Annex 1.

To the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

PROJECT PROPOSAL

"BOOSTING THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN MOLDOVA THROUGH EMPOWERMENT AND ENGAGEMENT"

32 months

(Estimated time frame: May 1, 2012 – December 31, 2014)

SUBMITTED BY

SOROS FOUNDATION-MOLDOVA

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PROJECT SUMMARY:

The project seeks to support the empowerment of people in rural communities to claim their rights and demand accountability from local government. The project focuses on rural communities and activities at the community level as an area that is the least developed in Moldova and as a long-term strategy for ensuring a sustainable democratic course of Moldova.

Rural communities constitute the majority of Moldova's population,[1] with the share of socially excluded people higher than the national average.[2] While there are many factors that lead to rural communities' marginalization and consequently different strategies to fight it, we believe that one of the core strategies should be rights awareness and empowerment of communities to claim respect for their rights, demand accountability from the government and engage in activities of common interest. This project is designed in line with this strategy, focusing on empowering local communities through selected "agents of change" that can plant the necessary seeds for further community engagement and participation.

The project is implemented in three main substantive areas that cover different but closely interlinked domains that promote empowerment of people in rural communities in a democratic state, namely:

- Legal empowerment of rural communities through a network of community-based paralegals,
- Empowerment of women in rural communities, and
- Strengthened regional media network for informed citizenry, participatory governance and accountability.

These three areas have been chosen both based on the experience of a previous project implemented by the Soros Foundation-Moldova with the Swedish Government's support meant to improve good governance in Moldova through increased public participation, and on the analysis of the needs in the country, priorities identified in the Swedish Government's cooperation strategy for Moldova 2011-2014 and the recommendations of the Review of civil society organizations in Moldova commissioned by the Swedish Government and undertaken in 2011.

While Moldova has done impressive progress after the change of regime in 2009 in terms of media freedom, openness to civil society, initiation of several critical reforms and EU integration preparatory stages, the country is still in a constitutional stalemate. In terms of economy the Government managed well a post-crisis economic recovery, but that was mostly due to regional context and not to some specific improvements at local level. Hence the progress achieved so far is not yet a tangible progress at the community level. The civil society groups from the capital appreciate the openness of the government and the efforts regarding EU integration (while criticizing other aspects of the government's activity), business people that are not harassed by the politics also appreciate the new course, but these achievements are not felt at the community level. The permanent election-type of rhetoric is not helpful either. Often the democratic and EU integration course are mistakenly portrayed as the reasons for poor economic performance of the state. Democratic values are portrayed as "imported" values of the West, for example the case of the anti-discrimination bill and the country-wide blackmail campaign initiated by the Orthodox Church (supported by other religious groups as well) and extremist groups.

These developments show how fragile democracy building is still in Moldova and how important it is to focus on community level. Therefore, the project will focus on empowering people (predominantly poor) from rural communities to firstly learn about their rights, understand the values of a democracy and the role of the community and the state. The project will focus on leaders from the community that can act as the agents of change and bridge to the local community, such as the paralegals and women. By this approach the project will both empower the communities to take an active part in local decision-making and will pave the way for a more gender-balanced representation at the local level.

The paralegals have proven as viable agents of change in the communities through the previous project implemented with the Swedish Government's support. The paralegals come from and live in the community, knowing well their needs and hence being able to engage in activities of utmost importance for the communities. They will further support the community members through education and basic legal advice. The project will work on two levels to promote legal empowerment through community-based paralegals. On the one hand the project will continue testing paralegals in action working at community level, and on the other hand the project will work with the main stakeholders at the policy level to ensure the continuation of paralegal services with government funding. The Justice Sector Reform Strategy for 2011-2016 provides for testing and supporting the establishment of a network of community-based paralegals, but the Government has no skills and opportunities to prepare adequate policies to implement this service without civil society support. Given the Soros Foundation-Moldova's previous experience in this respect, it is best placed to engage on further testing and preparation of adequate policies for sustainable community-based paralegal services in the country.

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[1] See National Bureau of Statistics: stable population at the beginning of 2011 – slightly over 2 mln living in rural areas and around 1.5 mln in urban areas (excluding Transnistria).

[2] 2010/2011 National Human Development Report, Republic of Moldova, From Social Exclusion towards inclusive Human Development, UNDP, 2011

When such approved, this will be a sustainable mechanism of community empowerment for the years to come and an effective tool for reducing the ever-lasting gap between central policies and community life.

As community based paralegals is totally apolitical it is worth being tested in such a difficult environment like the one in Transnistria. To this end, the project intends to empower also selected Transnistrian NGOs with knowledge and skills about community based paralegals and the benefits they could eventually bring to poor and marginalized groups and to the human right advancement in that region.

The project places a special focus on women who continue to be among the marginalized groups of Moldova irrespective of the many laws and strategic documents adopted. As with other areas, the project covers the gap that is not filled by other active actors in the field. Hence the project will empower women from rural communities to engage in decision-making processes and development of their communities through well-developed training and support with implementation of small scale initiatives. The timing of the project is particularly favorable as it provides us the chance to steadily support and prepare good leaders for the next local elections to take place in 2015. In the longer-term, women's participation in local decision-making processes will ensure a more balanced representation of communities and a more social orientation of the local government. The Women's Academy for Leadership, to be developed within the project, is a new and unique training opportunity for women's empowerment in Moldova and, after being tested during the project, it will serve as a good basis for similar training as a continuing opportunity for empowering women in Moldova.

Across the sectors the project will support the establishment of a sustainable regional media network that will provide the population with accurate information about their daily lives problems presented in a fair manner, on the one hand, and will also channel this information to the national media and the central public authorities that are so disconnected from the daily lives of communities they are called to represent. While media freedom has significantly improved in Moldova in the last 3 years, a new phenomenon is threatening the media, namely the threat of monopolization of media by private companies linked to political forces and consequently, the use of media to solely promote certain political agendas. The project will provide support to the regional media network both regarding the development of sustainable business strategies and production of qualitative reports about people's lives, often outside of politicians' and businessmen' s interests.

Within the third area of the project (media) we will have a special focus on Transnistria by bridging the two parts of the country through regional media reports. We believe that the recent elections in Transnistria and the changes in the Moldovan Government that started concrete actions to resolve the conflict, plus the international support for the 5+2 negotiations format create opportunities for changes in that respect. While there is a lot of support provided to conflict resolution on various levels, there is not enough exchange of information between the two parts. The 20 year gap has driven the populations apart and one needs to take this into account in any strategy regarding this conflict. Our project is designed to fill the gap regarding the regional media. The added value of our project is the establishment of long-lasting sustainable cooperation between regional media outlets of the both banks of the Nistru River and creation of opportunities for exchanges of news and reports between the two sides. In this way the population of Moldova will get more accurate information from Transnistria and vice-versa, which will contribute to confidence-building between representatives from both sides of Nistru.

Project impact and intended outcomes:

The overarching goal of the project is to lay the ground for sustainable development of Moldova as a democratic state. The project seeks to achieve this by empowering people from rural communities to become more active in both claiming respect for their rights and demand accountability from the local government. Hence the project seeks to contribute to the following three main fields:

- Improved good governance and respect of human rights in rural communities of Moldova through legal empowerment, which shall in a longer term reduce poverty levels and build the foundation for a more inclusive policy-making;
- Strengthened good governance at the local level by empowering women from rural localities to become active leaders in their communities;
- Establishment a pluralistic, diverse and sustainable regional media sector as a means of supporting good governance, empowering rural people and achieving development goals.

The project will achieve these goals by reaching the following outcomes:

Legal empowerment of rural communities through a network of community-based paralegals:

- Intended Outcome 1: People in rural communities are empowered to efficiently handle legal issues at local level with the assistance of paralegals;
- Intended Outcome 2: Legal empowerment through the network of paralegals is integrated into the governmental policies and CSOs agendas.

Empowerment of women in rural communities:

- Intended Outcome 1: Young women from rural areas are able to influence the local democratic processes

- Intended Outcome 2: Women leaders from rural areas learn to communicate within a network and promote advancement of women in local leadership

Strengthened regional media network for informed citizenry, participatory governance and accountability:

- Intended Outcome 1: A stronger pluralistic, diverse and sustainable regional media sector in Moldova.
- Intended Outcome 2: Breaking the informational isolation of the Transnistrian population through a strong engagement of the media from both banks of the Nistru River.

PROJECT BUDGET: $ 1,685,995.00 USD

PROJECT AREA I. LEGAL EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH A NETWORK OF COMMUNITY-BASED PARALEGALS

PROJECT AREA I – SUMMARY:

The project seeks to contribute to the improvement of the lives of rural communities in Moldova through legal empowerment, facilitated by community-based paralegals. It relies on the understanding of legal empowerment as a means to use the law for the benefit of the disadvantaged and hold government accountable for its actions. The project also relies on the assumption that poverty is not only a result of poor resources, it is first of all a result of mismanagement and ignorance of the system towards the needs of all, and hence legal empowerment should be an important part in any poverty alleviation work. In this respect, the project will continue to promote the model of community-based paralegals as part of primary legal aid services, alongside or combined with the primary social services provided by the state. The paralegals' role is to help people solve basic problems of a legal nature, refer them to a specialist or specialized agency, mediate local conflicts, educate people about their rights and how to claim respect for their rights, as well as motivate and support community members to engage in local decision-making processes and demand accountability from local government. The project will develop policy proposals for state-funding of paralegals and link the network to other civil society actors. As a result of the project implementation, a network of community-based paralegals will be created in Moldova and the instruments for state-funding of legal empowerment services via paralegals will be developed.

The implementation of the project area will contribute to the achievement of the Sida Cooperation Strategy for Moldova 2011-2014, objectives 1 and 2, sector 1: Democracy, human rights and gender equality (Moldovan public administration is more efficient at planning and implementing reforms; Moldova has a more independent civil society that increasingly supplements and balances other actors in the public and private sectors). The paralegal network will empower the rural population to claim respect for their rights and demand accountability from the local government, which in the longer term will increase the efficiency of the public administration at local level.

PROJECT AREA I - CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE:

The project is designed to promote legal empowerment of the poor in rural areas through a network of paralegals. The project relies on the understanding of legal empowerment as defined by current research and experience in the field, primarily defining legal empowerment as a "broad" and "multi-faceted" concept, at the core meaning "the use of law to specifically strengthen the disadvantaged".[3] The project also relies on the findings of the 2008 report by the high-level Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor that describes legal empowerment as "a process of systemic change through which the poor and excluded become able to use the law, the legal system, and legal services to protect and advance their rights and interests".[4] The project further relies on research and experiences on legal empowerment projects implemented by the Open Society Justice Initiative and its partners,[5] particularly in Sierra Leone,[6] Philippines and Ukraine. Open Society Justice Initiative views legal empowerment as "the use of law to specifically benefit the disadvantaged. It empowers citizens and communities as agents in their own development; demands accountability of the state; and fosters the rule of law and peaceful dispute resolution. Legal empowerment offers practical legal solutions to everyday problems of the poor by using community-driven models such as paralegals and other non-lawyer resources and by adapting and responding to local context, including informal systems of justice."[7] It further recommends this concept as an important part in the development work.

The project understands the concept of legal empowerment to include the following three main elements: (1) Legal empowerment is a means for improving good governance, relying on the assumption that a population that is aware of its rights and obligations is more likely to demand their respect, which will lead to more accountability and hence better governance; (2) Legal empowerment includes basic education about rights (legal literacy) and is a necessary part in a comprehensive legal aid system, as a prerequisite of an accessible and equitable legal system. The open system for basic legal advice on community system should contribute to early conflict resolution and in the longer term to reduced volume for courts' work, as well as ill-founded petitions to the state authorities;

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[3] See Steve Golub, *What is Legal Empowerment? An Introduction*, in Legal Empowerment: Practitioners' Perspectives, Edited by Steve Golub, Series Editor Thomas McInerney, Legal and Governance Reform: Lessons Learned No. 2/2010, International Development Law organization

[4] Making the Law Work for Everyone, Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor and UNDP, 2008, report available at: http://www.undp.org/publications/Making_the_Law_Work_for_Everyone%20(final%20rpt).pdf

[5] See for example the Community-based Paralegals, a Practitioners' Guide, Open Society Justice Initiative, Open Society Foundations, 2010.

