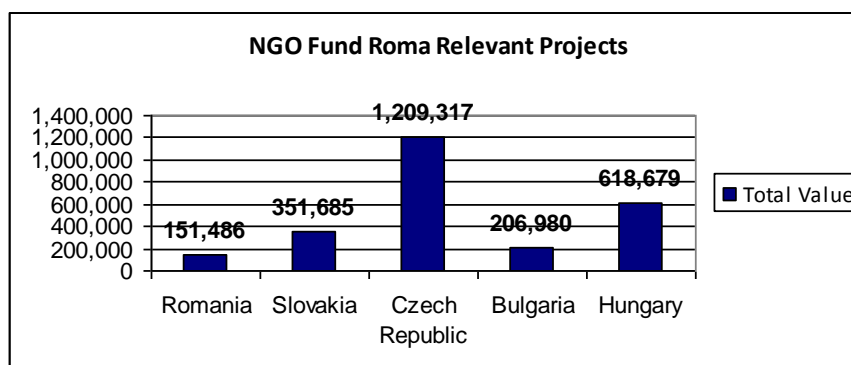
¹⁸ a local government, a public agency, a municipal public company, a school, and a regional authority

¹⁹ Two projects in Bulgaria, two projects in Hungary and three in Slovakia

- **By type of partnerships:** Half of the individual projects worked in partnerships with organizations in Norway (5 of the projects in Hungary and one in Slovakia). In addition, all the projects in Hungary and in Slovakia started with and further generated in-country partnerships with other NGOs, local governments, welfare services, schools and local churches.

1.2.2 Support to sub-projects within the NGO Funds in the five countries

The NGO funds supported 61 projects with a total of €2,538,147 in the five countries. The Table below illustrates the funding distributed by the NGO funds in the five countries.



The highest was the support to Roma relevant sub-projects by the NGO Fund in the Czech Republic (25 projects), followed by Hungary (17 projects) and Slovakia (9 projects). It is lower in Bulgaria (7 projects) and the lowest in Romania (3 projects).

The supported subprojects were very diverse in the different countries, following the specific regulations and types of calls of the relevant NGO fund operators. The profile of the subprojects can be grouped as follows:

- **By sector and priority area.** All the 17 subprojects in Hungary were under the priority area Social cohesion, child and healthcare, managed by Autonomia foundation. In Bulgaria 6 were in the areas of Social service and healthcare, and one in Civil Society and Human Rights. In the Czech Republic – under three of the four priorities of the fund – Multicultural communities (12), Human rights (10) and Youth (3). In Slovakia, (similarly to Czech Republic) the projects were also under three of the four priorities of the Fund operated by OSF, namely Strengthening the multicultural environment (5), Supporting the right to equal treatment (3) and Supporting the protection of human rights (1), and in Romania two projects were funded under the priority Social inclusion and access to social services, and one project under the priority Children and Youth opportunities for community involvement.

- **By field of operation and activity**

The first bigger group of 29 subprojects (or 47% of all subprojects related to Roma) was in the area of education and related community initiatives. Some of them, especially in Hungary and Slovakia, were focused on direct work with Roma children and youth (pre-school, after school activities, community centers, work with parents and teachers, etc.). Others, especially in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, reflected the priority area of multiculturalism and respectively involved various activities bridging Roma and non-Roma children together by multicultural centers, summer camps, campaigns, etc.

The second group of 17 subprojects (27% of all) related to improved service provision and social conditions of Roma. These involved the six community service projects to various disadvantaged groups in Bulgaria that included Roma too, the projects in Romania related to health service advocacy, as well as expanding capacities of NGOs providing social services, as well as initiatives in Hungary for social working camps to improve housing conditions, or to clean up Roma

neighborhoods.

Human rights projects were funded in the Czech Republic and Slovakia . They treated various aspects of fighting discrimination by policy suggestions, free legal aid, direct assistance to victims of discrimination, etc.

- ***By level of funding and duration.*** The projects supported by the NGO funds were much smaller than the individual projects and were in the range between €9,000 and €100,000. About 67% of all subprojects (45 projects) were below € 50,000 (with 8 of them less than € 20,000). Only 20 projects were above € 50,000 (6 of them above €80,000). Most of the NGO Funds subprojects were of duration less than 2 years.

- ***By level of intervention.*** The majority of the NGO Funds' subprojects (47) were at the local level.

- ***By target group.*** 31 of the NGO funded Roma related subprojects had an explicit focus on Roma, while the other 30 had broader focus and target groups, *i.e.* – disadvantaged people or multiple target groups especially in the area of multiculturalism.

2. Results

We were tasked to outline the results from the projects selected as “Roma relevant” in view of their meaning to Roma inclusion. This task faced three main challenges:

- *The wide diversity among the 75 projects identified as Roma relevant* as sector and priority area of funding, size and duration of grants, methods and approaches applied, as well as local contexts in which projects were implemented. This made the generalization on results very difficult;
- *The uneven and diverse type of information gathered within the different projects from the five countries.* First, it was usually gathered based on the indicators designed for the relevant area of intervention and not explicitly for Roma inclusion. Second, the indicators were mostly on output level, and data on outcomes was missing;
- *Missing information on how many Roma were actually covered by the activities* of the supported individual projects and NGO Funds subprojects. In most of the cases such information was not gathered specifically;

Due to the above challenges, it was practically impossible to provide a consistent summary of all of the results and outcomes from all supported Roma relevant projects. Instead, we tried to group and highlight some of the key results and examples from what we could gather as data in the three key outcome areas of the Roma inclusion framework:

- Roma empowerment,
- inclusive policies, institutions and practices
- non-biased inclusive society.

More details on supported projects and their results are offered in the second part of the study - the Background Papers, consisting of the country findings reports and the attached Map of Supported Projects 2004–2009.

2.1. Roma Empowerment

The majority of the Roma relevant individual projects and subprojects (59 out of 75), worked at the local level. They had a direct outreach to over 70 localities, as some of them worked in more than one location. The majority of them, (namely the individual projects in Slovakia), one of the

individual and most of the sub-projects of the NGO Fund in Hungary, and some of those in the Czech Republic) were in the most disadvantaged regions with a high share of Roma population.

This by itself is a good result of the distribution of grants in regard to the direct outreach to Roma and potential for Roma empowerment. In some cases, the projects were the first more systematic intervention or activities addressing the issues of Roma in the respective localities. As noted by one of the respondents in Slovakia, *”before the EEA and Norway Grants nothing was happening in the community, now we have a community centre and a lot of initiatives around it”*.

The majority of the locally based projects entailed direct work with Roma expanding their capacity and responding to the needs of different groups in the diverse Roma society. Most of them contributed to *growth of capacities of people which expanded their access to education and social service*, and a few *-to increased skills and employment opportunities*.

Only very few of the projects had some aspects of community self-organizing for problem solving and/or for representing the interests of Roma with decision makers. However, the community initiatives and events organized accompanying the work on improving services, especially in education, were good steps in expanding community cohesion and bringing together active people, who in turn may get organized around issues of importance to the people.

The results in the Roma empowerment area can be grouped around the following outcomes:

(1) Expanded access to education of Roma children and youth

The supported projects in Hungary involved over 1,042 Roma and disadvantaged children in a variety of integration educational services and activities; 14 Roma mentors were trained to reduce the dropout of primary school Roma children; 60 Roma students attended the Roma Music College and 2 Roma mentors trained to work with them.

Especially, the subprojects of the NGO fund in Hungary combined educational activities for children and youth and work with their parents and larger families, and broader community activation initiatives and events contributing to the social cohesion in communities. In some cases this involved creating of community structures like parents clubs, fan clubs or initiative groups. Combining sport, after class activities, summer camps and community events contributed to reducing school drop out and increasing the motivation of continuing education in the next grades. For some children, these were first time experiences which helped them gain new social experience and self esteem.

Most of the projects invested in work related to pre-school, primary and secondary education. Only one of the subprojects (supported by the NGO fund in Hungary) worked in the area of higher education. This was the project of *Romaversitas* – an NGO systematically developing new ability programmes that are assisting Roma students for finishing their study at the University and College levels, and supporting the most excellent ones to continue MA and PhD studies.

In Slovakia, the individual projects were mostly in the area of education with two of them explicitly increasing the improvement of the educational level and the competence of the Roma youth population:

- *The social integration of Roma children in schools project of the Wide Open School Foundation* (a Roma organization working in the long term on Roma inclusion) developed a support system of social integration for Roma pupils and increasing their access to quality education in primary schools. Over 900 Roma children passed through IT training and got e-learn competencies and 160 teachers from 40 schools have been trained in multicultural education, and anti-bias education for social justice. The shared web portal “Through the Eyes of Pupils”, developed by the projects, collected and published information on Roma people history, culture, art and traditions. The portal connected 1, 000 pupils and 160 teachers from 40 primary schools in Slovakia

- *The Wild Poppies integration programme developed by the NGO PRO DONUM in the Roma settlement of Jarovnice in Eastern Slovakia, was supporting the children with after-school preparation, thus increasing their chances to gain a decent education, and in the course of two years more than 100 children have been taken care of and only 20 of them have dropped out of school*

(2) Expanded access to social and health services

A number of projects (both individual and NGO Funds sub-projects, addressed various issues related to limited availability and access to social services in Roma communities. Access to social service is critical for the survival of people, especially with the high level of unemployment and when families are dependent on social allowances:

- *In Hungary approx. 2,021 people from disadvantaged communities received different kinds of social services organized under the projects funded by the EEA and Norway Grants. Some of the projects invested in expanding the capacities of service provision;*
- *The projects supported by the NGO fund in Bulgaria worked at the very local level, establishing social services where such were missing, and introducing new models of service provision. In total over 250 children and over 120 parents and families benefited from these services.*

(3) Expanded access to employment of Roma individuals and families

Increasing employability of people in Roma communities is of critical importance to overcome exclusion. Only a few of the projects funded by the EEA and Norway Grants however addressed this area as a priority of their work or as part of set of integrated activities. Some examples include:

- *Within the project of the Budapest public company, 33 well qualified young Roma received job placement for 6 months and out of them, 17 got more regular jobs;*
- *184 Roma community members passed through employment training and courses within the Szécsény – Children’s Opportunity Programme” ;*
- *The Community Bridge-building Project in Slovakia included prequalification courses and 11,508 employment support services to socially excluded citizens in 12 municipalities, and more than a thousand people were assisted in employment and self-employment.*

(4) Improving living conditions

A very good case in this area is *the Social Construction Camp project of the Foundation for the College of Social Theories funded by the NGO fund in Hungary*. It was an experimental program with one of the smallest grants amounting to €11.766. It worked to improve the living conditions of the tenants of municipality owned housing with rent arrears, which are willing to work to repay their debt, and are ready to act as a group, recognizing their shared interest. An agreement with the Town Council was reached regarding the conditions of implementing a social housing work camp, and crediting the working hours of locals against their payments in arrears. The Project Promoter won additional support from Habitat for Humanity to assist their project with on-site construction supervisors, necessary equipment and international volunteers. The project involved 60 inhabitants organized in a local network, and mobilized 130 volunteers (both Roma and non-Roma). The College for Social Theories plans replication and expanding the work in this direction and has mapped social housing in the country.

(5) Fostered community development by applying integrated approaches to fight social exclusion

While a number of projects were working in one priority area, a few of the individual and NGO

funds projects applied an integrated approach and developed a combined set of services addressing together several areas of social exclusion. This proved to be a very successful approach to tackling exclusion:

- *The “Szécsény – Children’s Opportunity Programme” developed by the Hungarian Anti-Poverty Network Foundation* was a regionally focused pilot project to fight child poverty and social exclusion in one of the most disadvantaged regions in North Hungary. It had the longest duration of all projects – 36 months. It successfully applied an integrated approach combining work for access to education, labor market integration, and community development initiatives. This involved 'Sure Start' preschool activities, public education activities to promote de-segregation and facilitate entry into secondary education, including 14 mentors to assist children; initiatives to improve child nutrition and healthcare; implement youth development programmes; activities to improve parents' employability and employment opportunities; IT training, etc. This was combined with community development activities, including setting-up of 22 community houses/spaces. Over 1200 people from the disadvantaged communities benefited from the set of services and activities of the project.
- *The Community Bridge-building Project of the Civic Association ETP Slovakia* is one of the most impressive cases of applying an integrated approach to community development. For about two years it developed 12 community centres – long-life learning communities. They applied a set of integrated services “from the cradle to the grave” in the 12 municipalities in Central and Eastern Slovakia. This included educational activities for children and their families, employment training, courses and support services; social services and cases, training of professionals in a variety of aspects related to inclusion and fighting poverty. The 12 centres dealt with and resolved and documented 94,652 cases of over 1200 people; provided 11,508 employment support services to socially excluded citizens; on the job retraining to 2,167 people and housing construction and refurbishment training to 1,731 people. Though there is no data of how many of them got jobs thanks to the support provided, the project helped in increasing their skills and potential for employability.

Both projects involved Roma staff, and had effective partnerships with local authorities. This, together with the long-term record, high capacity and commitment of the two project promoters, are among the key factors for their success.

(6) Expanding people’s knowledge and capacity to stand up for their rights

While a number of the projects related to education and social service were providing assistance in the area of practicing basic civic rights, there was a group of about 10 projects (mostly in the Czech republic and a few in Slovakia) that were aimed at expanding the knowledge and assisting in fighting violation of the human rights of Roma community members.

- The human rights projects funded by the NGO fund in the Czech republic provided various free legal aid, service and counseling to over 2,530 people from the disadvantaged groups, a considerable part of which are Roma. *The „Law for (absolutely) everyone”* project of the *Milan Simecka Foundation (funded by the OSF operator of the NGO fund in Slovakia)* developed a new methodology for legal education of young Roma from marginalized communities and those living in social facilities, and young people from 12 localities in Eastern Slovakia have been trained on the issues of fundamental rights;
- A very good case for empowerment is the project *“You Are Not Alone” of the NGO Vzájemne soužití (Mutual Co-existence) funded by the NGO fund in the Czech Republic*. It addressed the serious violation of human rights related to involuntary sterilization of Roma women. The project helped the victims of illegal sterilization to get organized to

fight for their rights, to raise public awareness, and to advocate for systemic changes against sterilization practices without informed consent. The victims received an apology from Prime Minister Fisher, yet so far no financial compensation was granted. The group continues to be supported by the NGO fund and is still active.