[6] The project's approach is analyzed by Vivek Maru in "Between Law and Society. Paralegals and the Provision of Primary Justice Services in Sierra Leone", Open Society Institute, 2006, Second Printing 2010.

[7] Legal Empowerment. An integrated approach to justice and development, Open Society Institute, *Working Paper*, September 2010 (draft, not published yet).

and (3) Legal empowerment is a tool that may, in the long term, contribute to poverty reduction as communities are empowered to deal with their problems, seek solutions, and demand respect of their rights.

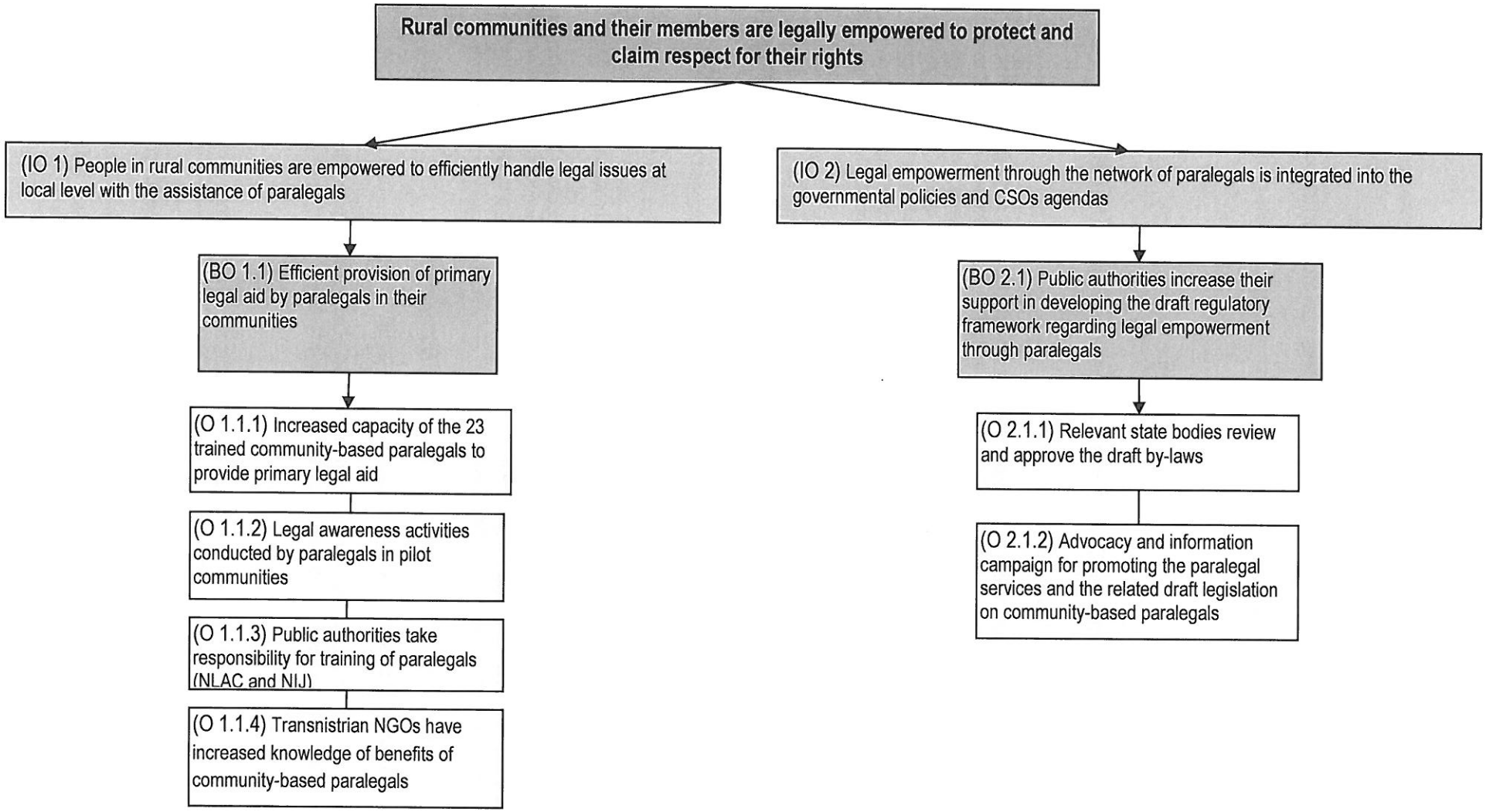
The project builds on the experience of a two-year project on "Improving Good Governance in Moldova through Increased Public Participation", the component "Bridging the Gap between People and Government", focusing on legal empowerment of rural communities through a network of community-based paralegals, implemented by SFM with Swedish Government's support during 2010-2011. The project created a network of 30 paralegals based in rural communities, equipped them with basic working tools, including offices provided by local government. All the paralegals received initial seven–week training, spread over a period of one year and were closely monitored during their first year of operation by the project team. The majority of the paralegals integrated well in their communities, gaining respect and interest of the communities in their work. During one year of activity, the paralegals proved that their presence in the community is necessary for several purposes: to help people solve individual problems that do not require the assistance of a professional lawyer; to educate communities about their rights, to help identify the nature and avenues for solving their problems; and serve as a bridge between the local authority and the community, especially for undertaking activities in the community interest and for involving the community in decision-making processes. However, one year is too short for a full integration and appreciation by the community. The main challenge the project faced, confirmed by the paralegals, is the rural communities' low awareness of rights, little initiative in claiming the respect of their rights and using the legal system for remedying their violations. The legal needs study[8] undertaken within the project shows a 22.2% incidence of legal problems encountered by Moldovans, which is quite low as compared to other countries where such studies were carried out (the Netherlands, Scotland), including countries with a similar legal system and history (Ukraine, Bulgaria, Russia). The low number of reported problems could be explained by several factors, including that people do not know their rights and hence do not seek remedies for the problems they have, accepting them as such and looking for various solutions, avoiding the legal system.

During 2010-2011, the project tested two models of paralegals, namely paralegals that are combining their work with that of a social assistant and paralegals that only work as paralegals. The 1-year experience showed that both models are viable for Moldova, but financially the combination of social-assistants and paralegals is more attractive. The project will further test and seek for the best model or a combination of the two models for further supporting and replicating the paralegal network. In addition, the project will work, alongside other on-going efforts, on developing a mechanism of Government's procurement of paralegal services, which does not exist at the moment and is one of the biggest challenges in connecting the paralegal network with the Government funds, both locally and centrally. The Justice Sector Reform Strategy for 2012-2016, approved by the Parliament on November 25, 2011, includes setting up community-based paralegals throughout the country, which will be done based on our project results and recommendations. The previous project could not identify the appropriate training and accreditation institution for paralegals, due to the short duration of the project. This aspect will have to be clarified in the current project. In advocating for state funding for supporting the paralegal network the project relies on the Law on state guaranteed legal aid that provides for the state obligation to create a system of primary legal aid in the country.

In parallel, the SFM is currently implementing a project for a group of 15 community paralegals who participate in the processes of monitoring and documentation of human rights violations in rural areas and liaise with national human right protection mechanisms and NGOs. This project is entirely funded from SFM core and OSF regional funds. The lessons learned and skills will be transferred to the entire network.

[8] The legal needs study report was presented at a public event on April 11th, 2012, disseminated and posted on the SFM website (http://soros.md/files/publications/documents/Legal%20Needs%20Moldova_en.pdf).

PROJECT AREA I – INTERVENTION LOGIC:



Project Area I – Impact:

Rural communities and their members are legally empowered to protect and claim respect for their rights.

PROJECT AREA I - OUTCOMES:

Intended Outcome 1: People in rural communities are empowered to efficiently handle legal issues at local level with the assistance of paralegals;
Intended Outcome 2: Legal empowerment through the network of paralegals is integrated into the governmental policies and CSOs agendas.

PROJECT AREA I – ACTIVITIES:

Intended Outcome 1:
People in rural communities are empowered to efficiently handle legal issues at local level with the assistance of paralegals.

Activity 1.1 Hiring and supporting paralegals' activity for 32 months

The 23 paralegals will provide basic legal advice to community members; educate community members about their rights, including the local government authority; refer community members to appropriate institutions and / or lawyers; solve local conflicts, including through mediation; motivate community members to take initiatives in solving community problems, including engaging with the local authority in activities for solving the respective problems. Hence the paralegals will work on an individual level, helping individuals solve their issues, and on community level, facilitating community members' engagement in solving issues of common concern. The problems the paralegals will be working on will vary, depending on the issues relevant to the community and its individual members, most often encountered problems being the ones related to land, property, disputes between neighbors, labor/employment relations, consumer problems, documentation and access to services, etc.

The project will also seek to ensure a balance between the two models of paralegals – those that are combining the work with social assistants and the ones acting mainly as paralegals only – in order to further test and develop proposals for the most appropriate model for its replication nationwide.

The paralegals will have a flexible work schedule, rendering their services in their offices provided by local authorities or at their clients' homes when the latter cannot come for health reasons and/or the presence of the paralegal is necessary for documentation and mediation of conflicts. They will keep permanent contact with the project staff, the trainers and other experts engaged by the project for solving issues that paralegals are unable to solve on their own. All the paralegals will be equipped with computers and internet access. The working paralegals' tools will be further developed and included in each paralegal's routine. These include, but are not limited to, the following: paralegal registry, case file templates, monthly activity reports.
The project provides for an exit mechanism according to which there will be a gradual reduction of remuneration for paralegals during the last 9 months. It will be supplemented from other sources, most likely from governmental ones. The same mechanism was approved and applied for Public Defenders who currently receive 100% remuneration from budgetary resources. More details about the exit strategy are provided in the Sustainability chapter.

Activity 1.2 Development of paralegal training curriculum and training methodology

The curriculum for continuous training needs to be developed.

An expert, assisted by the project coordinator, in cooperation with the team of paralegals' trainers, will revise the training curriculum and update the training methodology. A special attention will be paid to the leadership and communication skills of paralegals.

Activity 1.3 Provision of in-service training to paralegals

The training sessions will be interactive, with the requirement that paralegals read in advance and come to the training only to reinforce the knowledge and acquire practical skills.

The paralegals will undergo 10 in-service training sessions, of 5 days each, spread over the entire project period and 2 evaluation ones.

An important part of the training program will be based on the feedback collected from paralegals and on monitor's findings, making sure that there is direct connection between the training curriculum and the paralegals daily work.

The project will have a close cooperation with the NIJ (National Institute of Justice) and the NLAC (National Legal Aid Council) during both the development of the curriculum and training. These are the two public institutions which will take over the training system when the project is concluded. Therefore, a representative of these organizations will participate in all the trainings, while at least 1/3 of the trainers shall also be active staff of the NIJ. In order to ensure a steady know how transfer, the NIJ and the NLAC will also be the project partners in organizing the round-tables and in developing the referral mechanism as provided for in Activity 1.4.

Activity 1.4 Paralegals' referrals to legal aid lawyers and link with the legal aid system

The paralegals deal with three main categories of issues, from the perspective of the skills and resources necessary for solving them: routine issues that can be solved by the paralegal him/herself; issues that require the involvement of a lawyer and issues that raise systemic problems that require a combination of advocacy methods. For routine problems the project will equip the paralegals with knowledge and skills to deal with on their own, including by providing a constant support by the project team (legal skills back up in particular). For systemic problems the project team will engage with the paralegal and/or another civil society group or strategic lawyer will be contacted for advocating for solutions to the identified problem. There are still a number of problems that require ordinary lawyer services, which the paralegals are not in a position to provide. In this respect, the paralegals will recommend the beneficiaries to contact a lawyer. However, for the poor beneficiaries reaching a lawyer is an issue especially if they need to travel to the raion. For this category of beneficiaries, the paralegals will be trained to explain the eligibility criteria for benefitting from free legal aid, as well as the ways of contacting a legal aid lawyer and helping them make an appointment so that the beneficiary does not travel to the raion center when the lawyer is not available.

In this respect, the project will seek to establish a partnership with the National Legal Aid Council and its Territorial Offices in order to develop a referral system of legal aid requests by paralegals. The project will hire an expert who will help the National Legal Aid Council prepare the concept for a referral system, which will be later on tested within the project. A round-table will be organized to discuss the referral mechanism drafted by the expert.

Activity 1.5 Monitoring of the paralegals' work

In addition to the project coordinator, the project will benefit from a lawyer's services who will visit the paralegals on a periodic basis and maintain permanent contact (via telephone or email) in order to respond to routine paralegals' queries (the position of a monitor in the project). The Monitor will collect monthly reports from the paralegals, review them and prepare paralegals' activity progress reports every three months to be reviewed by the NLAC. The project coordinator and the project monitor will develop paralegals' performance indicators to be discussed and approved by the NLAC. The indicators will be amended to respond to the realities and prevent the bureaucratization of the paralegals' work.

Activity 1.6 Review and update the basic legal guide and the paralegal's guide

The basic legal guide consists of an explanation in a plain language of all legal fields relevant for rural communities. The guide has been developed within the previous project and is meant as a living document, to be permanently updated with new information or amendment as new laws or amendments are passed. The main principle will be kept, mainly that the information be presented in a simplified manner to be understood by ordinary people. The guide will be updated every six months through paralegals' individual inquiries or monthly reports, as well as trainer's observations after paralegal training sessions.

The paralegal guide is a methodological guide addressed to the paralegals, containing advice on the main paralegal skills, such as interviewing, writing (petitions, requests etc), teaching about law and human rights, solving conflicts through negotiation and mediation, referring to other specialists or agencies, public speaking, community mobilization and documentation of paralegal's work.

The basic legal guide and the paralegals' guide will be posted on the website created for legal empowerment in Moldova. They will be used for creating an internet-based program on basic legal information, available to any person looking for a legal solution to a specific problem of a legal nature.

Intended Outcome 2:
Legal empowerment through the network of paralegals is integrated into the governmental policies and CSOs agendas.

Activity 2.1 Establishment of a working group to develop and advance draft legislation for endorsement of stakeholders' support for community-based paralegals

The Project will work with the Ministry of Justice, the National Legal Aid Council and the Ministry of Labor, Social and Family Protection on policy development in the legal empowerment area. In this respect, after one year of project operation, the project, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, will establish a working group in order to develop the legal framework for accrediting the paralegals and development of draft legislation to allow procurement of paralegals' services by local and central public authorities. At

the same time, the amended legal framework should allow for a combination of governmental resources with those of civil society organizations in order to make paralegals' services more attractive and diverse. For a successful achievement of this task, the working group members will benefit from one study visit to countries where primary legal services are provided by non-lawyers.

The project will regularly organize consultative round-tables with the participation of public authorities, MPs, governmental agencies, civil society and donor community with the aim of enhancing their support, ensure their regular update on WG findings and collect their feedback at different stages of legal drafting.

Activity 2.2 Public outreach

The project will develop a new website, designed specifically for legal empowerment of the poor in Moldova. The website will include the project description, the paralegals' working tools, the paralegal guide and basic legal guide. The website will also be updated with success stories from paralegals' work and will be linked to the partners the paralegals will engage with, as well as with paralegals' networks in other countries (for example, the networks facilitated through the Global Legal Empowerment Network, coordinated by Namati – www.namati.org).

The project will seek to engage actively the media sector in promoting the project and the success stories. Firstly, the project will be launched with a press conference, so that the public is informed about the vision, objectives and sought results of the project. Further, the project will feed the media outlets with information about the project development, so that it is constantly on local and national media, both print and broadcast. In particular, the network of local radio and TV stations will be approached to continuously cover the work of paralegals and exchange information between different regions of the country. In this respect, the project team will also help the paralegal liaise with the TV and Radio stations from the network supported by component 2.

At least 2 promotional videos regarding the project vision and impact will be produced and agreements with the national and private TV channels will be made to broadcast them. All the information will be available on the website created by the project.

In parallel, the project will seek ways to use social media in promoting the project, including by creating a Facebook page and liaising with bloggers interested in writing about the project vision and results.

PROJECT AREA I – HYPOTHESIS AND RISK ANALYSIS:

The project operates on the following hypothesis:

- Limited or lack of access to basic legal advice and information leads to further marginalization of the rural areas and further increase of poverty rates. Legal advice is available only in the towns and even that is conditioned on paying a lawyer or finding an NGO that provides legal aid. In the context of a predominantly rural country, the focus on empowering rural communities to tackle their problems through increased awareness of their rights and public participation in the community life is crucial for the sustainability of democracy, rule of law and good governance in the country. Therefore, the state has to provide funding for basic legal advice and community education about rights.

Thus, the project seeks to empower the poor members of the rural communities in Moldova to protect their rights and actively participate in public life, with the goal of effectively influencing systemic changes in the country. Through a permanent coordination and supervision of community-based paralegals and effective communication with the central public authorities the project seeks to determine coherent and cost-effective changes in the legal aid system and practices of central and local authorities, which originate from and lead to improving the quality of life of the poor members of rural communities.

The project envisages the following main categories of risks and will employ the following strategies to address them:

Internal risks:

Risk 1: Quality of the paralegals *(low risk level)*

Project response: Human resources in rural areas are a big problem faced in any area of socio-economic life; therefore the project will put a special focus on training and monitoring of paralegals. The project will significantly improve the paralegals' working tools, will develop a Code of Conduct and will design a continuous monitoring by periodic visits to the paralegals and continuous communication via telephone, Skype and email with the project team.

Risk 2: Paralegals' turnover *(medium risk level)*

Project response: Given the usual turnover of people and the varying quality of paralegals, we envisage at least 20 paralegals out of the total of the 23 to stay within the project successfully and be involved further in the network. The project will also develop a transparent and sustainable substitution mechanism.

Risk 3: Corrupt practices at local level *(medium risk level)*

Project response: the project is aware of the spread corrupt practices in the country and is aware of the danger of possible corrupt behavior of certain paralegals (to claim or accept remuneration for their activity) or not willing to stand up to the local public authorities if needs be to defend someone's rights. The project monitor will pay a special attention to this aspect. The monitor will collect feedback not only from the paralegals, but also from the community members regarding the paralegals' activity, as well as liaise with the public authority. The Paralegals' Code of Conduct to be developed within the project will be a tool for regulating the paralegal's conduct in more details and should help prevent corrupt and other inappropriate behavior.

External risks:

Risk 1: Political and economic instability of the state and the failure of the Government and Parliament to act on the proposed legislative drafts and provide funding for the paralegal services. *(low risk level)*

Project response: SFM signed a long-term collaboration agreement with the MoJ and NLAC on developing primary legal aid and legal empowerment in the country through community-based paralegals. Hence the risk related to potential political changes or Government failure to act upon its promises is properly addressed.

The project will start the work on the legislative framework, which will include cost estimations and impact assessment of the proposed amendments already in the second year of the project, so that there is sufficient time to develop the amendments and secure political support. The project's public outreach strategies will ensure public support for the project and will build pressure for the politicians to support the proposals. In case the proposals are not adopted in the due time to allow immediate state funding for the paralegals once the project is over, the Soros Foundation-Moldova will seek alternative funding to secure the network's continuation for a certain period of time. In the worst case scenario, even if state funding does not intervene immediately and no additional funding is received for keeping the network, the project will still have a significant impact on the pilot communities as it will leave behind 23 well trained and skillful paralegals, that will be well equipped to either find a job within the local public authority or non-governmental sector. The tools created by the project, in particular the website with the invaluable information about rights, problems encountered and advice on remedies for such problems will remain available for the Moldovan public. The Soros Foundation-Moldova will continue working in the legal empowerment area and seek support for continuing the paralegal services at community level in Moldova.

PROJECT AREA I – PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK:

Impact: Rural communities and their members are legally empowered to protect and claim respect for their rights.

INTENDED OUTCOME 1	Indicators	Means of verification	Baseline	Targets
People in rural communities are empowered to efficiently handle legal issues at local level with the assistance of paralegals	- Number of requests for legal advice and information addressed to paralegals in pilot communities	- paralegals' registers and monthly activity reports - monitor's reports on field visits (8 field visits per month)	By 2012: over 6000 requests during 2010-2012	2013: an average of 350 requests for legal advice and information addressed to paralegals in pilot communities on a monthly basis 2014: an average of 400 requests for legal advice and information addressed to paralegals in pilot communities on a monthly basis
	- Number of referrals for legal aid services in pilot communities channeled through paralegals	- paralegals' activity reports - data collected from TOs registers and annual reports of the NLAC	By 2012: zero	2013: referral mechanism developed and approved 2014: a functioning referral system, with at least 50 cases referred to TOs of NLAC
	- number of people who address paralegals and took action to solve their	- monitor's reports	By 2012: no data available	2013: 25% of people who addressed the paralegals took action to solve their

	problems related to specific legal fields (actions include: addressing lawyers, notaries, filing complaints and requests with relevant public authorities, engage in alternative dispute resolution)	- paralegals' registers - client case files		legal problems 2014: 35-40% of people who addressed the paralegals took action to solve their legal problems
Bridging Outcome 1.1	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Targets**
Efficient provision of primary legal aid by paralegals in their communities	- number of people who are satisfied with the services provided by paralegals	- interviews with 15% of paralegals' beneficiaries, randomly selected from paralegals' registers (conducted by paralegals' monitor) - interviews with public authorities (conducted by paralegals' monitor) - client satisfaction questionnaire, done on a permanent basis in a box, anonymous, self-administered	By 2012: limited knowledge of level of satisfaction among rural population	2013: over 60% of paralegals' clients are satisfied with their services 2014: increased or at least maintained level of satisfaction among paralegals' beneficiaries
	- Number of community members actively participating in public lectures on community problems of a legal nature, delivered by paralegals	- paralegals' registers and monthly activity reports - monitor's reports on field visits	By 2012: an average of 10 people participate in a public lecture organized by paralegals	2014: a 50% increase in the number of community members actively participating in public lectures
	- Number of legal consultations sought by paralegals and offered by the project monitor and legal counselor	- legal consultations register (kept by monitor)	By 2012: an average of 46 legal consultations offered per month	2014: decreased number of consultations sought by paralegals (maximum 23 consultations per month)
Outputs	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Target**
Output 1.1.1 Increased capacity of the 23 trained community-based paralegals to provide primary legal aid	- number of increased grades after each paralegals' training	- evaluations, case studies (prepared by trainers prior to each training)	By 2012: Minimal grade: 10 points (out of 20) Maximal grade: 19 points (out of 20)	2013: a 25% increase in paralegals' grades 2014: paralegals maintain or further increase their grades
	- number of paralegals who actively participate in discussions during trainings (bring real examples into	- individual performance sheets (filled in by trainers during each training)	By 2012: passive involvement of paralegals in trainings during	2013: at least 15 out of 23 paralegals actively participate in discussions during trainings

	discussions, address questions, engage in debating)		discussions	2014: 20 out of 23 paralegals actively participate in discussions during trainings
Output 1.1.2 Legal awareness activities conducted by paralegals in pilot communities	- Number of public lectures organized by paralegals in pilot communities	- paralegals' activity reports	By 2012: public lectures organized occasionally in pilot communities	2014: 5 public lectures conducted by each of the 23 paralegals throughout the project
Output 1.1.3 Public authorities take responsibility for training of paralegals (NLAC and NIJ)	- number of NIJ and NLAC staff who participate in revising paralegals' curriculum and in developing the accreditation scheme	- minutes of working meetings - revised curriculum and accreditation scheme	By 2012: 1 NLAC staff member participated in developing the initial training curriculum	2014: 5 NIJ and NLAC staff members revise paralegals' curriculum and develop the accreditation scheme
	- number of trainings conducted in partnership with NIJ and NLAC	- list of participants - signed collaboration agreement with NIJ and NLAC	By 2012: zero	2014: 3 trainings conducted in partnership with NIJ and NLAC
Output 1.1.4 Transnistrian NGOs have increased knowledge of benefits of community-based paralegals	- Number of Transnistrian NGOs participating in study visits to paralegals' communities and roundtable	- list of participants - follow-up reports written by Transnistrian NGOs after study visits - minutes of the roundtable	By 2012: zero	2014: 3-5 Transnistrian NGOs participate in study visits to paralegals' villages and in roundtable
	- Number of actions taken by Transnistrian NGOs to initiate primary legal aid in Transnistria	- success stories on initiating primary legal aid in Transnistria shared by Transnistrian NGOs	By 2012: zero	2014: 3-5 actions taken by Transnistrian NGOs to initiate primary legal aid in Transnistria