2.2. Inclusive policies, institutions and practices

Critical to the outcomes in the process of Roma inclusion are the policies, capacities and practices of decision makers and institutions. A number of the projects addressed this issue in various ways. The individual project of Kyustendil municipality in Bulgaria resulted in a Municipal Strategy for Social Services for Children and Families (2010–2013) that a year later evolved into a Municipal Strategy for Development of Social Services (2010–2013). Some projects tested new methodologies, online courses on multicultural education, web portals (for example, for multicultural education in Hungary and Slovakia) and suggested them to schools and other educational institutions. Others involved intensive training for the staff of social institutions, social workers, teachers, and school administration in the area of new types of services and approaches to Roma communities.

A very good practice was the involvement of representatives of institutions into the activities of many of the projects together with NGOs and with representatives of the Roma community which contributed to learning by doing of more participatory and inclusive approaches to policy implementation. A number of projects, some in Hungary and many in Slovakia, had a growing partnership with local institutions – schools, social welfare agencies, local governments and in some cases regional authorities.

There were also projects specifically aimed at expanding the awareness and knowledge of public and local administration on human rights and fighting discrimination against Roma. For example, the project of the *Open Society*²⁰ (funded by the NGO fund in the Czech Republic) developed a qualitative study among 2600 respondents on the attitudes of the majority and used it as a foundation for organizing 13 seminars for 222 representatives of public and local administration.

Another group of projects (a few in Slovakia and two in Romania) entailed advocacy for more inclusive policies. The two NGO fund subprojects in Romania are very good examples of advocacy for more responsible and quality service to Roma people. Both were developed and implemented by two of the leading Roma organizations in the country.

- *The Ruhama Foundation* consolidated nine social service provision NGOs (both Roma and non Roma) at the county level. Based on their work, the institutions recognized the NGOs' consultative role in elaborating local public policies for social services by disadvantaged communities, including Roma communities. Their suggestions were adopted into the local development strategy in Oradea.
- *The Roma Centre for Health Policies – Sastipen* evaluated the access of Roma to public health services in 45 local communities in 3 regions in Romania. The study was realized in partnership with 9 local Roma NGOs. Based on it Sastipen and its partners developed recommendations for changes in the health policies and these were promoted to regional and national level decision makers. Though some of the recommendations were not taken into account by the relevant public authorities, the project was a successful practice of bottom up development of evidence based advocacy for improvement of the public health service to Roma. In addition, the project promoter Sastipen is a leading Roma organization in the area of access to quality healthcare and continues service and advocacy

²⁰ Branch of the Prague Open Society Fund

work, based on this study.

2.3. Non-discriminative societies (decreasing the level of prejudice and discriminatory attitudes)

Interactions between Roma and non-Roma are usually limited – in school, at work, at the places where they live. This parallel and divided co-existence is among the main factors that nurture prejudice and negative stereotypes among the majority of the populations in the different countries. This in turn grows new generations of young people negatively minded about Roma and diversity in general. They are easy to manipulate into supporting nationalistic policy platforms. Thus diversity-supportive constituencies are of critical importance for the sustained progress of Roma inclusion and for developing non-discriminative societies in general. Some of the Projects in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia addressed this issue in a variety of ways:

- *The multicultural sub-projects funded by the NGO fund in the Czech Republic* supported various initiatives bringing in contact over 13,115 students from the Roma and the majority. About 1480 students from disadvantaged groups (most of whom were Roma) were involved in multicultural activities – multicultural centers, performances, educational, cultural and sport activities. This contributed to building bridges between Roma and non-Roma. In addition, 189 teachers were trained and/or participated in multicultural education initiatives.
- *The Kurt Lewin Foundation's project "100 poorest"* funded by the NGO Fund in Hungary is a very good case of a consistent public campaign to disseminate knowledge about the different forms of poverty and the life of disadvantaged people. The aim was to trigger social dialogue to increase responsibility, solidarity, and voluntary actions in the society. It combined in a creative way various campaign activities – publication of a "100 poorest", photo contest and exhibitions, public campaign and films, you tube presentations, public meetings, presentations on TV etc. The project involved about 40 Roma people in the volunteer actions. It is estimated that 3 million people were reached out to by the various campaign activities. It received follow up funding from OSI to continue the campaign work.
- *A number of the subprojects of the NGO fund in Hungary* have contributed to nurturing solidarity within the Roma community and among Roma and Non-Roma especially by stimulating volunteerisms and involvement to support the most needed families and children. A lot of the examples provided above had this as an integral part of the projects. One more example is the Eight Beautitudes Foundation mobilized over 286 high school students to volunteer in initiatives to assist poor families and children in György-telep (a ghetto in the settlement on the outskirts of Pécs)

3. Relevance

Practically all the 75 Roma related projects supported under the 2004-2009 EEA and Norway Grants are responding to real needs in Roma communities. An important aspect in this direction is that most of the projects were implemented at the local level in the most disadvantaged regions and involved direct work with and within Roma communities.

The projects brought results that are relevant to the three key areas of Roma inclusion:

- A number of projects contributed to individual empowerment of Roma community members. They raised awareness on human rights and assisted in increased access to education, social services, and a few to employment opportunities and improved living conditions. *Most instrumental were services and initiatives that were community based and involved Roma beneficiaries as active participants, not just as passive receivers.*

- *Some of the projects helped social cohesion in disadvantaged communities. They had a more integrated approach to community development combining a complex set of services and interactive initiatives* that in addition to addressing individual cases were also stimulating self-organizing of Roma community members around concrete problems. This involved the establishment of various community structures (formal or informal) like parents clubs, community centres, community houses, etc. which became new meeting points for the members of the community. Some of them have the potential for further activating the communities and developing community initiatives for improvement of the situation and wellbeing of people.
- *Some of the projects contributed to expanding the knowledge, skills and practice of institutions and policies in the area of overcoming social exclusion.* In this group, the most effective and relevant were those projects that succeeded in involving local institutions (local and regional authorities, schools, etc.) as active partners and participants in the Roma social inclusion measures. However, in all of the cases they were supportive partners, not the leading ones. The projects were led by NGOs working on issues of social inclusion and or education.
- Another group of projects addressed the negative stereotypes and bias in society, They helped in *building bridges among the Roma and majority of societies* by a variety of interaction opportunities, awareness raising activities and campaigns, activated volunteerism, and solidarity with people in poverty and need.

Another aspect of relevance of supported projects relates to the applied methods and type of investments made. The majority of the projects involved “soft measures” facilitating the process of inclusion in various areas. As was already mentioned, the projects applying more integrated approaches seem to have more impact in addressing the complexity of Roma inclusion.

Another group of seven of the individual projects – four in Hungary, one in Slovakia and two in Bulgaria – had a very considerable part of the investment related to renovation and/or construction of buildings. They all brought improvement of the physical infrastructure related to social service provision or education.

While these were very much needed, the relevance of this investment in regard to Roma inclusion is to be further explored. In principle, such reconstructions are to be provided by the relevant public budgets, and at least a serious leverage of funding needed to be requested from municipal or public budget for these types of works. This in turn could bring more sustainability.

One example in this relation is the individual project “*Pure Heart*”, *Záhorie Centre of Hobby Activities in Slovakia*. It supported reconstruction and renovation and expansion of a small house that today it is an intensively-used venue for after-school activities and social services for the community (access to internet etc.). This is a good example where the capital investment (for refurbishment) is matched by the contribution from the municipality covering part of the initial investment and now covering the running costs. Based on this record, the community center is in a better position to generate funding for other soft activities. In cases when no funding is available, the center works on a voluntary basis having the premises secured.

4. Sustainability

While all the reviewed projects brought some tangible results of benefit to Roma in their concrete local setting, they can be considered just as steps in the process of Roma inclusion. The outcomes as “effects of the interventions on people and systems”²¹ will depend on the extent to which the

²¹ As defined in the Programme operators manual of the EEA and Norway grants

project promoters, partnering local institutions and participants in the projects will continue working in the direction of Roma inclusion. This is especially true at the impact level – improvement of the situation of Roma and overcoming the discrepancy of development of disadvantaged regions and excluded groups. For such a change on the ground to occur and be registered, much longer and consistent efforts and follow up than the timeframe of supported projects would be required.

Based on the field work and the review of evaluative information for some of the NGO funds²² at least 50% of the project promoters continue to work on the same or similar initiatives. However, the sustainability picture per country and among projects differs.

In Bulgaria: All the NGOs with subprojects addressing Roma issues funded by the NGO fund continue working on services provision to vulnerable groups.

In the Czech Republic: Based on the interview with 9 out of the 25 subprojects of the NGO fund the rate of continuation of work on the same or similar issues is high. Additional evidence of the stability of the organizations is the fact that a lot of the staff involved in projects supported in the rounds of 2007 are still with the NGOs.

In Hungary:

- Based on the visit of 6 of the 8 individual projects only two of the project promoters were successful in raising some funds to continue the work started with the EEA and Norway grants. These are the *Antipoverty network and Camp Europe (Roma college of music)*. Some of the other project promoters have stopped working on the same issue (for example the *Budapest Public Company* that did employment training and job placement for Roma). As noted in the interview with them “this was a good model and initiative but with very low sustainability. It was neither mainstreamed, nor continued and the experience from it will be lost”. Others are facing financial difficulties and their existence is jeopardized – like the *Nutcracker Foundation* working with the most socially disadvantaged youth in Budapest, and the *Buratino school* in Budapest.
- Based on a sample of 14 out of 17 subprojects of the NGO fund²³, 50% of them continue the work started with the grants, expanding the same initiatives or developing similar ones. Some of them are doing it on volunteer basis as part of their NGO or church work, while others – have raised funds from other donors – for ex. OSI has supported the continuation of the campaign for the poor of the *Kurt Lewin Foundation*. Another part of 30% of the project promoters continued work on some of the initiatives or components for one to two years after the projects were over, but had to stop due to financial reasons. Only 20% (3 organizations) had stopped working on the same issues due to lack of finances.

In Romania: Two of the project promoters – *Ruhama* and *Sastipen*, are well established and active Roma organizations that continue working systematically for Roma inclusion. The other project promoter continues work on educational issues mostly in mainstream schools, but has stopped working in the particular school with a great number of Roma children.

²² We were provided with full access to all the data base of the Autonomia foundation / the NGO fund in Hungary including monitoring and evaluation reports on each of the projects. This was not the case with all programme operators.

²³ We visited 6 of the projects and for the rest we received evaluation and monitoring reports which had information on the sustainability of the initiatives. This could be tracked for the projects that were funded in the first round of the NGO fund.

In Slovakia:

- Based on the field visit of all individual projects and interviews with four out of nine subprojects of the NGO fund in Slovakia 77 % (or 10 out of 13 project promoters) have secured further funding for projects with a similar focus that continue or expand the initiatives funded under the EEA and Norway Grants. These include three of the individual projects and seven of the NGO subprojects.
- A good example for sustainability is the already mentioned *The Community Bridge-building Project of the Civic Association ETP Slovakia*. Out of the 12 community centres that were created under the EEA and Norway Grants, six have already been refinanced through the Swiss Development Agency (SDC). Options to finance the other four centers have been actively explored. Activities have stopped in only two centres where after the local elections the new mayor considered the centre as an unneeded burden and engagement.. As outlined in the interviews, the commitment of the Local government is a very important factor for the success of the centres and their sustainability. The design of the ETP model is based on a careful selection of the Municipality and reaching a written agreement where the Local Government provides premises and covers the running costs, while the ETP ensures the equipment, staff, experts and trainers. The centres stay as a structure of the NGO, not of the Municipality. But if there is a well prepared partnership with shared commitment, the ownership of the centre is also shared. Evidence for this is the case with *the ETP centre in Moldava-nad-Bodvou*. In order to bridge the gap between the end of the EEA and Norway financing and ensured new funding, the municipality has hired the ETP local coordinator at different positions in order to keep the center alive.

Based on the interviews there are several key factors that are of importance to sustainability:

- (1) *Organizational/Institutional: the level of commitment of the project promoters for continued work in the direction of social inclusion of vulnerable groups.* Over 60% of the supported project promoters have inclusion of vulnerable groups and Roma as a priority in their mission and strategies. All had some good record of work and practical experience in this direction (depending on the age and outreach of the organizations).
- (2) *Political: the extent to which there is a shared commitment for continuation of the work from the public and local institutions that were involved in the initiatives* (as a partner or as a target of advocacy action). As outlined above, local institutions need to be active partners, especially in projects related to service provision. This can increase the possibility that the piloted services can be mainstreamed and or further supported by the local institutions. However, this factor has its political vulnerability. With changes of government many of the achievements can cease to be sustainable. From this perspective, it is important that NGOs and especially Roma NGOs are involved as leading or at least equal partners.
- (3) *Financial: the extent to which the project promoters were successful in raising other resources in support of continuation of similar activities.* Though some of the Project promoters succeeded to raise additional funds to continue work in the same or similar initiatives, in all interviews the issue of identifying new funding was outlined as critical. All of the organizations depend on outside financing, as in all five countries local philanthropy, especially on issues of Roma, has not been very developed and sources of available and accessible funding for NGOs are limited.
- (4) *Ownership: the level of community involvement and ownership of the results and respectively the commitment to continue.* As outlined above, a great number of the project promoters were locally based or working directly at the local level. Many of them were rooted in the communities due to trust and credit from previous actions. Applied participatory approaches stimulated linkages

The involvement of Roma organizations and/or experts in the supported projects in the past funding period was low. Only a few of the project promoters had direct involvement of Roma in the project implementation, not just as participants, but as partners and managers.

- Out of the 4 project promoters of individual projects in Slovakia only one was a Roma NGO, and one of the individual projects in Hungary had a contracted partnership with a Roma organization.
- There were only a few cases where Roma were on management or staff positions in the organizations managing the projects. Some examples are the coordinators of the ETP centers, and a manager within the Antipoverty Network program in Hungary.
- Out of the 61 NGO sub-projects only 13 were implemented by Roma NGOs.

The reason for the low involvement of Roma NGOs as project promoters and partners may be the fact that Roma inclusion was not a priority in the past funding period. But it is also linked with the issue of promotion and outreach to organizations, as well as the needed capacities to apply for the grants.

III. The New Role and Place of EEA and Norway Grants (2009-2014) in Support to Roma Inclusion Processes

1. Roma inclusion as a strategic priority

For the period 2009-2014 the EEA and Norway grants will provide €1.79 billion channelling support through 146 programmes in 15 countries. Projects supported under these programmes may be implemented until 2016. Based on evaluations of previous periods two main significant changes were adopted:

1. *The support will be consolidated into larger programmes, instead of supporting individual projects thus providing for more targeted efforts.* They will be managed by Programme Operators (mostly public institutions and line Ministries in the beneficiary countries) which will be awarding funding to projects within their programs, based on agreed design and approaches.
2. *There is an increased focus on strategic partnerships.* Strengthening bilateral relations became one of the two main goals of the grant schemes. Over half of the programmes will involve cooperation with donor programme partners, who are playing a strategic role in programme planning and implementation as well as facilitating project partnerships. At the programme level, 1.5% of the budget is allocated to bilateral funds to help develop contacts with potential partners and to expand cooperation. At a national level, 0.5% of the total country allocation is set aside for developing bilateral cooperation and activities of bilateral interest²⁴.