INTENDED OUTCOME 2	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Targets**
Legal empowerment through the network of paralegals is integrated into the governmental policies and CSOs	- number of normative acts that reflect the systemic approach towards legal empowerment and related services' procurements from paralegals and other civil society groups	- by-laws, regulations, strategies, policies	By 2012: primary legal aid provided for in 3 unconnected normative acts	2014: 6 normative acts provide for integrated approach towards primary legal aid delivery, including procurement of related services from paralegals and other civil

agendas				society groups
Bridging Outcome 2.1	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Targets**
Public authorities increase their support in developing the draft regulatory framework regarding legal empowerment through paralegals	- number of laws and by-laws drafted with the participation of local and central public authorities	- 1 action plan of working group on drafting the regulatory framework - minutes of working group meetings - number of concluding observations and recommendations of the working group's study visit	By 2012: - collaboration agreement signed with the relevant public authorities (MoJ, MLSFP, NLAC) - Impact Assessment of the Law on State Guaranteed Legal Aid - Ministerial Decision regarding the delegation of project representatives into the monitoring groups for the implementation of the Strategy for Justice Sector Reform	2014: - 1 mechanism for procurement of paralegals' services by central and local authorities developed - draft legislation and by-laws for institutionalizing the paralegals services nationwide developed - 1 mechanism for securing government funds for paralegal services developed (based on two tested models: paralegals-social assistants and paralegals-only)
Outputs	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Target**
Output 2.1.1 Relevant state bodies review and approve the draft by-laws	- number of draft by-laws developed and submitted to state bodies for approval	- expertise on draft regulations and feedback from independent experts	By 2012: limited and unconnected normative acts	2014: at least 3-5 normative acts regarding the functioning of a network of paralegals in Moldova examined and approved by relevant state bodies
	- number of consultative roundtables with the Ministry of Finance, MoJ, MLSFP, NLAC, the Bar	- minutes and conclusions from meetings and roundtables	By 2012: 3 meetings with the MoJ and NLAC aimed at coordination of piloting and agreement on joint action plan	2013: three consultative roundtables with the relevant stakeholders 2014: three consultative roundtables with the relevant stakeholders
Output 2.1.2 Advocacy and information	- frequency of access/number of visitors on paralegals' website	- data on number of visitors collected from website administrator	By 2012: zero	2013: website on legal empowerment accessed on a daily basis by at least 20 people

campaign for promoting the paralegal services and the related draft legislation on community-based paralegals				2014: website on legal empowerment accessed on a daily basis by at least 35 people
	- number of media reports on draft legislation on legal empowerment through paralegals	- newspaper articles, radio and TV programs, promotional videos on legal empowerment - bloggers' web posts	By 2012: 6 media reports (TV and radio programs) reflecting the paralegals' network in written and TV media	2014: 12 media reports reflecting paralegals' activity, need for legal empowerment and its benefits

PROJECT AREA I – GENDER ANALYSIS:

The project will promote equal opportunities in hiring policies of the paralegals. The project will seek to ensure a gender balance among the paralegals, as well as the project team. The 2010-2011 project succeeded in hiring more women than men paralegals. The project envisages a separate chapter in the paralegal manuals and a training module on anti-discrimination in general, with a special focus on gender equality principles. In the daily work of the paralegals, a special attention will be paid to the services and method of delivery of services by the paralegals from the gender perspective. Of particular attention will be the following areas: domestic violence, employment, healthcare, social welfare benefits, areas that are of particular relevance to women. Given the high rates of emigration in the poor villages, particularly of men, we assume that women will be the highest percentage of beneficiaries of the paralegal services.

PROJECT AREA I – SUSTAINABILITY:

The project is developed in line with the main strategic documents in the human rights and justice field. The establishment of the community-based paralegals is provided for in the Law on state guaranteed legal aid,[9] the Justice Sector Reform Strategy for 2011 – 2016,[10] the Action Plan for the Justice Sector Reform Implementation for 2011-2016[11] the Government Action Plan for 2011-2014[12] and the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2011-2014.[13] These acts are the main legal and policy frameworks on which the proposal is based. The Action Plan for the implementation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy not only creates conditions for further development and replication of the paralegals system, but also demonstrates the Government's commitment to dedicate time, efforts and funds for the successful development, completion and taking over of the related projects' results. In this respect, the actions 1 and 5 under the Pillar nr 3 (3.1.3) establish the joint responsibility of the National Legal Aid Council, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection for the successful testing and institutionalization of the primary legal aid system with paralegals at the core of it.

The project will sign memorandums of cooperation with the main stakeholders in order to build working partnerships and ensure that all project lessons are channeled correctly towards the implementation of Moldova's declared obligations and contribute to the achievement of the project goals. In addition, the project will hold periodic advocacy events to keep the relevant Government stakeholders updated and involved in the development of the project. In addition, it will conduct a vast public outreach campaign in order to increase the public knowledge and interest to require paralegals' services, as well as demand government support for the implementation of the declared goals. In this respect the project will work with local civil society actors.

There is no doubt that the Government acknowledges the need for paralegals in Moldova for three main purposes: educating communities about their rights and means to claim their rights; providing basic legal advice; and facilitating community members' involvement in decision-making processes. Hence paralegals' roles cut across various areas of Moldova's social life and can contribute to: an increased awareness of rights and confidence in the legal system among rural residents and socially vulnerable groups; reducing the volume of legal claims arising from lack of understanding of the law and legal processes; contributing to good governance and, in a longer-term, reducing poverty in rural communities as a result of active engagement of communities in identifying and solving their problems.

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[9] Law on state guaranteed legal aid, nr. 198 of 26 July 2007 (entered into force on 1 July 2008 and previsions regarding civil legal aid on 1 January 2012).

[10] Adopted by the Parliament, Law nr. 231 of 25 November 2011.

[11] Approved by the Parliament on February 16, 2012

[12] Approved by the Government, Decision nr. 179 of 23 March 2011

[13] Approved by Parliament, Decision nr. 90 of 12 May 2011.

The creation and development of paralegals in Moldova is also unique and very much appealing also for pragmatic, financial reasons since it reduces the burden on courts and professional legal aid system which are expensive. Instead it offers a completely new, multifaceted institution in the Moldovan landscape of legal services which combines them with social services, to be provided at community level. The paralegal notion was only provided in the legal aid law, but no content has been given to this notion prior to project initiation.[14] Often, due to the complexity or nature of the beneficiary's problem, the paralegal cannot offer a solution. When the problem cannot be solved by the paralegal or the paralegal is not certain about the appropriate solution, the paralegal's role is to correctly refer the beneficiary to the appropriate public or private institution that can offer the solution or further relevant information. Regretfully, experience shows that often people go to the wrong institution or send complaints to completely irrelevant public authorities wasting their own time and that of the public authority and not getting correct resolution at the end. The paralegals are supposed to cover this gap in the Moldovan legal system by correctly referring the people to the appropriate institution, which in the long term should also lead to a decrease of inadmissible complaints to public institutions (petitions) and faster resolution of complaints.

During the previous project the profile of the paralegal was developed and the piloting initiated. After one year of paralegals' work it can be safely confirmed that the paralegal institution is a needed and an appropriate instrument for accessing rights and improving local governance for Moldova. Through the paralegals supported by the project more than 6,000 people got basic legal advice that they would not otherwise have access to. However, these are only the quantitative results that can be traced during a one-year period. The impact that the paralegals can have on the lives of individuals and communities at large is much bigger if paralegals were to act for a longer period of time and got more support from lawyers and specialized civil society groups. However, the replication of paralegals nationwide needs to be done gradually and after a more extensive period of further piloting. The main aspects that need further testing and analysis refer to the following: identification of the most appropriate institutional affiliation of the paralegals; identification of the training institution and accreditation scheme of the paralegals; testing and finalization of the training curriculum (initial and continuing /in service); development of rules for procurement of paralegal services by state authorities and budget estimations for paralegal services covered by the national budget. It is obvious that the engagement and cooperation of the three most relevant state institutions – the MoJ, MLSPF and NLAC – is crucial for developing adequate tools for replicating the paralegals. Civil society groups should be involved in the demonstration project in order to ensure representation of various marginalized groups, as well as to ensure a link between paralegals and specialized NGOs. Therefore, the activities of this project and the instruments of cooperation with the above nominated public authorities have been thought out to fully engage them as dedicated partners but not only as passive beneficiaries. The Soros Foundation-Moldova has been very active in drafting the regulatory framework under which the public authorities would have ownership of the paralegals endeavor in Moldova.

A representative of the Ministry of Justice will be delegated to the WG on legislation, while the project director is a member of the WG established by the MJ for the implementation of the Action Plan for the Justice Sector Reform Strategy. It has been mutually agreed on that the project will work in close partnership with the public authorities seeking to decide on accreditation of paralegals, institutional affiliation of paralegals and cooperation model of paralegal with the Government, training institution for paralegals, budget estimations. These decisions will be taken based on the experience of this project and its pilot results. On the other hand, the project's main focus is on empowering the local communities, which should be more conscious about their rights and more assertive in requesting respect for their rights. The focus on the quality of paralegals during their training and the provision of permanent legal and organizational back up to the paralegal will increase the quality of the services offered to the community. The project will continuously share the success stories, which should inspire and give more confidence to the communities to claim their rights, as well as engage with the communities in solving problems of common interest. Hence, even if after the end of the project a paralegal position will not be created in a certain community, the respective community will have already established some practices of engaging with the local public authority and will be more confident in claiming the respect of their rights.

Being aware of the need for an exit strategy, the action plan provides for a gradual reduction of remuneration for paralegals during the last 9 months. The project will advocate for a gradual taking over of the entire network by the Government, while the Soros Foundation-Moldova will continue to support further maintenance and development of the paralegals network from OSI and other 3rd party resources. Nevertheless, the major part of funding will come from the Government in accordance with the existing legal commitments.

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[14] The regulation on paralegals' activity

[14] Adopted by the Parliament, Law nr. 231 of 25 November 2011.

[14] Approved by the Parliament on February 16, 2012

[14] Approved by the Government, Decision nr. 179 of 23 March 2011

[14] Approved by Parliament, Decision nr. 90 of 12 May 2011.

[14] The regulation was adopted by the National Legal Aid Council on 15 June 2011 (published on 13 January 2012) largely based on the project's findings.

PROJECT AREA I – PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK:

Project Area I Title: LEGAL EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH A COMMUNITY-BASED PARALEGAL NETWORK

IMPACT: Rural communities and their members are legally empowered to protect and claim respect for their rights.

Outcomes	Outputs	Activities	Timeframe	Input/Resources $	
Intended Outcome 1: People in rural communities are empowered to efficiently handle legal issues at local level with the assistance of paralegals **Bridging Outcome 1.1:** Efficient provision of primary legal aid by paralegals in their communities	**Output 1.1.1** Increased capacity of the 23 trained community-based paralegals to provide primary legal aid **Output 1.1.2** Legal awareness activities conducted by paralegals in pilot communities **Output 1.1.3** Public authorities take responsibility for training of paralegals (NLAC and NIJ) **Output 1.1.4** Transnistrian NGOs have increased knowledge of benefits of community-based paralegals	1.1. Hiring and supporting paralegals' activity for 32 months - conclude agreements with 23 paralegals	Q1-Q11	Paralegals modest remuneration 23 pers x 24 months x 300$ see note 1 23 pers x 6 months x 300$ x 75% see note 1 23 pers x 2 months x 300$ x 50% see note 1 Stationary & communication 23 pers x 32 months x 35$	165600 31050 6900 25760
		1.2. Development of paralegal training curriculum and training methodology - revising and updating the training methodology for paralegals; - developing the curriculum for continuous training;	Q1-Q2	Expert fee see note 1	2000
		1.3. In-service training to paralegals <u>Periodic in-service training for the network of paralegals, 23 pers:</u> - training sessions (10 x 5 days) - evaluation sessions (2) - total 12 trainings	Q2-Q11	Trainings' related expenses & Trainers' fees x 12 sessions x 10000$ see note 2 Logistic assistance for organizing of trainings 32 months x 600$	120000 19200
		1.4. Paralegals' referrals to legal aid lawyers and link with the legal aid system - providing constant support to the paralegals (legal	Q4-Q10	Expert fee see note 1 1 roundtable	3000 4000

		skills back up in particular); - establish partnership with the National Legal Aid Council (NLAC) and its Territorial Offices (TOs) in order to develop a referral system of legal aid requests by paralegals; - hire an expert to help the National Legal Aid Council prepare the concept for a referral system; - organizing 1 roundtable to discuss the referral mechanism drafted by the expert - organizing 1 roundtable for concluding observations and follow-up activities with 3-5 Transnistrian NGOs		Study visits of Transnistrian NGOs to paralegals' villages & meetings with the paralegals' trainers and local public authorities. 1 roundtable for concluding observations and follow-up activities	3000
		1.5. Monitoring of the paralegals' work - hire one practicing lawyer who will visit the paralegals on a periodic basis and maintain permanent contact; - developing paralegals' performance indicators (done by the project coordinator and the project monitor);	Q1-Q11	Monitoring and legal counseling services for paralegals: see note 1 32 months x 1125$ Local travel and car maintenance Monitor's communication costs	36000 6500 1500
		1.6. Review and update the basic legal guide and the paralegal's guide - updating the basic legal guide every six months through paralegals' individual inquiries or monthly reports, as well as trainer's observations after paralegal training sessions	Q4-Q5	Expert fee see note 3 2 revisions x 5000$ Printing cost (editing, publishing)	 10000 10000
				Sub-total Objective 1	**444,510**
Intended Outcome 2: Legal empowerment through the network of paralegals is integrated into the governmental policies and CSOs agendas **Bridging outcome 2.1:** Public authorities increase their	**Output 2.1.1** Relevant state bodies examine and approve the draft by-laws **Output 2.1.2** Advocacy and information campaign for promoting the paralegal services and the	2.1. Establishment of a working group to develop and advance draft legislation for endorsement of stakeholders' support for community-based paralegals. - organizing one study visits to a country where primary legal services are provided by non-lawyers; - organize a series of roundtables and consultative meetings	Q3-Q8	WG expert fees see note 1 1 study visit	10000 12000

support in developing the draft regulatory framework regarding legal empowerment through paralegals	related draft legislation on community-based paralegals	2.2 Public outreach activities - developing and updating a new website designed for legal empowerment of the poor in Moldova; - producing of 2 promotional videos regarding the project vision and impact; - agreements signed with the National and private TV channels; - creating a Facebook page and liaising with bloggers interested to write about the project vision and results.	Q1-Q11	Web domain procurement, Web maintenance. Internet based rights awareness and legal empowerment portal Informational update and maintenance 32 months x 650$ Production and broadcasting of 2 videos as advocacy and rights awareness tools	20000 20800 10000
				Sub-total Objective 2	**72,800**
Project implementation costs	Effective project management	Project implementation staff see note 1	Q1-Q11	Project coordinator - 32 months x 1800$ Project finance management (25% work time) x 32 months x 400$	57600 12800
		Stationary, communication, equipment	Q1-Q11	32 months	2290
		Evaluation	Q11	External evaluation	10000
				Sub-total Project direct costs	**82,690**
Sub-total: LEGAL EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH A COMMUNITY-BASED PARALEGAL NETWORK IN MOLDOVA					**600,000**

Budget comments:

1. All salaries and expert fees include all local taxes and social contributions.
2. Training costs include: a) training related expenses – participants accommodation, meals, hall rent, participants and trainers local & in-country travel;
   b) trainers' fees – 28$ per hour including all taxes
3. Manual writers and revisers' fees – 20$ per convention page (4000 characters with spaces), including all taxes

PROJECT AREA II: EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FROM RURAL COMMUNITIES

PROJECT AREA II – SUMMARY:

Project area 2 seeks to strengthen good governance at the local level by empowering women from rural areas to take an active role in the decision-making and development processes from their communities. In the long term, the project will also contribute to poverty alleviation in selected communities due to improved governance, more oriented towards the needs of the people. The priorities of this area will complement the Republic of Moldova's commitment to promote women's participation in decision-making at community level as expressed in one of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals and National Program on Gender Equality (NPGE) for 2010-2015 and the National Gender Equality Plan for 2010-2015. The project's priorities also fall under democracy, human rights and gender equality objectives of the Sweden's Cooperation Strategy for Moldova 2011-2014, aiming at encouraging and strengthening the participation and representation of women from rural areas in local decision-making and development.

The project will focus on young women from villages or small towns. During the project, 40 young women showing interest and potential for becoming actors of change will be offered the opportunity to participate in an innovative leadership program (Women's Academy for Leadership), that will last for 10 months and will be carried out two years in a row. The Academy will provide a wide range of leadership development opportunities such as: trainings, internships, coaching and mentoring, development and implementation of small community initiatives, leadership retreats and networking.

Prior to 2015 local elections, the Foundation will develop and carry out an electoral leadership program meant to offer special capacity building assistance to a group of 40 young women from rural areas interested in developing the necessary skills to successfully run for the local elections. The project will also develop activities meant to enhance women's visibility and general perception on the importance of women's participation in community development processes.

PROJECT AREA II - CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE:

Gender equality and women's empowerment in our country is framed by a broader international legal framework to which the Republic of Moldova has committed, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform and Action Plan, the Millennium Declaration, etc. Based on its international commitments, the Republic of Moldova has undertaken a number of strategic actions to bring the national legal and regulatory framework in line with international standards regarding gender equality. Beyond the fact that the Moldovan Constitution proclaims the equality of women and men in front of the law, the Law on Ensuring the Equality between Women and Men was adopted in 2006, two National Plans for Promotion of Equality between Men and Women have been approved by the Government until now (2006-2009 and 2011-2015). The subject of gender equality was also included in other national programs and strategies. Subsequently, institutional structures were created to ensure the implementation of the above mentioned documents: the Governmental Commission for the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men, Prevention of Violence and Ensuring of Gender Equality Department with the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family and other gender ministerial units.

Despite the existent national policies in gender equality, there are multiple issues in the society that reflect the inequality and discrimination of women in different areas of life. Among them are the following[15]:

- Workforce and migration: discrepancies between the salaries of women and men; limited opportunities for women with babies to find a job; increase in number of persons who migrate abroad, especially young women who are exposed to violence and human trafficking.
- Participation in public and political decision-making: underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions in political and public life; existence of structural barriers in promotion of women in decision-making positions in political and public life.
- Family and social protection: undivided responsibilities of women in professional and personal life; discrepancies between the pensions for men and women.
- Health area: high rate of abortions, as well as complications after birth giving among women from rural areas.
- Violence and human trafficking: high rate of domestic violence against women and girls; sexual harassment of women at the working place; women's and girls' trafficking as a result of domestic violence.

[15] As provided in the National Program for Ensuring the Equality between Men and Women.

- Public perception: unbalanced representation of women and men in media; use of sexist and stereotyped representation of women in media.[16]

While the needs are vast, the current project focuses on one sphere of public life that we consider particularly important for ensuring gender equality in Moldova and that is not sufficiently covered by other civil society or government supported initiatives, namely young women's participation in local decision-making process and community involvement. To participate in political and public life is part of the fundamental rights of every citizen and the Republic of Moldova registers a big gap with regard to women's balanced participation in politics or other public decision-making, this fact being mentioned in the international documents that report on the situation of women in Moldova.[17] We focus on this domain for several reasons: the appropriate moment (2012 – 2015 gives a good timeframe for preparing a pool of women able to participate in the 2015 local elections); the effect that a more balanced gender representation will give to the quality and focus of local governance and hence the quality of life of communities (we rely on the studies that show that women are more socially and community oriented); the experience that the Soros Foundation-Moldova and its partners have already gained in working on women's empowerment at community level. We focus on rural community development as we believe that rural communities did not get sufficient attention from donors and have not been developed especially due to centralized policies in Moldova. We will seek to create and strengthen community leaders and citizens' groups that will become more empowered and more aware about their importance in raising the standards of living in their communities. The communities, through the network of project's beneficiaries will increase their level of education concerning the women's rights and the benefits that equal participation of men and women can bring to a sustainable community development.

The current project proposal is developed largely following the experience from the previous project funded by the Swedish Government that aimed at empowering women from rural areas to participate in the decision-making process and implement community initiatives. The objectives established for the current proposal answer the main needs identified during the previous experience of empowering women to become active and visible at the community level. Based on this experience, the following need will be addressed in the future project:

Build the capacities of young women from rural communities to get involved in community life and decision-making process at local level. The Foundation's experience shows that women aged 25-35 are not so active in the decision-making process. Young women in villages do not enjoy the trust/understanding of the communities when they start to get involved in the decision-making process. Political parties also tend to marginalize women and young women specifically in terms of their access to winnable places during the election period. In the 2007 and 2011 local elections, local organizations tried to measure the gender election gap, which is the difference between the percentage of women candidates and the percentage of women who actually were elected into the local offices. The assumption is that in a gender sensitive election process, the percentage of women candidates will be close to that of the elected women. As it turned out, the gender election gap for mayors was 5,5% in 2007[18] and 2,2 % in 2011[19], for local councilors - 8,1% in 2007 and 4,6% in 2011, and for regional council persons -20% in 2007 and 11% in 2011. Though these indicators improved almost twice from the previous local elections, the gender gap is still big and needs to be improved. The gender monitoring in the 2011 elections[20] revealed that on average representation of women among the candidates for the local council was 33,2% but the representation of young candidates for the local council was only 12% and only 4% of the elected candidates for local councils were aged 18-29.

However, the political path is not the only way for the young women to get active and participate in the community development. A national survey of Moldovan NGOs from 2007[21] showed that women make up 50% of the NGO membership and 55% of the NGOs paid staff. We believe that this proportion is higher for the NGOs in the rural areas of Moldova. Many successful women mayors have an extensive experience in working with community non-profit organizations. As it turns out, women get active by setting up community groups or community organizations; they manage to mobilize local constituents in solving various problems thus gaining the respect of their community and local political leaders. In this situation they have more chances to get elected to a formal leadership role. This is even more relevant for young women since they are less likely to have a formal leadership role

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[16] For example, according to a recent research - Coverage of socially disadvantaged groups by TV stations in Moldova - developed by the Soros Foundation-Moldova (available in Romanian at http://www.soros.md/files/publications/documents/studiu_final.pdf), the television channels have reported more often on key characters women aged between 30 and 44 years old, with higher and uncompleted higher education. Compared to men, women were more frequently reported on as employed in culture, mass-media, social area and services or unemployed and less frequently as employees of state institutions. Women were more often reported on as workers and mid level managers. On the other hand, men were more frequently reported on as top level managers. Compared to men, women were more frequently reflected in the street, nature, home, household, hospital, gym, spending leisure time, while men were more often than women shown in conference rooms and at their places of work.

[17] Concluding Comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Republic of Moldova, August 2006.

[18] Equal Chances in Local Elections: Case studies from Local Elections in 2007: http://progen.md/files/2974_sanse_egale_in_procesul_electoral.pdf

[19] Equal Chances in Local Elections: Case studies from Local Elections in 2011: http://progen.md/files/8720_raport.pdf

[20] Monitoring Participation of Women and Vulnerable Groups in the 2011 Local Elections, developed by "Partnership for Development Center" with the support of JILDP/UN Women Moldova

[21] Study on the Development of Nongovernmental Organizations in Moldova http://www.undp.md/publications/doc/Studiu_DSC.pdf

(school or kindergarten director, for example) at the community level and are more likely to have a leadership role with a community based organization or an NGO. Civic involvement seems more flexible and less discouraging to active young women from rural areas. That is why, in order to break the vicious cycle of women's under-representation, one has to consider civic participation as an entry point strategy.