In the current funding period 2009-14 there have been some significant shifts in the EEA funding strategy in regard to Roma inclusion too:

- *Roma inclusion became a horizontal priority and a specific donor's concern in the programming of 2009-2014 EEA and Norway Grants.* As a result, agreements with the beneficiaries' countries were reached on programmes that will include components or aspects related to inclusion of minorities and improvement of the situation of Roma. These were supported by more or less targeted allocations of budgets.
- *The donor's specific concern on Roma was also reflected in the tenders and the approved proposals of the NGO funds* in the different countries and will be present in their grantmaking with more targeted or mainstream approaches.
- *A strategic partnership with the Council of Europe was established* and a Framework agreement signed in 2011. The role of the CoE is two-pronged: 1/ a strategic advisor and partner to the EEA and Norway Grants and 2/ a Donor Programme Partner of 18 Programmes that will have Roma inclusion related aspects. In some cases, the CoE will be also responsible for some of the pre-defined projects within the programmes.
- *There is also a growing strategic partnership with the Open Society Foundations (OSF),* through the growing joint work with the Roma Initiatives Office of the OSF as a coordinating unit of the OSF on Roma issues. As compared to the CoE, the partnership with the OSF is not initially formalized into a signed Agreement, and there is no formal participation of the OSF in the programmes in the different countries. The OSF's role is more on a strategic level – providing advice and feedback on strategies, measures and

²⁴ EEA and Norway Grants. Annual report 2011-2012. p. 10 <http://eeagrants.org/Results-data/Results-overview/Documents/Annual-reports/Donor-countries>

concrete programmes. Most recently (in June 2013) a letter of intent on cooperating with OSF has been signed which is a good step in further deepening the strategic partnership with this key actor in the area of Roma inclusion.

- *The EEA and Norway Grants have also expanding strategic cooperation with a number of strategic external actors.* This involves the close cooperation with the European Commission, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights and other EU bodies. The Grants have also joined several formal and informal platforms on Roma inclusion, including the Council of Europe Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Inclusion (CAHROM), the EU Platform on Roma inclusion, the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and the Coalition of International Organizations on Roma inclusion which includes the CoE, the World Bank, FRA, UNDP, the European Commission and OSF.

While all the above developments were very important towards a more focused attention on Roma inclusion in the current programming period of the EEA and Norway grants, there were also some challenges:

- *Timing:* The request from the donor to articulate Roma inclusion as an explicit priority came too late in the negotiation process, after the general programmes of the beneficiary countries were already agreed. This is among the reasons for the slow and sometimes confusing negotiation process to accommodate this request in already defined programme areas.
- *Ownership:* The specific concern on improvement of the situation of Roma was coming from the outside, namely from the donor countries. It was not initiated by the beneficiary countries. Under the pressure of timing, in many cases the components or aspects related to Roma inclusion were added technically to formally answer the donors' request, rather than strategically to optimize the overall work for Roma inclusion.
- *Donor Programme Partnerships:* The main identified Donor Programme Partner with expertise in the area of Roma inclusion and rights is the CoE. However, the CoE was enforced as a partner from the outside, and in many cases there were not too many links and a previous record of work together with the Programme Operators. Growing these new partnerships required more time in order to develop the programmes in a participatory way. Time pressure and lack of effective communication led to confusion and tensions in some of the countries, mainly in the Children and Youth at Risk programme area. Also, based on some of the interviews, the specific expertise the CoE provides does not cover the full spectrum of development challenges Roma face.
- *Integrating strategic input from the outside:* New strategic partners like OSF were providing input on strategic issues, as well as feedback on developed programme proposals of the different beneficiary countries. However, due to late timing strategic input was not always possible to integrate. There is no clarity to what extent and how the critical feedback on the programme proposals that was provided by the OSF was taken into account.
- *Strategic meaning:* Roma inclusion was evolving as a priority and still there is not enough clarity at the EEA and Norway Grants level on what is the substantial meaning of the Roma specific concern, and respectively what are the expectations for outcomes in this area. It accommodates a broad scope of possible content varying between direct and explicit focus on Roma, on the one hand, to focus on minority and/or vulnerable groups in general, which may (but not necessarily does) include Roma.

2. General Overview

2.1. Mapping new programmes – where and what will be funded?

Based on provided documentation there will be 36 programmes that accommodate focus, components or aspects related to Roma inclusion in the five countries of the Study – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. The programmes were developed in 13 programme areas supported by the EEA and Norway Grants. The Table below illustrates the presence of the programmes from the different programme areas in the five countries and their overall budget allocation (not the budget that will go for Roma inclusion).

	Area including measures for Roma inclusion	BG, € mln.	CZ, € mln.	HU, € mln.	RO, € mln.	SK, € mln.	Total in € mln.
1	PA 10 , NGO Fund	11,79	9,81	12,618	30	3,451 3,451	71,12
2	PA 11 , Children and Youth at Risk	7,86	4,298	11,216	22		45.37
3	PA 12 , Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion		1,24			1	2.24
4	PA 13 & 27 , Public health initiatives	13,415		16,64	8,10	13,41	51.57
5	PA 14 , Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting work-life balance				4,519		4.52
6	PA16 , Conservation and revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage	14	21,49	11,216	14	11,92	79.45
7	PA 17 , Promotion of diversity in culture and arts				6,819		
8	PA 18 , Research within priority areas				20		20
9	PA 19 , Scholarships	1,5			4		5,50
10	PA 29 , Domestic and gender-based Violence	4	0,84		4	7	15.84
11	PA 30 , Schengen cooperation and combating cross-border and organised crime	6	7,04		5		18.4
12	PA 31 , Judicial capacity building and cooperation	3			8		11
13	PA 32 , Correctional services, including Custodial Sanctions	7			8		15
	Total Budget in € Million	68.57	45.08	51.69	134.44	40.23	340
	No of Programmes (some are within 2 Programme Areas)	9	6	4	12	5	36

Table 3. Map of the programmes that will include some focus/aspect on Roma inclusion

As can be seen from the Table, only the NGO Fund is present in all of the five countries, while the rest of the programme areas that include some focus on Roma are present in one to four countries.

The 36 programmes that will include some focus on Roma inclusion distribute in the five countries as follows: the highest number of programmes and funding are in Romania (12)²⁵ followed by Bulgaria (9), Slovakia (6), the Czech Republic (5) and Hungary (4).²⁶ Some of the

²⁵ The programme areas Children and Youth at Risk and Local and Regional Initiatives to Reduce national Inequalities are accommodated in one programme in Romania, managed by the same Programme Operator The Romanian Social development Fund

²⁶ The NGO fund in Slovakia includes two programmes: SK03 – *Democracy and human rights* which will be implemented by the *Open Society Foundation* and SK10 – *Active citizenship and inclusion*. The Programme

programmes have been approved and have already started; others are still in the process of FMO appraisal.

The total budget of the programmes that will accommodate work for Roma inclusion is 340 M EUR. However, it is not easy to determine what share of this amount will go for Roma inclusion related work. The approach in that regard is very diverse among programmes and countries:

- **In Bulgaria and Romania**, the Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) define an indicative target of at least 10% for addressing the donors specific concern for “improvement of the situation of the Roma population” – set for “relevant programme areas” (Romania) and “across the programme areas” (Bulgaria)
- **In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia**, there is not an indicative budgetary target for the interventions responding to the particular concern on Roma inclusion. This makes it very challenging to estimate what will be the exact allocation of the programmes in these countries to Roma inclusion.

A challenge for all countries is the development of precise estimates of the allocated budget that will reach out directly to Roma communities. Some of the Programmes have components that are directly targeting Roma. Other programmes have a mainstream approach where Roma are mentioned as a part of the broader target groups or are addressing issues of the environment that are linked with the process of Roma inclusion (for example the *Campaign against Racism in the Czech Republic (CZ05)*). There are also programmes that have combined approach of targeted components, and mainstream approach (for example *the NGO Fund in Hungary*). A number of programmes do not have explicit reference to Roma and any outcomes or indicators that may relate to Roma.

In late April 2013 the FMO has asked the National Focal Points in all the five countries to provide a concept paper answering a set of strategic questions related to the EEA and Norway grants that will support Roma inclusion: what are the estimated funds set aside for the improvement of the situation of Roma, planned measures and anticipated outcomes, system to monitor and learn, and risks that are anticipated. The responses reveal that attribution of funding as “targeting Roma” is quite arbitrary and differs from program operator to operator.

Based on these documents, as well as the broader review of provided documentation of the different programmes, down below we outlined a summary of the estimations of Roma related allocations in each of the country. The breakdown of how these estimations are calculated is in the footnotes.

- **In Bulgaria: 11,700,000 EUR** (*Based on the MoU 10% of all the EEA and Norway budget for the country should address issues of improvement of the situation of Roma*). From the provided figures and justification²⁷ it is extremely difficult to foresee how much of the EEA and Norway Grants will go as direct funding to Roma related measures. Our very rough estimate can set the minimum to **7,000,000 EUR**. For the rest of the programmes more clarification will be needed in regard to specifying measures and their outreach to Roma.
- **In the Czech Republic:** The estimate for the budget that will support Roma related measures is **5,191,200 EUR**. It has been made by the country expert on the Czech republic

Operator will be the *Ekopolis Foundation* in partnership with Children of Slovakia Foundation and *Socia – Social Reform Foundation*.

²⁷ Working Paper on the 10% Target for Improving the Condition of the Roma Population in Bulgaria. National Focal Point of the EEA/N Grants, Bulgaria.

in our team, as at the time of finishing of this report, the country strategy paper in response to the FMO questions was not available yet.²⁸

- **In Hungary:** Based on provided estimate by the Programme operators and the National Focal Point **9,191,266 EUR** of the EEA/N grants will be in support to the donors specific request on Roma²⁹. However, based on the careful research of provided documents, only **4,020,025 EUR** have more or less clear focus on Roma. The rest of the claimed components are with a mainstream, with no clarity on how Roma will be targeted or involved.
- **In Romania:** The estimated budget that will go for Roma related measures is **17,400,000 EUR** in Romania (10 % from the 12 programmes with Roma inclusion aspects/measures as in the MoU).
- **In Slovakia:** the overall amount claimed by the National Focal Points as anticipated to benefit Roma is **5,688,908 EUR** or 7% of the Norway grant;³⁰ The estimate is by no means precise and reliable for a number of reasons that are subject of separate analysis. What is important to note however is that this estimate is 1.97 Mil EUR higher than the amount estimated by the author of the Slovak report (3,717,778 EUR).³¹

Based on above estimations the approximate budget of the (2009-2014) EEA and Norway Grants that will be allocated to support the improvement of the situation of Roma in the five countries will be between **37,329,000 EUR**³² and **44,471,374 EUR**³³. The difference comes from budget estimates made by the NFPs on programme pre-defined projects, calls for proposals and/or components for which we could not find clear justification and evidence of how they are actually

²⁸ **The Czech estimate** is based on the following calculation: CZ03: 1,534,800 € (600,000 € on Roma inclusion + assumed share of Roma-relevant projects in two potentially relevant categories); CZ04: 1,289,400 (calculated as estimated share of Roma in targeted population); CZ 05: 1,242,000€ (full budget); CZ 06: 625,000 € (very rough estimate, the exact amount will depend on selection of grant proposals; CZ 14: 500,000 € (allocation).

²⁹ **In Hungary** three programmes will have Roma relevant components. **The Children and Youth Programme:** 753 358 EUR - pre-defined project “*New approaches on the social integration area*” in partnership with the Council of Europe; 2 666 667 EUR for the open call entitled “*Prevention of early school leaving (ESL) of disadvantaged, multiple disadvantaged children, mostly Roma girls*”. The third area claimed by the NFP as Roma relevant is the open call “*Programme of Sport integration*” (3 221 741) EUR, however, it misses any specifics on how Roma will be targeted and involved; **the Public Health Programme:** includes 600 000 EUR for the pre-defined project “*Improvement of the working conditions of health visitors active in Roma communities*”; 909 500 EUR for the open call entitled “*Physical activity awareness among vulnerable and disadvantages groups*” is also claimed to be Roma relevant, however, this call misses any specifics of how Roma will be approached or involved; it is not open to NGOs. **The NGO fund** has allocated 1 040 000 EUR for the objective entitled *Empowerment of vulnerable social groups (focus: Roma)* which is 9% of the fund.

³⁰ For **SK03** – the fund operator does not provide quantitative estimate and refers to the entire funding of the two areas (962,760 EUR) as “addressing specifically Roma issues”. For **SK04** the amount stated is 1,041,177 EUR, which is the entire programme. For **SK09** the fund operator claims 75% of the current three calls (3,348,971 EUR) on the basis that “in Slovakia there are many regions with large Roma population” and thus the projects “might focus also on the Roma target group”. For **SK10** the fund operator claims 336,000 EUR as “conservative estimate” based on an estimate of the share of Roma-targeted parts of each of the two Roma-related key areas of support. Source: Report on the improvement of Roma population. Source: The Government office of the Slovak republic. National Focal Point of the EEA and Norway Grants. May 2013.

³¹ See the National Report for Slovakia for details.

³² based on indicative budgets, estimation of NFPs and our estimate for the Czech Republic

³³ based our estimation including: all the indicative budgets for Bulgaria and Romania, and only the components in the other countries that have more clarity on how Roma will be targeted and included.

going to target and involve Roma. This gap in the numbers may be bigger, as we included the 10% targets from Bulgaria and Romania, but as already stated for many of them also the targeting and outreach to Roma is still vague at this point. Depending on the management of the programmes and the opportunities to increase the Roma focus in many of them, the maximum overall allocation for Roma can considerably increase.

The 10% indicative target of the EEA and Norway budgets in Bulgaria and Romania makes it seemingly easier to identify the share of funding that will support Roma inclusion. However, calculating the 10% would be just a formal arithmetic exercise unless it is precisely stated what **exactly** will be funded with these resources, how **exactly** those activities will reach Roma and how exactly “Roma” have been defined. The “10% target” can serve only as **indicative planning target** that is still to be reached.