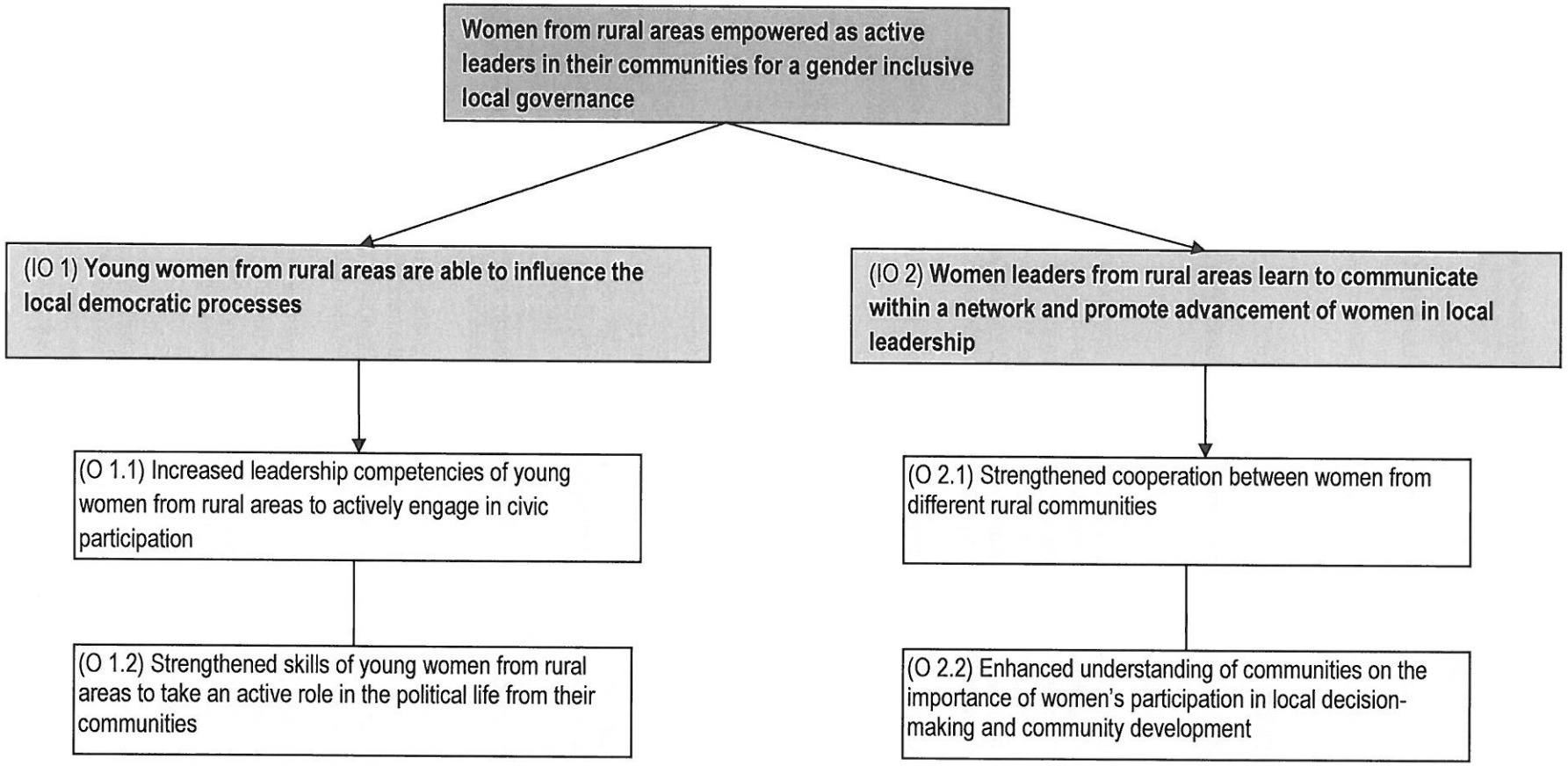
Given the above-mentioned arguments the projects plans to work with young women from rural localities and build their leadership capacities during two editions of a 10-month leadership program within the Women's Academy for Leadership. The leadership programs carried out in the previous project proved to be useful for the participants (more than 70%of the participants implemented community initiatives and ran for the local elections gaining seats as local councilors or mayors). Since the experience was a positive one and showed concrete results, further similar programs should be carried out. However, the experience shows that more systematic and longer-term development opportunities should be offered to the beneficiaries, which could lead to the creation of a rural platform of women leaders interested in displaying longer commitments to their communities. In this project, the leadership program within the framework of the Women's Academy for Leadership will be carried out for a period of 10 months, two years in a row, and will have overall 40 beneficiaries. The Academy will include the following components: training modules, coaching and mentoring, small grants for community initiatives, internships, leadership retreat, a networking and peer support fund.

This program will be implemented by the Foundation's partner organization the National Women's Studies and Information Center "Partnership for Development"(CPD). CPD is a spin-off of the Foundation's Women's Program and is known as an active actor that promotes gender equality in Moldova; due to its experience in the field, CPD has gained visibility and credibility among local authorities and civil society. CPD was involved as a partner in the previous project on women's empowerment in community life funded by the Swedish Government and was responsible for the implementation of the leadership program. The organization monitors the situation of women from rural communities and has developed skills and tools in building their capacities.

Additionally, one year before the local elections from 2015, the Foundation will develop and carry out election leadership programs designed to build the capacities and encourage young women with potential to run for the local elections. Awareness on the importance of promoting and encouraging women leaders from rural areas will be carried out through an annual Forum of Women from Rural Areas, which will be organized three years in a row in partnership with other stakeholders.

The implementation of this project will ensure new opportunities for young women from rural localities, bringing qualitative change to their life and the life of people from their community. At the same time, gender equality will be promoted as a prerogative for building good governance and democracy at the local level.

PROJECT AREA II– INTERVENTION LOGIC:



Project Area II - Impact:

Women from rural areas empowered as active leaders in their communities for a gender inclusive local governance

PROJECT AREA II – INTENDED OUTCOMES:

INTENDED OUTCOME 1: Young women from rural areas are able to influence the local democratic processes

INTENDED OUTCOME 2: Women leaders from rural areas learn to communicate within a network and promote advancement of women in local leadership

PROJECT AREA II - *ACTIVITIES:*

INTENDED OUTCOME 1: Young women from rural areas are able to influence the local democratic processes

Activity 1.1 Establish the Women's Academy for Leadership (WAL)

The Women's Academy for Leadership will have the purpose to empower young rural women (aged 25-35) from Moldova to strengthen their leadership skills and to contribute to the development of their communities by increasing their civic activism. In a program held during 10 months, the Academy's beneficiaries will be part of an advanced program in leadership and will benefit from many learning opportunities, coaching and mentoring activities to achieve their leadership potential and vision. Since the learning process will be practical, the participants will use their new knowledge, advocacy and leadership skills in implementing community project initiatives and will become agents of change at the local level.

WAL will be carried out for a period of 10 months, two years in a row, and will have overall 40 beneficiaries (20 each year). The Academy will include the following components:

- Training Modules
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Internships
- A Leadership Retreat
- Small Grants for Community Initiatives

✓ *Training Modules.* The WAL's program will consist of four modules (2 days each; however, after the first two modules, additional one-day sessions will be organized in order to assess the status of the participants' practical assignments) , built coherently one on another, in a gradual manner. The program will contain basic items necessary to acquire skills and the opportunity to receive coaching and mentoring tailored to the individual needs of each participant. Given the specifics of working with adults, each module will contain elements of training, mini-debates, knowledge workshops and practical assignments.

Module I: Leadership Development for Women. The module focuses on the conceptual boundaries of leadership, similarities and differences between female and male leaders, types of leadership, etc.

Module II: Achieving Leadership. The module refers to developing leadership skills; all topics will focus on participants' personality, behavior and personal traits, aiming at acquiring the necessary skills and techniques, creating and maintaining the team, etc. networks. The following topics will be included: personal style of leadership and development of credibility; women leaders in a new world; techniques for effective communication and negotiation; public appearances; networking.

Module III: Advanced Leadership Development. The module will offer the participants advanced and new knowledge and practical skills in leadership. The topics will include: public policy process; advocacy and lobby, representativeness and legitimacy in relationship to the constituents; community mapping needs. After the implementation of this module, the participants will have the opportunity to conduct a one-week internship in an institution, organization, etc, according to their personal interests and developed work plans.

Module IV: Leadership in action. The module focuses on practicing the acquired skills and knowledge during the previous modules. The following topics will be covered during the sessions of this module: project writing and management, monitoring and follow-up results; development of a leadership action plan for personal development. Participants will be awarded grants for implementing a community initiative after this module is completed.

- ✓ *Coaching and Mentoring (C&M).* The training modules are considered the *standard* activity within WAL. Further on WAL will take a highly individual approach. Since there are so many different elements involved (leadership coaching and mentoring, small grants for community project initiatives, internship, leadership retreat) it is important to build a unified vision on how all these elements of WAL will enable the participants to develop their most critical leadership capacities. That is why each participant will develop a professional and leadership development proposal. This proposal will detail: (1) what the WAL participants want to achieve in terms of their professional development, (2) specific changes related to the community, organizations where the participant lives/works (this part will be further detailed in the community project proposal and covered by the small grant program) (3) specific needs in terms of mentoring and coaching (4) other estimation of costs (for example the costs of transportation).

  The leadership C&M is designed for the beneficiaries who will participate in all training modules. It is expected that by that time all the participants will specifically decide on their professional and leadership development plan. Based on the specific needs expressed by the WAL participants in their development plans, the project will identify the qualified experts that will serve as mentors or coaches. The coaching and mentoring period will start after the third module. *Leadership coaching* will allow the young woman to prepare for the trainings sessions and implement the assignments, by working closely with a coach. It will provide encouragement and expertise at a time when it might be difficult to stay focused on goals — and when an appropriate level of support might not be available elsewhere. *Leadership mentoring* will be rather an informal transmission of knowledge, a psychosocial and motivational support received via face-to-face communication and during a longer period of time, between the beneficiary and a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (mentor).

  The selected coaches and mentors will provide encouragement and feedback in a confidential, risk-free setting. Participants will review their progress, discuss what is working and what is not, identify reasons for any setbacks and consider future development opportunities. The leadership coaching and mentoring component of WAL will help young rural women to convert their program experience to practical applications that specifically relate to their own goal and plans with regard to leadership. The coaching and mentoring will ensure a strong accountability among beneficiaries of WAL and will provide a strong motivation to keep participants' developmental plans on track, challenge them to grow, help them identify priorities and follow through on the goals they set (coaches and mentors will fill out a commonly agreed personal record forms for each individual they work with).

- ✓ *Internships.* The program will provide participants with the opportunity to use their newly acquired skills and gain experience in their home rayon or village based on their area of interest. After the completion of the training modules, the participants will return to their communities to: 1) complete an internship within a political party, local public authority or civil society organization; and 2) design and implement a project that promotes young women's civic participation in community life. The project will cover basic transportation and living costs during the internship duration. The project team will help the participants to identify internship opportunities within their geographic area.

- ✓ *Leadership Retreat.* Following the completion of the internships, the participants will be invited for a four-day leadership retreat (based on a "summer school" model), where the young women will share their experiences and lessons learned, tailor future plans for their career development and networking and develop concept proposals for the small grants program.

Activity 1.2 Small Grants for Community Initiatives.

Another central element of the WAL will be to enable participants to initiate a transformation within their community. In this way they will take more leadership roles within the community. The WAL participants will have to describe in their development plan the community initiative they want to implement. This will take a form of a project concept. After the concept of the project is approved, the participants will have to develop and submit a full project proposal. Our previous experience shows that support for community small initiatives serves as a "coming out" element for participants who benefit from the training and want to manifest themselves as leaders. In this period they test their negotiating, communications, decision-making, and teamwork abilities. More importantly this is the period when they challenge specific stereotypes and establish themselves as emerging leaders in the community. Even if the priorities covered by the small grants program will differ based on the needs identifies, the project will require that the small grants will promote and ensure gender equality principles. Coaches and mentors will fill out a commonly agreed personal record form for each individual they work with.

The project plans to support financially 30 small community initiatives (all the 40 participants in the Academy will be invited to apply; but from the previous experience not all the beneficiaries had the possibility to engage in leading community initiatives due to various circumstances that intervened during the program implementation). The maximum amount of the grant will be $2,000 and the implementation period will be maximum 4 months.

Activity 1.3. Carry out an Election Leadership Program in 2014

Despite the fact that the Law on Ensuring Equal Chances for Men and Women requires promotion of gender equality in political decision-making[22], presently there is no mechanism that requires accountability for violating or enforcing this requirement. One of the most challenging factors towards a greater woman's participation is the persistent discrimination of women candidates in terms of their positioning within the candidate's lists. Political parties have weak or nonexistent frameworks to advance women's participation. As a result, 2011 elections delivered very insignificant results in terms of women's participation. The number of elected female mayors increased in 2011 to 166 from 163 in 2007.

Taking into account that in 2015 Moldova will hold the next Local Elections, the project intends to develop a fast track program (in two editions) for young women interested to run for the local elections. The participants will be introduced to (1) the election process and legal framework, (2) election campaign, (3) election platforms. Each edition of this program will be composed of two modules, two days each. The participants will be selected through an open competition and one of the main selection criteria will be the motivation to run for the local elections of 2015. WAL alumnae will be also encouraged to apply for this training opportunity. The Election Leadership Program will be another opportunity for the project beneficiaries to defy gender and age stereotypes and get an opportunity to be involved in a more formal way in local development and decision making.

INTENDED OUTCOME 2: Women leaders from rural areas learn to communicate within a network and promote advancement of women in local leadership

Activity 2.1 Maintain a Networking and Peer Support Program

During the WAL activities the beneficiaries will learn about the importance of building communities across the boundaries. The project will highlight the importance of networks and will organize periodical meetings to foster communication and exchange of ideas among the participants. By sharing views, experience and knowledge in a non-formal communication, the community leaders will become stronger and better, will work out together on finding solutions, proposals and innovative approaches to multiple community problems. The beneficiaries will have the chance to value the internship opportunity within WAL, to set up partnerships and networks that will better meet their needs.

The WAL beneficiaries will be encouraged to identify common issues to work on such as regional advocacy or communication initiatives. Some of those initiatives will be funded within the project with the expectation that in time the capacity of the WAL fellows will increase to attract additional funding. All networking grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, the participants will be encouraged to attract additional funds and minimum requirements will have to be met such as: (1) project should have a gender equality impact or should contribute to women's participation, (2) the project should contribute or build cooperation among minimum 3 WAL participants, and (3) the project proposal will have a maximum requested budget of $5, 000 USD. Within the current project, the networking grant program fund will be $30,000.

Additionally, the project will build a distinctive image for the WAL and for the WAL fellows network by coming up with a distinctive image and by creating a WAL blog where all the fellows will be able to share their experience during and after the Academy.

Activity 2.2. Bring a contribution to the Forum of the Women Leaders from Rural Areas

The project will provide visibility opportunities for the WAL fellows' network. One such opportunity will be the Forum of Rural Women. This event will be designed to bring together the young generation and women leaders from rural areas representing different areas of activity. The Forum will be organized on an annual basis every October when the global community celebrates the International Day of Rural Women. In November 2011, a Forum of Women Leaders from Rural Areas was organized by a local organization "Agroinform", which had the purpose to promote women leaders from rural areas and encourage their participation in rural socio-economic development. At this moment the Forum consists of approximately 80 women from different rayons. Since the Forum includes women from different areas of activity, the project intends to bring its contribution to the upcoming editions of the Forum, with the focus on promoting the empowerment of young women from rural areas (it will cover the costs regarding the accommodation and meals for the project's beneficiaries).

The major goal of the event will be to heighten awareness of the important contribution women are making to social progress and to claim for a better life for them, by improving policies and live conditions. FRW will have a ceremonial part for honoring women leaders, exceptional and exemplary female leaders who have made a difference in their community. The event will be organized jointly with other interested partners.

[22] Article 7 of the law states that: political parties have the duty to ensure equal opportunities for men and women by: a) ensuring representation in the decision making bodies of the party of men and women and b) by ensuring that candidate's lists are created in a non discrimination manner.

PROJECT AREA II - HYPOTHESIS AND RISK ANALYSIS:

The project was developed and will operate based on the SFM's previous experience and lessons learnt in women's empowerment to participate in decision-making and community development. The following implementation risks have been identified:

Internal Risks:

- *Insufficient management of partner organization regarding the small grant-giving component of the project*
  Risk level: medium
  The Foundation will request the partner organization to submit a grant policy document that will state concrete steps regarding the grant-giving activities. Also, the partner organization will develop clear terms of reference for the grant fund and will also establish a clear grant awarding process. A grant evaluation board will be set up and clear evaluation criteria will be agreed upon. During the entire project, the partner organization will be closely monitored by the project team from the Foundation and will be offered feedback and consultancy on the entire project management as needed.
  It should be mentioned that CPD has experience in managing similar small grants program. During 2008-2010, the organization implemented, with the financial support of Oxfam Novib (from Holland), a program on empowering rural women within which it awarded 26 small community grants to community organizations, the average grant amount being 2000 Euros. Both the audit reports and the donor, mention the efficiency of CPD's financial management. **The same granting approach was used by the organization within other projects funded by the East-European Foundation, as well as by the SFM, in supporting small initiatives implemented by women's groups during the election period (voters' awareness raising).**

- *Drop out in the participation within the capacity building programs*
  Risk level: low
  Previous experience shows that about a fifth of participants are under a significant risk to drop out of the longer-term capacity building programs, since it requires commitment in terms of time and effort on behalf of the participants. In order to mitigate this risk the project will ensure to include risk analysis within the design of each project activity to avoid drop out triggers. For example, the project team will plan the trainings and meetings on days suitable to the groups of beneficiaries involved at a particular cycle of the project implementation. Usually, the beneficiaries prefer to participate in training sessions or develop activities in their community by the end of the week when they are less busy with their daily professional responsibilities. In the case of the Women's Academy for Leadership, the project will provide strong incentives for the participants to complete the program such as internships, small grants and leadership retreats, coaching and mentoring helping them in achieving their individual development plans. Moreover, the participants will be selected through open competitions and one of the selection criteria will be the readiness to participate in the entire program.

- *Weak capacity of project beneficiaries to write project proposals and implement community initiatives*
  Risk level: medium
  During the Women's Academy for Leadership, additional training sessions on project writing and management will be provided. Moreover, the participants will be assisted by the trainers/coaches in identifying the needs from their community and designing their own project proposals. After the proposals are accepted for funding, the WAL participants will be supervised in implementing the projects by the coaches and the project team. Given the possible lack in accounting and finances, the young women, beneficiaries of WAL, will not be responsible directly and entirely for the financial management of the small grants, since the payments will be made directly by CPD. **This approach is more effective because, based on SFM's previous experience, the beneficiaries who do not represent legal entities do not have experience in financial management or knowledge in accounting and this might jeopardize the observance of national accounting and fiscal regulations.**

External Risks:

- *Low interest of women to participate in the project's capacity building programs*
  Risk level: medium
  To avoid this risk, the information about capacity building opportunities will be disseminated throughout the country by the means of local newspapers. The project team will also disseminate the information through the nongovernmental organizations working the in gender area and other nongovernmental organizations from different regions of the country with which the Foundation collaborated previously.

- *Low multiplier effect of the WAL participants*
  Risk level: low

The project aims to enable young women to become proactive and get involved in order to create lasting positive change and raise the profile of women's role as a leader in the community long after the program is completed. The risk is that project beneficiaries will decrease their involvement after their participation within the program. In order to mitigate this risk the project team will make sure that the WAL participants participate in a Fellow's network, implement networking grants after the completion of the Women's Academy for Leadership, and develop "exit plans" within their professional and leadership development proposal designed during the Academy.

PROJECT AREA II - PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK:

IMPACT: Women from rural areas empowered as active leaders in their communities for a gender inclusive local governance

***Note**: Lack of bridging outcomes in project area II is explained by the fact that the empowerment of project beneficiaries - young women from rural areas- will be achieved by working directly with them.*

INTENDED OUTCOME 1	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Targets**
Young women from rural areas are able to influence the local democratic processes	Percentage of women beneficiaries elected as mayors at local level in 2015	Data collected by the CEC	0%	12%
	Percentage of women beneficiaries elected as local councilors	Data collected by the CEC	0%	50%
	Number of small projects and initiatives implemented by the women beneficiaries of WAL	Project proposal and projects' final reports	0%	75%
	Number of attendances and inputs of women beneficiaries in meetings at local councils	Focus groups, final evaluation report	0	35%
Outputs	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Targets**
Output 1. 1 Increased leadership competencies of young women from rural areas to actively engage in civic participation	Number of young women graduating from Women's Academy for Leadership programs	Lists of participants	0	40
	Number of young women undertaking internships within nongovernmental organizations and other local institutions by applying their knowledge and improving their professional skills	Cooperation memorandums with partner organizations, evaluation charts of each women intern	0	40
	Progress achieved by the young women benefitting from coaching and mentorship opportunities offered by the project	Mentors' evaluation reports, evaluation of progress of the beneficiaries' development plans	0	30

	Number of WAL's participants acting as leaders in their communities by identifying and solving concrete community issues	Funded project proposals, project reports, project's final evaluation report	0	30
Output 1.2 Strengthened skills of young women from rural areas to take an active role in the political life from their communities	Number of training programs on political participation and good governance designed for women beneficiaries	Training curricula	0	2
	Number of young women enrolling and graduating from the Election Leadership Programs	Participants' list	0	40
	Percentage of women beneficiaries in candidates' lists for local elections in 2015	Political parties candidates' lists	0%	70 %
INTENDED OUTCOME 2	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Targets**
Women leaders from rural areas learn to communicate within a network and promote advancement of women in local leadership	Number of participants in the Annual Forums of Women Leaders from Rural Areas	List of participants	0	300
	Number of local partnerships between women beneficiaries and local stakeholders (NGOs, media, local businesses, local public authorities, etc)	Beneficiaries' project reports, final evaluation report	0	50
	Perception of community on women's participation in decision-making and community development	Case studies, survey, analytical report	2006 survey[23]	2015 survey[24]

[23] A Gender Barometer was carried out in 2006 by Partnership for Development Center, measuring the perception of population on women's involvement in different areas of life.

[24] The Foundation will carry in 2015, in case of a budget balance, a survey on gender perceptions or will co-fund this activity in partnership with other international and local organizations interested in this kind of research.

Outputs	Indicators	Means of verification	Baseline	Targets
Output 2.1. Strengthened cooperation between women from different rural communities	Number of networking grants awarded to women beneficiaries by the Foundation	Project proposals, projects' reports	0	6
	Number of initiative groups created at the local level	Final reports of projects implemented by WAL's alumnae, final evaluation report	0	36
Output 2.2. Enhanced understanding of communities on the importance of women's participation in local decision-making and community development	Local media coverage of beneficiaries' initiatives	Media products	0	36
	Number of women beneficiaries engaging in public debates on matters of community concerns	Media products, evaluation questionnaire distributed annually among project beneficiaries	0	30
	Number of local initiatives undertaking by NGOs, citizens' groups or local public authorities promoting gender equality and empowerment	Beneficiaries' project reports, final evaluation report	0	15

PROJECT AREA II - GENDER ANALYSIS:

This project area is aiming at diminishing a gender gap in terms of local participation and will directly address issues concerning gender equality. Additionally, the project will ensure that the newly hired personnel will have knowledge in gender equality; if the case, capacity building in this area will be provided.

The capacity building trainings planned at different stages of project implementation will include separate sessions on gender equality and importance of women's empowerment. Since the project includes grants for women special sessions on project writing and management will be carried out, within which beneficiaries will be taught on how to include gender analysis within their project design and each implementation stage. The grants will be designed and assessed in terms of benefits for both women and men; an overall reporting and evaluation of community initiatives will be achieved by using gender indicators and gender disaggregated data.