- In Romania, the 10% financial allocation for Roma inclusion has a general character and it was applied to the total budget of the 12 programmes, without previous analysis of the needs, opportunities, capacities and proposed interventions in the respective area. This led to cases where programmes cannot meet (or at least have no clear strategy how to meet) the 10% budget target for Roma. An example is the Scholarship programme (RO15).
- In Bulgaria, the negotiation process was not smooth, Annex B of the MoU lists only five programme areas that should specifically address Roma. Four more programmes with a requested Roma focus were introduced **at a later stage**, which required serious revisions of the original programme proposals. While for the 9 programmes with Roma related measures the process of their detailed clarification and approval is advancing, there is an open question of how Bulgaria will meet the indicative target of 10% across all programmes. Six of the 15 programmes for the country may not be relevant to include directly measures for Roma. This will mean that some of the 9 programmes with Roma relevant measures will need to be revised and allocate higher than 10% of their budget to the improvement of the situation of Roma.

2.2. Implementation Mechanisms and intervention instruments

In all the countries, the **implementation mechanism** of the 2009-2014 EEA and Norway Grants includes three levels:

- **The National Focal Points** have the overall responsibility for reaching the objectives and implementation of the 2009-2014 EEA and Norway Grants in the country. They are tasked with the overall coordination and reporting to the donors countries ;
- **The Programme Operators** are in charge of the preparation, implementation, and monitoring of the programmes. The Programme Operators in the Civil Society area were selected through a tender. They are individual foundations and/or NGOs or a consortium of non-profit organizations. All of the Programme Operators of the rest of the programmes were named in the MoU all of them are public institutions (line ministries/national agencies) with one exception – the Romanian Social Development Fund³⁴ . In the Czech Republic, the National Focal Point (Ministry of Finance) has taken the role of the Programme Operator in a number of programmes, while the line ministries have the role of partners.

³⁴ The Romanian Social Development Fund is an autonomous public interest body for management of public interest projects.

- **The Project Promoters** are identified in two ways. First, they will be implementing pre-defined projects, that are envisaged in more than 60% of the programmes³⁵. The majority of the Project Promoters of pre-defined projects have been named in the project proposals, and only in a few cases they will be selected by an open tender³⁶. A second way of identification of project promoters are the open calls for proposals which are present in the majority of the EEA and Norway grants programmes in the five countries.

The capacity at all three levels will be of critical importance for the success of the EEA and Norway Grants programmes and projects funded by them. Based on the interviews with the majority of the programme operators and a few of the project promoters in the different countries the level of expertise in regard to Roma inclusion is diverse. In some cases it is missing or limited. In others, like the majority of the NGO funds, the design of the programmes was made based on a consultative process and previous experience in supporting projects for Roma inclusion in various areas – human rights, social inclusion and cohesion, education, and multicultural environment .

There are also some good attempts to expand the specific expertise and knowledge in the field of Roma inclusion. Some of the public institutions that are Programme Operators also had a consultative process with NGOs (including Roma NGOs) to get their input in the design of their programmes.

One example is the *BG07 Public Health Initiatives* in Bulgaria. The Ministry of Health invited key NGOs to discuss their practice and develop ideas for the programme. This is how the component on Roma medical students (previously a programme supported by the Roma Health Programme of OSF) was included in the BG07 programme. Unfortunately, it was decided to exclude some of the other suggested good initiatives that can bring very visible outcomes in the area of Roma Inclusion. One example was the Roma Health Mediators network that has 130 members working directly in Roma communities all over the country. It has a tested methodology and a great potential for expanding and replication. It is also one of the few cases of a Roma organization that succeeded in raising money from businesses.³⁷

Another good practice is the initiative of some Programme Operators and Project Promoters to invite experts on Roma and/or work in partnership with NGOs and with Roma organisations. In many cases this is linked with the good vision of the Programme operator and Project promoter. Some examples include:

- In Bulgaria *the Ministry of Justice* invited as a project partner OSI - Sofia in the project for Primary Legal Aid, and the partnership seems promising.
- In Romania *the General Inspectorate of Police (Project Promoter of the PDP “Integrated approach for prevention of victimization in Roma communities” within R21)*³⁸ envisages as a partner a Roma organization to be selected. In addition, the overall approach of the predefined project is part of the vision of the Project promoter, including building on previous experiences and creating synergy with other funding that will come (e.g. from the Swiss fund).

³⁵ In some countries like Slovakia, this share is much higher – 3 out of 4 programmes have predefined projects is much higher

³⁶ For example the Project Promoter for the Roma Atlas, within the NGO Fund in Romania

³⁷ Glaxo company provided them with a donation of 30,000 to expand the network especially in regard to immunisation of children in Roma neighbourhoods.

³⁸ RO21., Schengen Cooperation and Combating Cross-border and Organised Crime, including Trafficking and Itinerant Criminal Groups

- *Again in Romania, the Astra Museum is the Project promoter of the Open Heritage pre-defined project within R12)*³⁹. It will build upon a previous good record of promoting Roma culture and traditional hand-crafts, and has an expert on Roma in its team. The Project will advance the Project Promoter strategy on Roma.
- *In the Czech Republic, the implementing agency of the NGO Fund invited experts from the academic sphere and public institutions to have a leading role in the formulation of the Fund's strategic priorities. In order to avoid conflict of interests, the agency sought to avoid inviting representatives of organisations that might potentially apply for funding.*

A second key aspect for the effectiveness of the implementation will be the need for excellent communication within programmatic components and across programmes that accommodate Roma measures. Although there is a general coordination mechanism of the EEA and Norway grants provided by the National Focal Point, there is no clear strategy and mechanism for functional exchange of information in the area of Roma inclusion as a cross-sector priority. Within the complexity of the issues and the large number of programmes especially in Bulgaria and Romania this will be very much needed.

In addition to the thematic diversity of the programmes, there are areas where priority areas overlap. For example the Children and Youth at Risk in Romania is present both in the programmes in the Children and Youth at Risk Programme area and in other programmes like Civil society. The programme operators in the two areas – the Civil Society Development Foundation and the Romanian Social Development Fund cooperate closely. They discussed priorities during the design stage and their representatives will participate in each others selection committees. This way, they will not only avoid overlap of programmes, but will also search how to optimize the synergy between the investments of the two programmes.

2.3. Donor Programme Partners/Council of Europe

The majority of programmes in the five countries (21 out of 34) include one or more **Donor Programme Partners** with roles in advising on the preparation and/or implementation of the programmes. These include 12 Norwegian, one Lichtenstein and one Icelandic public institutions, research institutes and specialized agencies. None of them was referred to as directly involved in the components related to Roma inclusion.

The Council of Europe is currently the main Donor Programme Partner (DPP) in the area of Roma Inclusion. It is a DPP in eleven programmes that have Roma as a focus or aspect of work related to Roma. These include: *Children and Youth at Risk area* (Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania), *Domestic and gender-based violence* (Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia); *Schengen cooperation and combating cross-border and organised crime* (Bulgaria); *Judicial capacity building and cooperation* (Bulgaria and Romania); *Correctional services including non-custodial sanctions* (Romania) and *Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion* (Slovakia). The highest presence of CoE as a donor programme partner is in Bulgaria, and it is not present as a partner in the Czech Republic.

As already mentioned, the CoE is a strategic partner of the EEA and Norway grants. It was approached by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry due their long-term cooperation in the area of democracy and human rights. The aim was that the CoE helps in achieving more and better results due to its proven expertise, especially in the justice sector and intercultural mediation, and in developing various reports on different issues related to Roma inclusion.

³⁹ RO12 Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage

The CoE has a diverse role in regard to the programming of the EEA and Norway grants. First, it is an advisor to the overall programming providing strategic input based on its expertise. Second, it is involved as a donor programme partner and as such is participating in the design, monitoring and oversight. In some of the cases, it is also leading or participating in the implementation of the predefined projects “when it is clear that only the CoE has the necessary expertise”.

Based on the interviews with the CoE, the added value that it is bringing to the programmes is in several aspects:

- it is an intergovernmental organization and it has direct access to the political level and thus strong potential to influence and grow political will and commitment;
- it has a brand and name recognized in the different countries and can bring for legitimacy of measures and programmes;
- it brings tested and well systematized international expertise.

In addition to the top level political support and expertise, the CoE provides programme and project level expertise and technical assistance to the programmes: experts in its areas of expertise; development of methodological documents; contact points for the different program areas and 25-26 staff members that are involved in the different EEA programs that have components or aspects related to Roma inclusion

The CoE was very active in the region of Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, however since then it was working more in other countries in need. From this perspective the partnerships with the Programme Operators in the different countries were new. A challenge in the programming period was that these partnerships had to be developed very quickly. The space for confidence building and a relationship of trust was limited.

The process was different in the different countries. There were cases where it was more complicated, mostly in the area of Children and Youth at risk. The main tension points were the predefined projects, especially in Hungary and in Romania. In some cases there was a need for the FMO to intervene and to put pressure on the Programme operator to accept the suggestions of the CoE. The negotiation process of the programmes in the Justice sector was very good and no tensions were reported from both sides – the CoE and the Programme Operators. On the contrary, based on the interviews on the ground it was a process of discussion, joint development of ideas and equal negotiation. In some cases it was a tri-lateral process involving the Norwegian partners too (for ex. in Romania).

A number of programmes where the CoE is involved include soft measures – intensive trainings, sensitizing activities, increasing knowledge and awareness of various institutions and social workers. The CoE as a partner will bring in its expertise and tested models. The challenge will be how to systematically grow sustained local ownership of these models, to what extent they will integrate local expertise and adapt accordingly; and how these training will be matched with gaining practical experience in the interactive work of the institutions with the Roma communities and community based groups and civil society organizations.

3. Relevance of planned programs and projected outcomes in the field of Roma inclusion

We were tasked to analyze the relevance of the 2009-2014 EEA and Norway Grants Programmes that will include measures related to Roma inclusion. We explored this in several interrelated aspects:

- relevance to the needs in Roma communities and to the key areas of Roma inclusion,
- relevance to the national strategies and policies for Roma inclusion and

- adequacy of design and approaches.

(1) Relevance to needs in Roma communities and key areas of Roma inclusion

The 36 programmes are addressing a wide variety of fields and areas related to Roma inclusion: access to education, to health care and social care services, fighting discrimination, growing respect of human rights and multiculturalism, overcoming poverty and community development, fighting gender based bias and violence, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, assistance for victims of trafficking in human beings, etc. All of them are linked with key areas of exclusion and have the potential to respond to needs of Roma communities.

One area that is missing (or is present very sporadically) is the access to employment and innovative ways of income generation. Though employment is of critical importance to inclusion, only very few programmes have some relevance to this key need. This might be due to the fact that employment and income generation require a development focus that is still missing from a number of the approved programs. A second important area that is missing is housing.

Most of the suggested activities and initiatives have potential to bring benefits in the first two areas of Roma inclusion – *Roma empowerment and inclusive institutions*. The majority of interventions of different programmes are intended to be at the local level, with some of them specifically focusing on more disadvantaged regions and municipalities where there is more concentration of Roma communities. From a relevance point of view, it will be critical how Roma communities will be reached. At this stage, there is little information on the concrete tools that will be used. However, based on the interviews some of the programmes, especially civil society and some of the Children and Youth at Risk programmes, have designed pro-active tools to reach out to communities – information sessions, direct meetings etc.

Roma empowerment will be approached in a variety of ways. The majority of the programmes intend to involve variety of activities expanding access to services – social, health ,legal, justice, educational (pre-school, after school); deinstitutionalization of care for children, etc. Mostly the NGO funds, but also some of the programmes in different thematic areas intend to support self-organizing and community problem solving and initiatives defending human rights. A number of programmes envisage awareness raising campaigns within Roma communities on health issues, trafficking, crime prevention etc. From a relevance point of view, it will be critical how activities for empowerment will be approached – whether they will be passive service provision, or they will stimulate increased self-esteem, activeness and community development. Real empowerment takes place when people are less dependent on external support and expanding their opportunities.

In terms of Inclusive institutions, the programmes have direct relation to improving institutional practices that relate to various aspects of Roma inclusion. In many cases an active role in the implementation of the programmes will have municipalities and local educational, social service, health and other institutions. They will be eligible applicants in the calls for proposals, on their own or in partnership with NGOs with the aim of developing new inclusive practices. The PDPs implemented by Central administration bodies are expected to further improve their effectiveness and responsiveness to needs of their target groups. Some programmes will assist preparation and implementation of new legislation (in the Czech Republic).

Based on the interviews, more effective measures for Roma inclusion will be those that envisage *true partnerships and joint work of local institutions with representatives of Roma communities* – Roma NGOs, Roma initiative groups, Roma mediators and community leaders and the broader civil society. This will ensure more direct outreach to the communities, and respectively will be more likely to bring impact in these communities. Confining the projects implemented under some programmes only to the local institutions (municipalities, kindergartens, schools, healthcare institutions) may have a more limited effect, and in cases just fill in some gaps in local budgets.

This is why supporting partnerships with the involvement of NGOs and true engagement of local governments is crucial for the success.

The third area of Roma inclusion – unbiased and supportive society – is much less present among the programmes of EEA and Norway Grants (2009-2014). There are only a few initiatives that will work in this very important area for Roma inclusion in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic:

- In Slovakia these are *the priority area of Anti-discrimination and Combating racism and xenophobia under the SK03, “Human rights and democracy” programme*, managed by OSF, as well as one of the components *within SK04 – Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion* that will be targeted at multicultural education at the local level
- In the Czech republic *the pre-defined project “Campaign against Racism Institution” within CZ05 Intergroup Inequalities and Social Inclusion* will be realized by the Czech Republic’s Agency for Social Inclusion. It is aimed at improvement of young people’s awareness about the issues of hate violence, Increasing the capacities of local actors for effective prevention and combating the manifestations of extremism and racism, and the transferring of good practice and increasing of awareness about successful social inclusion between representatives of local authorities and the general public. It will involve a variety of actions like a national campaign, educational activities in the Ústecký and Moravskoslezský Regions aimed at local authorities, teachers and schools to grow support to pro-inclusive measures; educational programmes in schools, etc. The programme is very interesting but it may be very ambitious to realize the full scope of planned activities with the planned resources. It could also benefit from a stronger involvement of Roma NGOs and the incorporation of already existing initiatives, which often lack the resources for their continuation.

The Roma image in the media in all five countries is largely negative and stereotypical. This is why programmes targeting the majority population and stimulating positive interaction between Roma and non-Roma, as well as involving the media are very much needed in all five countries. As noted in the interviews, they might be needed as special programmes. But also, they can be present as communication components of the existing programmes in all thematic areas. Such a communication strategy of approaching the public at large will be needed and might be requested in each programme focusing on the benefits of outcomes rather than just visibility of projects and outputs.

(2) Relevance to national policies and strategies

All programme proposals make reference to the national policy documents relevant for Roma inclusion. Yet in most of the cases, they do not explain how the concrete planned interventions will advance these strategies and assist their translation both in the different thematic areas and at the local level. In addition, as noted in a number of interviews in the different countries, the national strategies are with a number of shortages, and there is a lot of skepticism on their practical performance in addressing the issues of Roma exclusion in a systematic way. The major challenge is their translation into practice, backed up with real budgets especially at the local levels.

Generally, most of the programmes that will be supported by the EEA and Norway Grants are not based on specific research related to Roma inclusion. They address the needs of the Roma as identified in the relevant country strategies, and as they are seen by the institutions. As these strategies list extensively all possible needs and do not prioritize them, the programmes are relevant *by default*. The question is whether the programmes needs addressed by the EEA and Norway Grants are the most pressing ones, or those which have more potential to advance Roma

inclusion. From this perspective programmes that had some consultative process especially with actors from the field – Roma organizations and experts – have more relevance.

(3) Adequacy of design and approaches

Many of the programmes that will have Roma inclusion related activities are complex in their design with various components, sometimes with no link to each other. Often, from the outside they look like a cluster of several individual projects or block grants under the umbrella of one programme. Overarching links and strategies among different components are often missing, as the different interventions are intended to target different gaps in the system. Also, in many cases the components related to Roma stand alone, maybe because they were added within the relevant programmes at a later stage.

The programmes in the different thematic areas differ in terms of approach and measures targeting Roma. Some have more specific approaches targeting explicitly Roma and respectively components with focused intervention in this direction. Others rely on mainstream approaches which will eventually capture issues of the Roma as part of the broader target groups. However, at least at this stage they miss a specific strategy on how to reach out to and work with Roma. Also the benefits for the Roma community are seen as somewhat self-evident, as the Roma population will represent a share of the target groups.

Examples in this direction are some of the Gender based Violence programmes, assuming that Roma will be part of the beneficiaries of activities (shelters, educational campaigns, etc.). However, based on experience of other programmes related to gender within Roma communities, it is very important to adapt approaches to the cultural specificities sometimes related with a more traditional cultural setting. As in other mainstreamed interventions, only those “adaptation components” can claim to be “targeting Roma” as a separate group (the rest of the program is targeting “any citizen, incl. Roma”). Such interventions will be successful only if they are developed in partnership with Roma organizations and involve Roma activists who can mediate the links with communities. Just one example is an initiative of the Center for Intercultural Dialogue Amalipe in Bulgaria which developed community based campaigns in 15 locations against early marriages (funded by other donors). It was successful due to the effective work of 15 local groups and Roma organizations who were partners in the initiative.

The Roma inclusion success of general interventions with a mainstream approach will be conditional on the capacity of the Programme Operators/Project Promoters to design and apply targeted tools to facilitate Roma access and participation.

Some programmes have found a very good “entry point” to the issues of Roma inclusion in their respective area, but not always the best approach to expand the effectiveness of the relevant institutions. One example is the *Public Health Programme in Hungary*, where a major component will be expanding the effectiveness of the health visitors system through providing them with IT equipment. While this will improve their work, it is not matched with soft measures to sensitize and increase knowledge and reduce the prejudice of the health visitors to the Roma community members. In addition, 909 500 EUR has been allocated for the open call entitled “*Physical activity awareness among vulnerable and disadvantages groups*”. However, the call for proposals will be open to “ state and local government owned (non-profit), local government or government institutions”. NGOs (both Roma and non-Roma) will not be eligible applicants in these calls which will reduce the direct outreach of the programme to Roma communities.

The possibility offered by the 2009-2014 EEA and Norway Grants to include pre-defined projects represents both an opportunity and a threat. It can provide a pro-active tool to support strategic interventions and project promoters in different areas. But it can also make the programme “closed” and difficult to modify in the process of implementation. What is critical from relevance point of view is how the pre-defined projects were selected and how they situate strategically in

the respective programme. Based on the review of programmes in the different countries, there are Predefined projects that are more strategic, and others with less clarity of why they were selected and what is their linkage within the relevant programme. We will provide several examples that are quite different in this direction:

- *The Predefined Project Social Atlas of Roma Communities in Romania (Romania, NGO Fund)* is aimed at mapping Roma communities in the country by involving Roma communities in the process. It will also advocate with relevant public institutions who are using the data for the improvement of Roma inclusion public policies. It's a very good example of a project whose outcomes will serve strategically the NGO Fund to allocate financial support relevant to community needs.
- *The Predefined Project "Improving access to justice for vulnerable groups, (particularly Roma) in Bulgaria is within the Judicial Capacity Building and Cooperation.* It's another good example of a project aiming to implement a pilot scheme for "primary legal aid", and based on that, will stimulate amendments to legislation. It is well targeted in 2 locations with a high share of Roma population, and in addition to the primary legal aid bureaus two hotlines will operate. It will be implemented in a partnership with OSI Sofia.
- *In Slovakia, an accredited program of extended education specializing on Romani language and culture and the development of the respective teaching materials for the course is a pre-defined project under SK 04 – Local and Regional Initiatives to Reduce National Inequalities and to Promote Social Inclusion.* It will be implemented by the Institute of Roma Studies at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. Though MA study in Romani language is important, based on the interviews it is questionable whether this is the burning priority in regard to Roma inclusion in Slovakia. Also, it is not clear how this predefined project is strategically linked within the objective of the overall programme for social and economic cohesion at the national, regional and local levels.

In principle the programmes in the civil society area in all the five countries have much more coherent and strategic design of the overall interventions, and the Roma aspects (more mainstream or targeted) are strategically situated in the overall design. One reason may be the fact that these are the only EEA and Norway Grants programmes that were selected on a competitive basis by an open tender. Part of the selection criteria was the quality of the designed overall strategy and its elements related to Roma inclusion, as well as the previous record of the applying organizations in supporting civil society (incl. areas related to Roma inclusion). The rest of the programmes were developed by public institutions invited to come with a proposal and with no competition from others that might come with a better idea.

4. Impact and sustainability prospects

The majority of the 36 programmes with elements related to Roma inclusion in the current period have a lot of potential for bringing direct benefits to Roma communities in the five countries. Planned components and activities may bring for meaningful initiatives that unlock good local processes of Roma inclusion: Roma empowerment – at individual, group and community levels, changes of institutional policies and practices, and reducing existing prejudice and negative attitudes towards Roma.

There are diverse and numerous outcomes planned within each programme. Some might relate to increased capacity of key actors to work in the area of Roma inclusion – NGOs, local institutions, Roma communities and broader society – especially young people. This will be critical as work on Roma inclusion is in the long run and it will take interactive leadership of different stakeholders from within the Roma communities and from outside it.

Others may lead to testing new and expanding existing approaches and practices in key areas like access to quality education, health care, social service, justice system, fighting gender based violence, countering trafficking of people, reducing crime rates and reintegrating young people who were in detention service back in society. Testing these practices will not resolve the problems, but they can demonstrate how problems can be resolved. In this aspect it is important to stimulate dialogue within and across programmes of how the various activities will lead to some systemic change. As noted in the interviews, it is not enough to develop new services but to create the infrastructure for these services.

Critical for the sustainability of the applied measures will be the extent to which they will be multiplied, mainstreamed and or further supported by the national governments. Programme operators in this funding period are mostly the public institutions that implement relevant policies that can impact Roma inclusion. However, so far the programmes' documents do not provide much on sustainability, and especially on the policy implications of supported measures. Changes in the environment will rely mostly on the advocacy activities supported by the NGO funds, but the challenge there will be that funds are much less than the existing needs in the NGO sector in general, and more specifically in the area of Roma inclusion.

The programmes are at their very beginning. At this point three aspects will be of critical importance to unlock their potential for achieving planned outcomes:

- Though programmes are already designed, it will be important *to develop a clear vision for the real change* they can bring in regard to Roma inclusion;
- *Translating this vision in the guidelines for application and selection criteria* will ensure good outreach and selection of organizations, groups and institutions that are directly linked with the issues of Roma inclusion and
- *Developing a system for consistent learning from emerging experiences and from others* who have been working in the field and adapting the interventions to make them more adequate. This will require a working exchange of information on the programs implementation, communication with other actors in the field and clear methodological guidelines on results monitoring and indicators matched by methodological support for individual program promoters and beneficiaries.

Based on the interviews, some of the programmes already have a more clear vision for the type of change they would like to see as a result of the interventions for Roma inclusion. This is especially the case of some of the programmes in the civil society field, as well as some of the pre-defined projects that were mentioned above.

In regard to the calls for proposals, hopefully the technicalities of guidelines and criteria will not kill creativity and potential for innovative approaches. As shared by some respondents, a threat for the accessibility of the EEA and Norway funds in this period may be the bureaucracy and too complicated application. This is especially in view that many of the calls will be managed by the same public institutions that are managing the structural funds which are rarely accessible to smaller and local organizations (including Roma organizations).

Last but not least, some of the respondents underlined the need for **looking at outcomes in an integrated way**. As stated in one of the interviews: "*Vicious circles of exclusion can be addressed only through virtuous circles of integrated interventions*". The improvement in isolated areas is unlikely to bring results unless the interventions are coordinated with and matched by deliberate efforts in other areas.

For example, a measure for boosting education opportunities needs to be sensitive to the factors driving drop-out which in many cases relates to income generation. Education needs to also be practical with a strong accent on vocation and marketable skills. The living conditions in most

Roma households are appalling and not conducive to children achieving a useful education. But this “educational impediment” might be an opportunity for employment or vocational training if the community is involved in a refurbishment project. In that case the latter would have both educational and incomes implications that need to be taken into consideration.

All this is possible with viable and vibrant communities. Thus the, interventions targeted at community development or rights awareness or boosting tolerance should not stop just at their immediate objectives (the direct outputs of the interventions). They need to fit a broader picture of Roma inclusion and the individual activities should be mutually reinforcing.

Only a few of the 2009-2014 EEA and Norway programmes with a Roma focus mention that they will be applying integrated approaches. Some examples are the Children and Youth at Risk/Local and Regional Initiatives... program in Romania, the NGO funds in Romania and in Hungary. Stimulating thinking on more integrated approaches that can bring more “integrated” outcomes in various areas of exclusion will optimize the EEA and Norway Grants investments in Roma inclusion. A second important aspect is to stimulate the synergy between interventions of different programmes that are working in the same regions and locations.

Again, the outcomes and the probability of their longer term impact and sustainability will depend on the projects/measures that will be funded under the different programmes. As the EEA and Norway grants have no clear definition of what is a Roma inclusion measure, we asked for input from the different stakeholders we met during the study.

What is a good project for Roma inclusion?

Based on the interviews we tried to develop the characteristics of successful projects of Roma inclusion. Good Roma inclusion projects need to:

- respond to the concrete needs and to work directly with the Roma communities
- focus on empowerment of Roma and to use participatory tools and approaches;
- create new type of communities of active people that believe that change depends on them;
- activate assets, putting together what people in communities have rather than focusing only on problems
- grow honest local Roma organizations rooted in the communities and representing them;
- to be based on true partnership with institutions (not fake “paper” partnerships); yet keeping the independence of community groups/ organizations to provide critical feedback to institutions
- have an integrated approach optimizing investment and achieving integrated outcomes
- to combine social services with interventions targeted at the improvement of social public policies;
- be based on true commitment of participating organizations and institutions that will continue generating positive change after the end of funding,
- have the support of the non-Roma populations based on the understanding that the ultimate results of Roma inclusion benefit the society at large

5. Monitoring and evaluation systems

Nominally all the projects have the necessary M&E attributes (defined outcomes, outputs, indicators). However, the quality of the M&E infrastructure needs to be further developed in order to allow for estimating the real results of the projects. In particular, in view of monitoring and evaluation several aspects are of crucial importance.

Firstly, – the **indicators to measure the results in the Roma inclusion field** need to be further deepened and developed as they are fragmented and only partially present. Most indicators are

output related and not outcome oriented. This is not a problem related to the EEA and Norway funded programmes only, but the FMO can request from the POs and NFPs explicit efforts in this regard.

One starting point could be revising the “List of Standard Indicators, EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014”. Most of the indicators related to Roma inclusion are “output” and not “outcome” indicators. In addition it should be clearly communicated that this is a reference list of indicators designed for “program level monitoring.” The really important area of interventions (and monitoring) is the project level. For that level it is not possible to standardize the indicators and they need to be customized for the individual projects. That requires specific expertise which when absent within POs and NFPs can be provided by a professional body dealing with M&E. This might be in the form of a strategic partnership(s) similar to that with the CoE.

Secondly, the objective difficulties in **defining the target populations** represent a challenge. “Roma” identity is situational and fluid. It differs on the circumstances, on who’s asking, on the purpose, etc. Notoriously the official census data diverge from “expert estimates”. Those difficulties are being used as a comfortable excuse for not applying rigorous results-oriented monitoring at all. “Counting” Roma is definitely not an option. However, there are a number of techniques that can support developing statistically robust and credible estimates.

Having adequate project baselines are critical for adequate progress monitoring. Currently the baselines are vague or set to “0”. Currently the baselines are vague and filling those fields in the application forms is rather a part of a ritual and not a project management and reporting tool as it should be. At least in the future calls deliberate should be made to improve that.

Thirdly, the **data collection system** for the Roma inclusion field:

- **Collecting ethnically disaggregated data is legal and permissible when the individual records are anonymized.** This is the case of project outcomes targeting.
- In most cases “surveys” are specified as a source but those are usually very expensive. Project level data generation can be an optimal alternative. The project implementation level data can be used effectively for monitoring purposes. A lot of information is being generated in the process of the project implementation. With minor adjustments of the reporting standards this information can yield useful data for outcome reporting. Again, as in the case of the indicators, professional expertise is necessary.
- The M&E functions of the National Focal Point should be clearly results-oriented. Project beneficiaries in some countries were sharing their frustration by the fact that some the NFPs were more preoccupied by the formal compliance with the procedures than by the meaningfulness of the respective expenditure and that the general procedures were being interpreted in the most rigid way not serving the degree to which the interventions actually make sense and improve the life of Roma. In this respect, a clear message from the donor would help clarifying that the results are (at least) equally important as compliance with the procedures.

IV. The EEA and Norway Grants (2004-2009: Conclusions and Lessons from Roma Relevant Projects

1. Conclusions from 2004-2009

- (1) *Roma inclusion was not an explicit priority and a donors request for the implementation of the 2004-2009 EEA and Norway Grants.* The mapping of individual and NGO projects funded in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania proved that general priorities may lead to some Roma relevant projects, however, their number, size and impact will be limited in the absence of a clear Roma inclusion priority.
- (2) *In total €13,782,088 or 3,4% of the overall EEA and Norway funding in the five countries was allocated in support to 75 projects that can be considered Roma relevant.* This included € 11,244,391 support to 14 individual projects (with size varying from €200,000 to €3 M Euro) in Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria and €2,538,147 in support to 61 subprojects provided by the NGO funds in the five countries. Their size was varying from €9,000 to €100,000 (with about 67% of them were below €50,000)
- (3) *Hungary had the highest level of funding for Roma relevant projects both as amount and its share of the overall EEA and Norway funds for the country.* It was followed by Slovakia and the Czech republic. These type of projects were much less in Bulgaria and the lowest in Romania.
- (4) *Nearly 80% of the Roma relevant individual projects and NGO Funds' subprojects (59 out of 75) funded under the 2004-2009 EEA and Norway Grants worked at the local level* in over 70 localities, in many cases in the most disadvantaged regions with high share of Roma population. The majority of the locally based projects entailed direct work with Roma expanding their capacity and responding to the needs of different groups in the diverse Roma society. This by itself is a good result of the distribution of grants in regard to their direct outreach to Roma communities.
- (5) *Funded Roma relevant projects in the previous period were of high relevance to key needs in Roma communities.* Most of the projects focused on various educational and integration activities for Roma children and youth, on improving social service (within state institution for children, to very deprived groups, within Roma settlements, training for social workers etc.). Very few addressed the issue of employment and housing. Only one project in Hungary was focused on job training and job placement. Two of the projects (one in Hungary and one in Slovakia) had a more integrated approach working in multiple locations and tackling more than one field of exclusion and combining services and initiatives related to access to education, social service and employment, as well as community activation initiatives.
- (6) *The Roma related projects supported in the previous funding period achieved various good results towards a process of Roma inclusion:*
 - *In the Roma empowerment outcome area* these included expanded access to educational, social and employment service, improved community cohesion, activated community development by applying integrated approaches to fight social exclusion; expanded people's knowledge and capacity to stand up for their rights by free legal aid and legal counselling, as well as assistance to self-organize to fight human rights violation;
 - *In the inclusive institutions outcome area* projects contributed to developing municipal

strategies in key areas of exclusion, new methodologies, online courses on multicultural education, web portals, training for staff of social institutions, social workers, teachers, school administration, advocacy for inclusive policies;

- *In the non-biased and inclusive society outcome area* projects for multicultural environment and education brought in contact thousands of students both Roma and non-Roma, trained hundreds of teachers in new multicultural teaching; public campaigns raised solidarity with the poor (including Roma) reaching through the media and internet to 3 miln people
- (7) *The majority of the identified Roma-relevant projects were implemented by NGOs.* The 2004-2009 funding period showed that NGOs have a very important role in regard to Roma inclusion. NGOs, with small financial support and limited human resources can implement good projects with important positive impact in the Roma communities. Even though projects were small in size and of limited duration, they included useful initiatives of benefit to Roma communities. They also contributed to expanding the capacities of the implementing organizations by learning through doing.
 - (8) *While all the reviewed projects brought for some tangible results of benefit to Roma in their concrete local setting, they can be considered just as steps in the process of Roma inclusion.* The outcomes and longer term impacts will depend on the extent to which the project promoters, partnering local institutions and participants in the projects will continue working in the direction to Roma inclusion. Change will require much longer and consistent efforts and follow up than the timeframe of supported projects.
 - (9) *Based on the sample of visited projects and provided evaluative information for some of the NGO funds at least 50% of the NGOs that had Roma related projects continue to work on the same or similar initiatives in their localities.* However, all of them shared that funding for small scale initiatives for social inclusion is difficult to acquire. One of the very few sources for funding are the EEA and Norway NGO funds.
 - (10) *The sustainability prospects of the individual projects differ per country.* While in Slovakia three out of four of the individual projects continue and succeeded identifying funding from different sources, in Hungary only two of 8 projects succeeded in raising funds for follow up activities. Again, all of the project promoters of individual projects that continue are NGOs. Though it would be anticipated that public institutions that were managing individual projects would be easier to continue and mainstream the initiatives it is not the case.
 - (11) *The involvement of Roma organizations and/or experts in the supported projects in the past funding period was low.* Only a few of the project promoters had direct involvement of Roma in the project implementation not just as participants but as partners and managers. Only one project promoter of individual project in Slovakia was a Roma NGO, and one of the individual projects in Hungary had a contracted partnership with a Roma organization. There were only few cases where Roma were on management or staff positions in the organizations managing the projects. Out of the 61 NGO sub-projects only 13 were implemented by Roma NGOs. The reason for the low involvement of Roma NGOs as project promoters and partners may be the fact that Roma inclusion was not a priority in the past funding period. But it is also linked with the issue of promotion and outreach to organizations, as well as the needed capacities to apply for the grants

2. Lessons for future applications

Based on the interviews with program operators and project promoters from the previous period that worked on projects related to Roma the following lessons can be outlined:

- Relying only on mainstream approach to vulnerable groups will be less effective. Targeted promotion of the services for Roma is needed, as they are often unaware of the possibilities for support and rarely ask for assistance on their own;
- In order to enter the community and build relations of confidence and trust, active people from the Roma communities are needed – community leaders, mediators, representatives of Roma organizations. Social services targeting Roma population need to build confidence not only among the immediate clients but within the whole community to ensure proper supporting environment;
- An increased work with the mainstream population is needed to ensure that the positive effects of the services upon Roma clients will be supported by their non-Roma environment. Adequate public campaigns for ethnic and cultural tolerance are needed regardless of the size of the communities;
- When working with non-Roma children and their families in interventions aiming at reducing ethnic-based violence and promoting tolerance, a special focus should be put on those having direct contacts with the Roma;
- Although training of teachers for working with Roma children are effective, more direct out-of-school contacts should be encouraged, e.g. teachers periodically visiting the homes of the children and talking with their parents;
- More effective are those measures that mobilize and expand partnerships. True partnership and joint work of local institutions with representatives of Roma communities – Roma NGOs, Roma initiative groups and community leaders ensures more direct outreach to the communities, and respectively will be more likely to bring for impact in these communities. Partnership with the municipality may bring for more sustainability of the initiative
- A good practice was the involvement of representatives of institutions into the activities of many of the projects together with NGOs and with representatives of Roma community which contributed to learning by doing of more participatory and inclusive approaches to policy implementation.

Key factors that are important for long-term sustainability of results and initiatives are:

- the level of commitment of the project promoters for continued work in the direction of social inclusion of vulnerable groups;
- the extent to which there is shared commitment for continuation of the work from public and local institutions that were involved in the initiatives;
- the extent to which the project promoters were successful in raising other resources in support to continuation of similar activities;
- the level of community involvement and ownership of the results and respectively commitment to continue.

V. Roma Inclusion Measures under the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014: Conclusions and Recommendations

1. EEA and Norway Grants (2009-2014): Will they make a difference for Roma inclusion?

(1) Roma inclusion has a growing strategic place in the EEA and Norway Grants. From the sporadic funding under the EEA and Norway Grants (2004-2009) it has graduated into a horizontal priority in the programming of EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014. It is backed up by a new type of strategic partnerships. The Council of Europe is the main partner in the area of Roma inclusion where it has a multiple role – a strategic advisor to the EEA and Norway Grants, donor programme partner in 18 programmes in the region, and a leading or supporting actor for the predefined projects in some of these programmes. Another key partner is the Open Society Foundation. It is providing strategic advice and feedback based on its hands-on and diverse expertise in various areas of Roma inclusion. There is also growing strategic policy coordination with external actors like the European Commission, FRA, CoE and OSF and the EEA and Norway grants has joined several formal and informal platforms of cooperation on Roma inclusion.

(2) As a result there will be 36 programmes in 13 programme areas under the 2009-2014 EEA and Norway Grants that will accommodate focus, and components or aspects related to Roma inclusion in the five countries of the Study. Romania has the highest level of funding and number of programmes (12) followed by Bulgaria (9), Slovakia (6), the Czech Republic (5) and Hungary (4). While some programmes have components that are directly targeting Roma, others apply a mainstream approach where Roma are explicitly mentioned as a part of the broader target groups, and others do not have any explicit reference to Roma.

(3) The total budget of the programmes that will accommodate work for Roma inclusion is 340 M EUR. The total share of the EEA and Norway Grants funding that can be expected to address Roma inclusion is between 37,329,000 EUR and 44,471,374 EUR. The figure sums up the estimates, developed by the Programme Operators from the four countries in response to the FMO questions in May 2013 and the estimate by the Czech researcher on the basis of (a) specific Roma targeted programmes and measures, (b) expected benefits for Roma as part of larger target groups in mainstream measures and (c) the indicative target of 10% planned for Bulgaria and Romania. Depending on the management of the programmes and the opportunities to increase the Roma focus in many of them, the maximum overall allocation for Roma can considerably increase.

(4) A major challenge was the process of introducing Roma inclusion. It was more evolving rather than strategic with challenges related to timing, ownership, and clarity of strategic meaning. The Roma specific concern came as a donors concern – and not as a concern genuinely raised by the countries. It was articulated quite late in the negotiation process, when the programmes were already decided and designed. Countries were technically adding projects and components, thus responding to an outside request for Roma inclusion. This resulted in fragmented rather than strategic addressing of Roma inclusion in the country programmes.

(5) A second challenge was, and still is, the lack of enough clarity at the FMO level of what is the substantial meaning of the Roma specific concern. This may hamper the consistency of the donors demands for effectiveness in the area of Roma inclusion. At present the EEA and Norway Grants vocabulary accommodates various interpretations of the Roma specific concern under the broad statement “*improvement of the situation of the Roma population*”. The approach covers a broad scope of possible content varying between a direct and explicit focus on Roma, on

the one hand, to a focus on minority and/or vulnerable groups in general, which may (but not necessarily does) include Roma. This in turn leaves space for diverse interpretations of the donors request in the beneficiary countries. Unless clear and defensible criteria for Roma inclusion, or at least for “benefiting Roma” are articulated, the future reporting may be confusing thus opening the possibilities for “inflating success” on paper.

(6) All programmes make reference to the respective National Roma Integration Strategies and are relevant by default to the needs identified there, as the strategies list extensively all possible needs. Since the strategies do not prioritize the needs, the question is whether those addressed by the programmes are the most pressing ones, or those which have more potential to advance the Roma inclusion process, or just needs picked up at random. Programmes that had built on previous experience or had some consultative process with local stakeholders, especially Roma organizations and experts, – have more relevance and linkage to the priority needs of Roma.

(7) The programmes are relevant to diverse needs of Roma communities and have a great deal of potential to generate meaningful outcomes towards Roma inclusion.

- The majority of the programmes intend to bring benefits in the first two outcome areas of Roma inclusion – *Roma empowerment* and *Inclusive institutions*. A variety of activities will focus on expanding access to services (social, health, education), others (especially the NGO funds) will assist self-organizing and community problem solving, initiatives defending human rights and advocacy action.
- The majority of the planned interventions are intended to be at the local level, with some of them specifically focusing on more disadvantaged regions and municipalities where there is more of a concentration of Roma communities. Municipalities and local educational, social, health and other institutions will be directly involved in the implementation as participants in training programmes and exchange of integration practices, and/or as eligible applicants in the calls for proposals, on their own or in partnership with NGOs.
- Two critical areas are missing in the programme portfolio – (a) access to employment and innovative approaches to income generation and (b) housing –both of critical importance to overcoming Roma exclusion.
- There are only a few initiatives that are specifically targeting antidiscrimination and fighting racism – mainly in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic. The rest of the programmes do not include clear communication components that will be addressing the public at large and thus working for overcoming bias and negative prejudice.

(8) The capacity of all levels of the implementation mechanisms will be of critical importance for the success of the current programme period. In most of the cases the Programme Operators have limited specific capacities related to Roma inclusion. The limitations are both in terms of staff and previous experience in Roma targeted measures. The prospects for effective use of the funds for Roma inclusion are higher with those Programme Operators that have partners from within the NGO sectors, or have included as Predefined Project Promoters, bodies dealing primarily with ethnic and integration issues

(9) The initial assumption that a core strategic and donor programme partner like the Council of Europe will be able to provide for the strengthening of the Roma inclusion focus of the programmes in all areas faced challenges. Some related to a lack of space and time to build trust and develop these new partnerships in the different countries. Others are rooted in the multiple and sometimes conflicting roles of the CoE as both strategic advisor on what type of programmes to be included, and a partner or implementer of predefined projects. While the CoE has contributed for the better formulation of a Roma inclusion focus and measures in the different

programmes, especially in regard to justice deficits and intercultural dimensions, it did not help considerably the addressing of Roma inclusion as a complex developmental challenge.

(10) The Monitoring of the programmes' contribution to Roma inclusion will be an issue

- The programmes generally do not provide clear Roma relevant indicators, and where such exist, they are quantitative and on an output level. There are practically no outcome indicators to measure changes in the situation or the behaviour of the Roma target group, which may seriously hamper the future assessment of whether and where the EEA and Norway Grants made a difference;
- As most of the Programme Operators and all National Focal Points are public administration bodies, they all state that they cannot gather data on the ethnicity of the beneficiaries, as it is a matter of self-determination. The prevailing attitude is that reaching out to Roma will be assessed by the number of measures having Roma as (part of the) target groups. This approach will hardly provide evidence of the actual number of Roma beneficiaries.

(11) The EEA/N Grants are becoming one of the very few strategic donors that will be supporting Roma inclusion in the region.

- The EEA and Norway Grants mechanism has a number of strategic advantages. It can plan in the longer term, it can match its efforts with the larger investments planned by the EU structural funds, and it has more flexibility and potential for innovation, as compared to the EU funds. It is the only donor that is investing in Roma inclusion horizontally across all programme areas.
- At the same time there are also some threats – funds may be spread too thin in too many areas, and the management of Roma inclusion as a horizontal priority across programmes and countries may be challenging and require relevant “horizontal” capacities on Roma inclusion at the FMO level.

(12) The EEA and Norway Grants have a very strong potential to make a difference in the area of Roma inclusion:

- *Roma inclusion is defined as a distinct cross-sector priority in all five countries.* This may lead to better high level coordination on Roma inclusion in the concerned countries and may facilitate strategic thinking and overcome fragmentation in the field of Roma inclusion;
- *All programmes include bilateral cooperation which has the potential to generate innovative approaches on Roma inclusion in both beneficiary and donor states,* particularly if/when the comparative advantages of individual partners are utilized in cooperative endeavours
- *It is a multi-country mechanism which gives high potential for regional strategizing and cooperation.* There was great interest expressed in the interviews in knowing how things are planned or done in the different countries;
- *EEA and Norway Grants are well placed to model and demonstrate a different way (approach and mechanism) of support* including increased access to vulnerable groups, in particular Roma, providing technical assistance and capacity building for small Roma organizations and informal groups, outreaching proactively the beneficiaries, and supporting community empowerment and organizing.
- *The EEA and Norway Grants can serve as bridge funding for assisting initiatives that were piloted to scale up from local to district and/or national level and prepare to be*

funded further by the structural funds. There has been a lot of experimentation in the area of Roma inclusion going on – a number of approaches, methods and practices which are or were innovative at their time. Many remained at their pilot stages and were not further expanded and replicated. Those that were mainstreamed as part of the Governments’ policies were adopted partially, thus reducing their substantial potential in regard to Roma inclusion.

Whether the EEA and Norway Grants potential will be unleashed will depend on the effective implementation of the current programme period and the extent to which there will be:

- (a) effective outreach to Roma communities (depending on the design of the calls for proposals and cooperative work with Roma NGOs, experts and bodies);
- (b) common standards on “Roma targeted measures” and what is their strategic meaning;
- (c) exchange of information on who’s doing what in order to optimize interventions and investments; and
- (d) clear design and planning of monitoring and evaluation procedures related to Roma inclusion measures.

2. Recommendations for the current program period (2009-2014)

(1) The EEA and Norway Grants need a vision and strategic clarity on the specific concern on Roma. This will help situate the planned programmes for the current funding period into a more strategic framework, expand their effectiveness towards Roma inclusion and assist the process of monitoring and reporting.

(2) We would suggest that donors concern on the improvement of the situation of Roma is clearly defined as a Roma inclusion concern, targeting positive change in the three outcome areas of Roma Inclusion:

- (a) *Increased Roma empowerment;*
- (b) *Inclusive institutions (policies and practices); and*
- (c) *Unbiased and non-discriminatory society.*

Each of these areas has multiple aspects and dimensions and the sustainability of the inclusion process depends on the strategic fit among them.

(3) Regular strategic review of the implementation of the Roma inclusion focus within and across programmes will assist in expanding the in-country commitment beyond a formal set of measures or activities to be reported to the donor within defined financial parameters (e.g. the 10 % requirement). This process should not be a campaign effort related to programme approval and reporting only. It needs to be a part of the strategic monitoring and mutual learning from the programmes implementation in three directions:

- (a) the progress towards expected Roma inclusion outcomes and impact within the programme areas;
- (b) the interrelations between the different programme measures (e.g. studying possible leverages at the local level where multiple measures are being implemented); and
- (c) the links with the national policies and strategies from two perspectives – relevance and sustainability by potential mainstreaming of emerging good practices.

(4) Developing a reliable and comprehensive information system/ database by the National Focal points of all planned and implemented activities related to Roma inclusion funded under the EEA and Norway Grants.

Such a system will be of benefit to all involved in the Roma inclusion process: potential applicants in Calls for Proposals (for better focusing of their projects), Project Promoters (for enhanced cooperation with other entities and leveraging the effects of their actions), Program operators (for better targeting of their calls for proposals and avoiding duplication of efforts), public authorities (for better planning, mobilization of outside resources and establishing new partnerships). The benefits of the system can be further increased if concrete planned measures are actively promoted at the local and regional levels.

(5) The design and the implementation of calls for proposals and small grants schemes needs to ensure effective outreach to Roma communities. Four aspects will be of critical importance:

- (a) Relevant criteria need to stimulate the participation of NGOs and especially Roma NGOs as project promoters or partners of local institutions;
- (b) Calls for proposals will need targeted and pro-active communication reaching out to Roma communities and community based groups and organizations;
- (c) Guidelines and project application processes need to be designed in a way that makes them feasible and user friendly to smaller organizations and municipalities;
- (d) Technical assistance for developing initiatives, especially for small communities and Roma organizations will be a good investment in capacity growth at the implementers level.

(6) Expanding the capacity for substantive Roma inclusion of Programme Operators and the National Focal Points will be of importance for the outcomes of implementation. This can be achieved by one or more of the following approaches:

- (a) Attracting experts on Roma inclusion to assist Programme Operators;
- (b) Creating Roma advisory groups (at the level of the NFPs or Programme Operators),
- (c) Better coordination and work with in-country specialized bodies related to Roma and social inclusion.

(7) All programmes need to develop a specific communication strategy and/or components to address the negative and discriminatory attitudes of the public at large towards Roma in the relevant area. Such focused efforts would have multiple benefits: they will improve the results orientation of the individual programs, will increase the public support for Roma inclusion, which is easier to achieve when the public sees what the results of the money spent are, and will give voice to the Roma involved. The communication strategy of approaching the public at large needs to focus on the benefits of outcomes rather than just on visibility of projects and inputs.

(8) Sustainability of the measures for Roma inclusion needs to be planned from the very start of the programmes. Although the reviewed documentation did not elaborate much on sustainability, all planned interventions have fair chances for sustainability, provided there is political will, commitment to the Roma Inclusion agenda, adequate budgetary planning and appropriate implementation strategy of different Programme Operators and Project Promoters.

(10). Developing of monitoring, evaluation and data gathering systems will be critical to ensure that the specific concern on Roma inclusion is followed through.

- Strategic clarity of the Roma inclusion priority is the first step in this respect. It will help put the question of what and how it will be monitored into a more coherent strategic framework of why and for what are the investments made. It will be important to look at monitoring and evaluation as a learning system – on what is changing as a result of the interventions rather than technical “counting heads” and outputs. Ideally, the indicators

will study the three outcome areas of Roma inclusion listed above – Roma empowerment, Inclusive institutions and Non-biased and less discriminative societies.

- As Roma inclusion is a growing horizontal priority and concern, it will require revisiting the “List of Standard Indicators, EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014” that includes reference lists of indicators at the programme level. It will be critical to work on outcome indicators related to Roma inclusion, as the majority of existing ones are on the output level. A second important need is to identify adequate qualitative information gathering, as a number of aspects of change may not be possible to just quantify.
- The really important level of interventions (and monitoring) is the project level. Customized indicators need to be developed for the individual projects. *It is important to communicate explicitly that collecting ethnically disaggregated data is legal and permissible when the individual records are anonymized.* This is definitely the case of project outcomes targeting. The project implementation level data should be used more effectively for monitoring purposes. With minor adjustments of the reporting standards this information can yield useful data for outcome reporting. Again, as in the case of the indicators, professional advice should be sought.
- The FMO can request from the POs explicit efforts in this regard. However, as it will require professional expertise that is usually unavailable with the POs and even the NFPs, external support from a professional body dealing with M&E is desirable. This might be in the form of a strategic partnership similar to that with the CoE. A potential strategic partner in this direction can be the Fundamental Rights Agency that has specialized in various aspects of minority monitoring. Another potential partner is the Central European University that has been developing projects for monitoring of Roma interventions with the involvement of Roma experts.
- In regard to data collection approaches, there are a number of interesting practices that can stimulate better involvement of Roma in the process of monitoring and assessing the change in the communities. One example is the community monitoring methods used by the Roma Health Programme of OSF Budapest. Such practices can be further explored. In addition to internal monitoring done by the Programme Operators local groups of Roma experts can be established to serve as local focal points for feedback on what actually works. Alternatively, this can be done in partnership with Roma organizations.

3. Recommendations for future funding

(1) Defining donor states’ vision in support to Roma inclusion

- a) **It will be critically important that the EEA and Norway Grants continue support for Roma inclusion as a strategic priority in the long-term.** This will help situate the assistance in an at least 10 year strategic perspective – a time frame that is more feasible to generate sustainable change on the ground
- b) **The future support needs to be based on visioning of where the EEA and Norway Grants can actually make a difference and what outcomes and impacts can realistically be achieved.** This will assist in clarifying important questions of strategy: which of the the priority areas of the National Strategies for Roma Inclusion to consider, what will be the best approaches of funding, who will be the most appropriate actors to manage this funding and who will be the most appropriate partners in the process.
- c) **An important question of visioning relates to anticipated outcomes and impacts on the ground.** Given the limited funding, the EEA and Norway funding mechanism may not

be able to directly achieve dramatic decrease in poverty, exclusion and reduced disparities. But it can contribute to it by investing and expanding the capacity of key actors, able to facilitate key processes at key places that will in turn work in the long term for Roma inclusion, thus reducing disparities and inequalities.

- d) Another major contribution may come from building synergies between different sector-specific programs financed by individual donors (and most of all, by individual Operational Programs of the EC that are sector-specific by design).

(2) Defining donors states strategic approach to Roma inclusion

- a) **It will be good to keep Roma inclusion as a horizontal priority across programmes.** In practice it is an integral part of the good governance horizontal principle which among others accommodates inclusion and equal treatment of all communities/minorities.
- b) **Mainstream approaches need to be complemented by Roma targeted measures.** Mainstream approaches are important, as they open all policies to consider the issues of Roma. However, without integrated targeted interventions that directly assist Roma communities and facilitate involvement of Roma organizations their effect will be minimal.
- c) **Strategy approach needs to be combined.** Based on the interviews it can combine: (a) support to agreed priority areas of Roma inclusion linked with the NRIS and sector specific strategies; (2) holistic support for Roma inclusion in territorially defined areas (e.g. micro regions) with a high concentration of Roma population and (c) support to specific thematic priorities, e.g. civil society and/or children and youth at risk, etc. How this will be achieved will depend on overall strategic vision of funding to Roma inclusion and identified country-specific priorities.

(3) Defining strategic priorities

- a) **The future programming will benefit if it is based on a broader consultative process that involves different stakeholders** – NGOs, Roma communities, and other actors on Roma inclusion. This will be important at the FMO level when deciding on strategic niches and approaches, at country level to identify priorities, as well as at Programme Operators' levels when designing programme interventions. In this, there should be a clear plan of follow up after the consultations, so that suggestions are integrated into the strategy and approach.
- b) **Creating a Roma inclusion advisory group at the FMO level** will be beneficial to assist the strategy process, as well as the formative assessment and learning from the current period. It will assist expanding the specific capacity of the FMO needed to meet the complexity of the issues related to Roma inclusion.
- d) **It is better if there is a clear statement of the share (%) and/or the amount of the EEA and Norway Grants that will be allocated to Roma inclusion in each of the countries.** Allocation needs to be proportional to the identified needs and capacity during the consultative process. The recently implemented practice of asking for strategy concept papers on the programs and interventions will provide for more coherent vision on what will be changed, what will be the complementarity and linkage among programmes. However, such concept papers need to be required at the start of the negotiation process rather than at its end. This will help them be truly strategic rather than project-driven.

- (4) **Donor programme partnerships with international stakeholders need to be strategically reviewed in order to maximize their potential for assisting Roma inclusion.** Based on the findings from the study, partnerships may face challenges that can further block their potential for effectiveness (e.g. CoE as DPP in Children and Youth

programmes in the different countries). There should be a clear strategy of how partnerships are developed so that they are equal, and provide for learning for both sides. Developing partnerships will require enough time and space for discussion and joint work at the design stages. There will be a need to look at improving the channels of communication, ensuring that local expertise is also considered. Having more than one strategic partner assisting the implementation of programmes in different areas can bring more diversity of expertise and approaches.

(5) It is critical to nurture new types of community based Roma leadership. Further growing civil society and especially new types of Roma NGOs that are based in their communities, and represent their interest needs to be a priority in the long-term. Without this the effectiveness in regard to Roma inclusion will be low.

- While it is important to continue with a mainstream approach of support to Roma NGOs as an integral part of the NGO funds, it will be instrumental to further discuss the strategy in this direction with strategic partners like the Roma Initiatives programme of the OSF. This can bring for more clarity on the substantial synergy of the work of the NGO funds in regard to Roma inclusion.
- A complementary option is to consider matching the efforts of OSF by creating a joint regional partnership fund that will support Innovative Civic initiatives in regard to expanding community based capacity for empowerment of Roma.

(6) Critical to the success of the investments in Roma inclusion is the work at the local level. In this respect the Programme – Local and Regional Initiatives for Reducing Disparities and Social Exclusion has a lot of potential. In the current period this programme will be implemented only in some of the countries. We would suggest that in future financing periods it will be one of the main areas that will accommodate Roma inclusion programming, because:

- It can bring for testing an area-based approach with a longer term perspective of work in selected regions where disparities are most obvious;
- It can model seed initiatives based on an integrated approach to development that can be further expanded by EU funds. It can be linked with the new EU instruments for integrated territorial measures;
- It can include initiatives related to social economy and income generation. While they are of critical importance for activating communities, empowerment, and inclusion, the area of job creation is the least present in the funding;
- Based on the learning from EEA and Norway funding in the past period, some of the good practices applying an integrated approach in multiple regions can serve as an example. Such approaches can easily be developed as block grants.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Roma inclusion

Terms of Reference for a study on Roma inclusion
under the EEA and Norway Grants

EEA and Norway Grants

Through the EEA and Norway Grants, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway contribute to reducing disparities in Europe and to strengthening bilateral relations with 15 countries in central and southern Europe. The three countries cooperate closely with the EU through the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA).

The EEA EFTA States have contributed to European cohesion efforts ever since the EEA Agreement entered into force in 1994. €1.79 billion has been set aside under the Grants for 2009 to 2014. Norway provides 97% of the funding.

Read more on www.eeagrants.org

Introduction

The Financial Mechanism Office seeks to contract a consulting service for the preparation of a study of the EEA and Norway Grants funding to Roma inclusion.

Background

Background

The Roma are today Europe's largest minority, counting 10-12 million people, of which most are EU citizens. Despite efforts to improve the social inclusion and integration of Roma, many are still facing rising levels of impoverishment, social exclusion and discrimination. Roma EU citizens migrating and settling in other EEA countries has in recent times become a source of tension and public debate. The EU has highlighted need for better integration of Roma, and in 2011 the Commission adopted a Communication on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies by 2020. In line with the framework all EU Member States have now developed national Roma strategies.

The issue of Roma inclusion remains high on the political agenda across Europe, and Roma inclusion has also become an increasingly important priority under the EEA/N grants. While

the the social inclusion of Roma was not an explicit priority under the EEA/N grants 2004-09, some funding was targeted towards vulnerable groups, and a number of projects supported Roma inclusion measures⁴⁰. In the funding period 2009-14 there has been a shift towards making the social and economic inclusion of Roma a priority, ensuring that special measures are taken to include Roma as a target group in relevant programmes.

There is now a need to provide accurate and up-to date information on the relevant measures supported by the EEA/N grants. As the projects from the funding period 2004-09 are being concluded, the timing of the study will enable a complete picture of the supported measures from this period. In addition to providing factual information on the funding for Roma, the study may also provide input and guidance for Programme Operators under the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14 and serve as a useful reference document for further funding to Roma inclusion.

Purpose of the study

This study aims to provide a complete overview of all supported projects, sub-projects and programmes in the field of Roma inclusion under the EEA/N grants. The study will also extract results, lessons learned, best practices and recommendations for future funding. The study will focus on some of the countries receiving EEA/N grants funding with the largest Roma populations; Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic⁴¹. Information on the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma in the relevant countries combined with the identification of relevant national and EU strategies and funding programmes for Roma inclusion will provide context and background to the EEA/N grants funding.

Scope of the study

- i) **Results:**
 - a. **2004-09:** (*Mapping the support to Roma inclusion under the EEA/N grants 2004-09, including both individual projects and sub-projects under funds will be carried out by the FMO and the findings shall be used in the study*). Detail on the concrete results of the relevant projects and sub-projects, best practices and lessons learned. This should also include projects and sub-projects that targeted minorities and other vulnerable groups, with a focus on results for Roma inclusion.
 - b. **2009-14:** Strategies and possibilities for Roma inclusion support under the EEA/N grants 2009-14, - this should go beyond describing the actual areas of support and should include a presentation of how the programmes targeting disadvantaged and minorities can also reach Roma. Relevant programmes. Information on the system established for planning, monitoring and reporting on results. The partnership with and role of Council of Europe.
- ii) **Relevance:** The socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma in Bulgaria, the

⁴⁰ Under the EEA and Norway Grants 2004-09 the reporting system did not provide a full picture of the supported measures to Roma inclusion

⁴¹ Greece has a bigger Roma population (2,36%) than the Czech Republic (2,18%) and could be included in the study. Roma has not been a focus for EEA/N Grants support in Greece.

Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic. Current national and EU strategies and funding programmes for Roma inclusion in the five countries listed above. Swiss funding if relevant. Identifying synergies, complementarities and possible funding gaps. To what extent does the funding provided by the EEA/N grants correspond to the needs of the relevant countries?

- iii) **Sustainability:** Possibilities for continuation of benefits from the EEA/N grants funded projects on Roma inclusion after completion. The probability of continued ownership, impact and other long-term benefits.
- iv) **Future funding:** Highlighting best practices, areas of improvement, recommendations and key lessons learned for future funding. How can measures better target the Roma population in the framework of the EEA/N Grants? Input on possibilities for future bilateral cooperation? Indicators on Roma inclusion?

Study tools

The following tools shall be used to achieve the purpose of the study:

- Document review and analysis
- Semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders
- In-depth and on-the-ground review of selected projects and programmes

Study team

All members of the team are expected to have relevant academic qualifications and experience. The selected consultants should have working knowledge of national and European Roma inclusion policy and previous knowledge of Roma inclusion issues.

It is suggested that the FMO participate in parts of the study as observers.

Annex 2: List of respondents

Donors countries and the FMO

1. Jøranli Mette. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Norway
2. Maria Egeland Thorsnes. FMO of the EEA and Norway Grants
3. Matus Minarik. (Former officer) FMO of the EEA and Norway Grants
4. Agota Kovacs. FMO of the EEA and Norway Grants

Strategic Partners and stakeholders:

Council of Europe

5. Matthew Barr, Head of Resource Mobilisation and Donor Relations, Office of the Directorate General of Programmes, Council of Europe
6. Larissa Kirraeva - Council of Europe (Children and Youth at Risk Programme area)
7. Natalia..... - Council of Europe (Justice Sector programmes)

Open Society Foundation, Roma Initiatives office

8. Kinga Réthy. Deputy director. Open Society Foundation, Roma Initiative Office
9. Jelko Jovanovic. Director. Open Society Foundation. Roma Initiative office
10. Jennfier Tanaka. Programme coordinator. Open Society Foundation, Roma Initiative office

Other Stakeholders:

11. Andrey Ivanov, Human Development Advisor, UNDP Bratislava Regional Center
12. Viola Zentai. Executive director, advisor. Central European University – Center for Policy Studies; Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma
13. Béla Rácz. Project coordinator. Open Society Institute – Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma
14. Ádám Kullmann. Senior policy officer. Open Society Institute – Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma
15. Marius Taba. Program manager. Roma Education Fund
16. Alina Covaci. Program manager. Open Society Foundation, Roma Health Program

List of People Interviewed in Bulgaria

Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway

1. Ms. Guro Katharina Vikør (Ambassador),
2. Ms. Dagfrid Hjorthol,
3. Ms. Svetla Semerdjiewa

National Focal Point

4. Ms. Anelia Grozdanova,
5. Ms. Irena Boneva,
6. Mr. Garo Madukyan

Programme Operators and Project Promoters 2009-2014

7. Dr. Angel Kunchev. Ministry of Health (Programme Operator BG07 Public Health Initiatives)
8. Ms. Rossitca Gavazova. Ministry of the Interior (Programme Operator BG13 Schengen Cooperation)

9. Ms. Victoria Todorova, Ministry of the Interior (Programme Operator BG12 Domestic and Gender-Based Violence)
10. Ms. Penka Stoyanova, Ministry of the Interior (Programme Operator BG12 Domestic and Gender-Based Violence)
11. Name: Mr. Georgi Stoychev, Open Society Institute, Sofia (Programme Operator BG05 Funds for Non-Governmental Organisations)
12. Ms. Elitca Markova, Open Society Institute, Sofia (Programme Operator BG05 Funds for Non-Governmental Organisations)
13. Ms. Maria Valova. Ministry of Education and Health (Programme Operator BG 06 Children and Youth at Risk)
14. Ms. Lilia Kovacheva. Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Young People from the Minorities. Project promoter PDP Capacity Building, BG06 Children and Youth at Risk
15. Name: Ms. Nadya Parpulova,
16. Ms. Dessislava Velkova
17. Ms. Nadya Radkovska. Ministry of Justice. (Programme Operator BG15 Correctional Services, including Non-custodial Sanctions)

Programme Operators and Project Promoters 2004-2009

18. Mr. Zdravko Sechkov. Foundation for Local Government Report, Programme Operator NGO Fund 2004-2009
19. Ms. Dessislava Tencheva. Foundation for Local Government Report, Programme Operator NGO Fund 2004-2009
20. Ms. Rossitca Ivanova, National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues
21. Ms. Ahavni Topakbashiyan. National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues
22. Ms. Daniela Nikolova. National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues
23. Mr. Petar Atanasov. National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues
24. Mr. Nikola Petkov
25. Ms. Radostina Radanova, National Youth Programmes and Initiatives Department, Ministry of Education and Science
26. Albena Prokopieva. SOS Children's Villages Bulgaria. Type of stakeholder: Project Promoter, 2004-2009 NGO Fund
27. Mariya Boncheva. Community Council on Education – Alternative Montana Association, Project Promoter, 2004-2009 NGO Fund
28. Tatyana Vrabcheva. Alternatives Association. Project Promoter, 2004-2009 NGO Fund
29. Cvetelina Neshkova. Alliance for Regional and Civic Initiatives, Project Promoter, 2004-2009 NGO Fund
30. Antonia Vasileva. Alternative 55. : Project Promoter, 2004-2009 NGO Fund
31. Svetla Sivcheva. Naja Association. Project Promoter, 2004-2009 NGO Fund
32. Elitza Petrova. Global Initiative in Psychiatry – Blagoevgrad, Project Promoter, 2004-2009 NGO Fund

Other stakeholders

33. Name: Mr. Dimitar Dimitrov, director Roma Programme. Open society institute Sofia.
34. Mr. Boyan Zahariiev, Open society institute Sofia
35. Ms. Ivanka Ivanova, Open Society Institute Sofia
36. Mr. Deyan Kolev. Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance „Amalipe“
37. Mr. Nikolay Kirilov. Roma Lom Foundation
38. Mr. Georgi Bogdanov. National Network for the Children
39. Mr. Roumyan Sechkov. CEGA Foundation

40. Name: Mr. Gerassim Gerassimov. Swiss Contribution Office at the Embassy of Switzerland
41. Ms. Sara Perin, director. Trust for Social Achievement (America for Bulgaria Foundation)
42. Ms. Maria Metodieva, coordinator. Trust for Social Achievement (America for Bulgaria Foundation)
43. Dr. Ivaylo Turnev, National Roma health Mediators network
44. Ms. Dora Petkova, researcher and consultant, Roma health issues
45. Ms. Tsveta Petkova, researcher Roma health issues

List of people interviewed in the Czech Republic

Norwegian Embassy, Prague

1. Tijana Balac Nilsen. Deputy head of mission. Norwegian Embassy, Prague

National Focal Point and Programme Operators 2009-2014

2. Martin Boruta, Ministry of Finance, Prague
3. Markéta Mlejnková Ministry of Finance, Prague
4. Zuzana Drhová. Agency for Social Inclusion. Government Office of the Czech Republic, Prague
5. Štěpánka Gray Marková. co-ordinator of NGO fund. NROS Foundation, Prague

Project Promoters NGO fund subprojects 2004-2009

6. Tomáš Johanna. Project co-ordinator. Občanské sdružení - Společně – JEKHETANE, Ostrava
7. Martin Cichý. Director. Sdružení Romano jasnica, Trmice
8. Veronika Vaňková. Project co-ordinator. IQ Roma Service, Brno.
9. Elena Gorolová. Project co-ordinator. Vzájemné soužití, Ostrava
10. Pavel Košák. Project co-ordinator. Člověk v tísní o.p.s., Prague
11. Tomáš Habart. Project co-ordinator. Člověk v tísní o.p.s., Prague
12. Martina Volfová. Project co-ordinator. Charitní sdružení Děčín, Děčín
13. Marek Zemský. Project co-ordinator. Liga lidských práv, o.s., Brno

List of people interviewed in Hungary

Norwegian Embassy

1. Arild Moberg. Deputy, Institution: Royal Norwegian Embassy in Budapest
2. Sande and Tamás Polgár. Advisor. Royal Norwegian Embassy in Budapest

National Focal Point and Programme Operators 2009-2014

3. Katalin Czirfusz. Head of Unit. National Development Agency
4. Katalin Csire. Head of Unit. National Development Agency Managing Authority for International Co-operation Programmes, National Focal Point.
5. Zsuzsanna Pikó, programme manager, Managing Authority for Human Resources Programmes. PO Children and Youth Programme
6. Márton Matkó. Head of Unit. National Development Agency.
7. András Nun. Project manager. Autonomia Foundation. (NGO fund PO)
8. Anna Csongor. Director. Autonomia Foundation. (NGO Fund PO)

Programme Operators and Project Promoters 2004-2009

9. Dávid Hargitai. Project manager. Budapest Public Employment Service Non-profit Company (FKFSZ)
10. Gabriella Csépanyi. Director, project manager. Nutcracking Foundation

11. Juilanna Tomposch. Executive director, project manager. Camp Europe Felsőörs Education Nonprofit Limited Liability Company
12. Judit Berki. Project manager. Szécsény – Children’s Program – Hungarian Anti-Poverty Network.
13. Dr. Andera Kerekes, István Svecz. Office manager, ex project manager. Salgótarján Micro-Region Multipurpose Association
14. Katalin Mezei. Director, project manager. Burattino Elementary and Vocational School and Children Home
15. Gábor Márton. Director, project manager. Unbounded Heart Foundation
16. László Babai. President, project manager. Independent Roma Association of Bonyhád
17. Jenő Hartyándi. President. Mediawave International Visual Art Foundation
18. Andrea Blum. Professional manager. Association of Roma Youth of Drava Valley
19. Márton Illés. Program manager. Kurt Lewin Foundation
20. Gábor Daróczi. Director. Romaversitas Foundation
21. Name: Dr. Ferenc Horváth, Director. National Roma Police Association

List of people interviewed in Romania

Norwegian Embassy

1. Oystein Hovdkinn, Hilde Berit EIDE, Diana Sacarea. Norway Embassy
2. Thomas Stauffer. Swiss Embassy.

National Focal Point

3. Catalina Melita, Aurora Tranescu, Daniela Tala. Ministry of European Affairs

Programme Operators and Project Promoters 2009-2014

4. Florin Moisa. Roma Resource Centre. Partner of the Programme Operator 2009-2014
5. Mihaela Peter, Liliana Vasilescu, Paula Constantin, Cosmin Campean, Alexandru Trica. Romanian Social Development Fund
6. Stefania Andreescu. Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Care
7. Anca Ghinescu, Vasile Lungu, Adrian Curaj, Magda Resiga, Monica Cruceru, Lazar Vlasceanu, Cosmina Rughinis, Gelu Duminca – Agentia Impreuna. National Authority for Research and Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding.
8. Monica Ileana Calota, Adrian Georgescu, Valentina Neg. National Agency for Community
9. Gabriela Bica, Cristina Vladu, Mircea Mocanu, Constantin Sloga, Valentin Rosca, Alexandra Constantinescu, Lucia Duminica. Ministry of Health.
10. Diana Popescu, Alexandru Olaru, Andreea Dinulescu, Cristina Dumitru. Ministry of Justice.
11. Maximilian Nicolae, Adrian Petrescu, Carmen Ungureanu. National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons
12. Elena Ciocan, Ana Maria Savulescu, Ruxandra Jipa. Ministry of Interior.
13. Dan Cristea, Radu Tudor Petre. General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police.

Programme Operators and Project Promoters 2004-2009

14. Miruna Tirca. Komunitas Association.
15. Daniel Radulescu. Roma Centre for Health Policies – Sastipen.
16. Marian Daragiu. Ruhama Foundation.

Other Stakeholders

17. Marie-Jeanne Ghigea, Adriana Rachieru. AMPOSDRU (Management Authority)
18. Costel Bercus. Roma Education Fund Romania
19. Daniel Vasile, Marica Ionescu. National Agency for Roma
20. Damian Draghici. Senator/ Honorary Counsellor on Roma Issues in Prime Minister Office
21. Marian Mandache, Adrian Vasile. Romani Criss.
22. Rahela Dadu, Mirela Faitas. Roma Civic Alliance
23. Gelu Duminica. Impreuna Agency
24. Danieal Tarnovschi. Soros Foundation Romania
25. Name: Valeriu Ioan Olaru, Adriana Avram. Astra Museum. Project promoter for pre-defined project
26. Name: Ionut Sibian, Anca Nicovescu. Civil Society Development Foundation Programme Operator (2004-2009/2009-2014)

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