PROJECT AREA II - SUSTAINABILITY:

The sustainability of the project is first of all defined through establishing and developing for the first time (two years in a row) an Academy for women from rural areas that will represent a significant step in the development of the participants. After the completion of each edition of the Women's Academy for Leadership, the project will provide networking grants to the participants to ensure that they continue to develop as a platform of women interested in bringing further change in themselves and the communities they represent.

Offering the project participants capacity building in how to analyze the community needs, write and implement a project, is ensuring that this will boost their confidence and skills and they will apply for other opportunities to attract funds in their communities.

The sustainability relies also in the fact that the project will invest in a group of leaders who will promote a gender-sensitive public agenda and citizens-inclusive governance at different levels of decision making and community development. The experience gained from the implementation of this project will allow the project team to draw conclusions and lessons, as well as build partnerships with other institutions that would be interested in supporting the Academy in the future.

PROJECT AREA II: EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FROM RURAL COMMUNITIES. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

IMPACT: Women from rural areas empowered as active leaders in their communities for a gender inclusive local governance

Outcomes	Outputs	Activities	Timeframe	Inputs / Resources/$	
Intended Outcome 1: Young women from rural areas are able to influence the local democratic processes	Output 1. 1: Increased leadership competencies of young women from rural areas to actively engage in civic participation Output 1..2: Strengthened skills of young women from rural areas to take an active role in political life of their community	*Activity 1.1* Establish the Women's Academy for Leadership (WAL)		Grant to CPD: 8 training modules Coaching and mentoring 40 internships 2 Leadership retreats 30 small grants	297, 300
		WAL, edition I	Q2-Q5		
		WAL, edition II	Q6-Q9		
		Activity 1.2 Small Grants for Community Initiatives.	Q5-Q9		
		Activity 1. 3 Two Election Leadership Programs	Q8-Q11	Trainer's fees, 4-6 modules, accommodation, meals and transportation ($25,000x2)	50, 000
				Subtotal Intended Outcome 1:	*347,300*
Intended Outcome 2: Women leaders from rural areas learn to communicate within a network and promote advancement of women in local leadership	Output2.1.:Strengthened cooperation between women from different rural communities Output2..2.:Enhanced understanding of communities on the importance of women's participation in local decision-making and community development	*Activity 2.1* Maintain a Network and Peer Support Program	Q6-Q10	Grant to CPD: Creation of the WAL Network 6 Networking grants	32,000
		Activity 2.2 Annual Forum of Women Leaders from Rural Area	Q3, Q7,Q11	Costs for transportation, rent, meals (40 participants); awards for most active women leaders -$16,666 x3 editions	50,000
				Subtotal Intended Outcome 2	*82,000*
		Project administration	Q1-Q11	Project director ($1000x32) – $32,000; Financial assistant ($600x32)- $19,200; Project monitoring and evaluation- $3000;External final evaluation - $15,000 Communication costs - $1,500	70,700
				Sub-total project administration	*70,700*
				Grand total	**500,000**

PROJECT AREA III: STRENGTHENED REGIONAL MEDIA NETWORK FOR INFORMED CITIZENRY, PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

PROJECT AREA III – SUMMARY:

In Moldova, regional/community media remains one of the best ways of communicating information to large numbers of rural and marginalized communities and engaging them in working together for community development. Given the nature of local TV and radio stations, programming and content is often locally-based and very relevant for the audience it serves. Thus, regional media can be an effective vehicle for change and its development should be a priority in Moldova.

This project seeks to promote a pluralistic, editorially independent and financially sustainable regional broadcasting media sector in Moldova. The project is based on the assumption that cooperation among the regional broadcasters, members of the network, and the solidarity it creates will be critical to the regional network's ability to survive. With this purpose, the project aims to transform the Association of Regional Broadcasters into a strong and viable organization that would enable rural media to function freely and independently, hold governmental institutions accountable, provide space for engagement between the members of community and public authorities and empower rural population to participate in decision-making. The project will be particularly focused on developing the Association of Regional Broadcasters development strategy and on building its capacity to manage professionally the regional media network. The project further seeks to establish partnerships with national and regional NGOs working in human rights, public health, gender equity, anti-discrimination, education and other relevant public fields. This partnership will improve the quantity and quality of broadcast programming content, strengthening media's capacity to report on and understand political and development issues relevant to decisions that affect the daily lives of people. We will specifically emphasize regional media's role in the empowerment of women and marginalized groups of the population. The project is designed on the assumption that the more the population is informed in an objective manner about the problems and progress within the communities, the more these communities' members will be interested in taking initiative to address these problems and hence improving their living standards and reducing poverty.

The project also seeks to foster better synergies among media outlets from both sides of the Nistru River in support of conflict resolution in Moldova. This will offer an alternative source of information to the Transnistrian population and help foster connections across the Nistru River. In order to achieve this objective, the project will provide on-going technical assistance, mentor and work closely with the Association of Regional Broadcasters' managerial team in order to raise local journalists' awareness of key issues of public and community concern in Transnistria and Moldova, including through facilitating media cooperation with the civil sector, will review and monitor stations' editorial policy and broadcasted programming and provide support and technical assistance in developing standards for editorial and technical excellence in addressing conflict-sensitive aspects with the purpose of conflict resolution in Transnistria.

PROJECT AREA III - CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE:

The impact produced within the previous SFM/Sida projects (2006-2009; 2010-2012) ensures important ***pre-conditions for the current project proposal***, namely:

- The regional TV and radio network has managed to become an alternative source of information for the local public. According to the Public Opinion Poll conducted within the project,[25] regional stations' members of the network are trusted by an average of 50 percent of rural population. Moreover, regional TV is also seen as the most 'important' news source in the rural area.
- Regional independent broadcasters have joined their effort and formed an Association of Regional Broadcasters (the *Association* hereinafter) in order to protect their interests. As part of this activity, the Association was supported in establishing a network hub – a central production facility - that is owned and managed by the Association members (joint ownership and management by network member stations).
- The regional network proved to be an efficient way to expand relationship with Transnistrian media outlets (two radio stations joined the network from the very beginning and two web-TV studios in Transnistria were created as an integral part of the Network's general development strategy; they were integrated into the network through experience and programming exchange, participation in the monthly network meetings, bilateral study visits, joining the Association of Regional Broadcasters as members, participating in the Associations regular meetings and in the Association's strategic planning, etc).

[25] The Public Opinion Poll was conducted in January 2011, for the project use and hence it is not published. The results are available at the Soros Foundation – Moldova, contact person Victoria Miron (vmiron@soros.md).

- The stations appreciated the benefit gained from their cooperation within the network (the programming exchange contributed to enriching and diversifying the broadcasting grid, while the exchange of experience among network members – to the increase of professional standards). They are interested in further maintaining and improving their cooperation.
- Many regional media outlets are willing to establish partnerships with civil society organizations in order to address community related issues in a more professional manner.

Hence, the previous projects have planted the seeds for the regional media in Moldova, but the network needs further support due to the fact that it is still fragile and faces a series of ***challenges***. These are briefly described below:

a). The biggest challenge the regional media faces is related to the *underdeveloped Moldovan advertising market*. Moreover, it is monopolized by a company allegedly associated with political forces. This causes an unfair distribution of financial resources and curtails regional media outlets' ability to attract advertising revenue. National TV stations with the highest rating are those "connected" to some important Russian and Romanian channels, which are the most attractive for advertising. Because of very low wages, the regional media outlets face a high turnover of staff. To meet this challenge, the regional TV and radio stations must become organizationally strong and be able to cooperate effectively. Within the framework of the previous project they concluded that in order to survive they must fuse regional stations' efforts and form joint products, which will enable them to stay relevant on their local/regional markets. The Association can provide their members a specific structure for collaboration. The first project objective will be focused on assisting the Association in establishing a strong and effective system of collective governance and sustainable strategies for development, as well as in building its capacity to manage the network and its central production facility. Managing the regional network as a unified media entity will ensure its cost effectiveness in the long term and branding its specific profile as a national coverage channel with regional content will increase its advertising revenue.

b). *Limited technical and professional capacities* of the regional media sector. Qualitative improvement of the regional informational product will lead to increased rural audience and better chances to compete with the big nationwide media stations. Establishing social development driven partnerships with civil sector organizations will be another response aligned with media sustainability. For this purpose, the network members must strengthen their regional ground advantage and establish partnerships with local NGOs and working relationships with local public administration.[26] The role of the Association and the central hub will be to extend the partnerships to the national level. The second project objective aims to encourage the regional media outlets to cooperate with civil sector organizations and raise local journalists' awareness of key issues such as governance, accountability, transparency, corruption, human rights, gender equity, social integration and so on. The project team will assist regional journalists in being more proactive and effective in achieving their goals through shared visions and partnerships.

c). *The unresolved conflict in Transnistria continues to cripple Moldova's economy, condemning its population to widespread poverty and social insecurity*. The highly partisan media sector in Transnistria does little to facilitate the conflict resolution process. At the same time, the Chisinau-based media outlets, including the "Teleradio-Moldova" public broadcasting company, fail to produce any credible programming for audiences in the separatist region. With more Moldovans from rural area getting their news from regional TV and radio outlets than any other station, it is vital that the regional broadcasters act to facilitate a wider debate over the Transnistrian conflict and to increase the pressure from the society to demand action on behalf of policy-makers to resolve the conflict. Hence, the project will include a separate objective aimed to support the network's long-term engagement in the Transnistrian region and implement confidence-building measures between the two sides of the frozen conflict in the Transnistrian region via cooperation of independent media outlets.

Taking into account the importance of regional media and its particular advantages over the large media companies, as well as the problems that constrain its sustainable development, this project identified ***two areas of intervention***: a) assist regional media network and the Association of Regional Broadcasters (the Association hereinafter) created by the network to become competitive and secure its long-term sustainable development, as well as enlarge and diversify cooperation with other civil society actors; b) create media synergies in support of conflict resolution in Moldova.

The SFM team believes that ***the regional broadcast media could play an important role in advancing good governance and empowerment of rural communities to claim their rights and participate in solving the problems of their communities, in***

[26] The study "Coverage of socially disadvantaged groups by TV stations in Moldova", carried out by the Soros Foundation-Moldova in 2011 (available http://www.soros.md/files/publications/documents/studiu_final.pdf) found that the TV stations (national broadcasting area) in Moldova provide a reduced broadcasting volume to information about people with mental and physical disabilities, people living with HIV, LGBT, elderly people, poor, Roma and women. The majority of reports regarding these groups during 2011 had an informative character and was provided in the context of events such as conflicts, accidents and other less ordinary situations. This proves that TV stations themselves need training on how to report on socially disadvantaged groups in a manner that promotes tolerance and equality, rather than enforces the discriminatory prejudices and stereotypes. This is relevant for both national and local TV stations, as well as radio broadcasters. For this reason the project puts a special emphasis on collaboration between regional media and specialized NGOs that could help and mentor the regional broadcasters on non-discriminatory reporting.

addition to national / large media, in particular addressing the following needs of the rural and other marginalized communities:

1. Due to the proximity to rural communities, the regional TV and radio stations benefit from deeper audience trust and larger citizens' involvement. They cover topics that are relevant to the community and encourage community discussion and debate. Thus, once they acquire high professional skills, regional media can be an effective vehicle for change. It will help empower people, liberate them from prejudice, fear, passivity etc. and can achieve greater results in counteracting negative social phenomena, such as discrimination, gender inequity, harmful habits etc. Regional media interventions are of particular importance as these phenomena are deeply rooted in community life.
2. Benefiting from community support and citizens' involvement, regional media has better chances to improve the responsiveness, transparency and accountability of local governance and thus encourage economic and social development solutions that would better respond to rural population's needs and poverty alleviation.
3. Regional journalists, members of the network, represent diverse ethnic groups, come from different parts of the country, including from Gagauzia and Transnistria, hold programs relevant to different ethnic groups present in Moldova; broadcast in Romanian and Russian, and some programs in other languages (Gagauz, Ukrainian, Bulgarian). Such a framework guarantees respect for ethnic pluralism and ethnic tolerance. In doing so, the network acts as a neutral forum opposing some extreme political views on ethnicity. It also equips local journalists with the skills and background to effectively address interethnic relations in preventing interethnic tensions within their own communities. Regional media cooperation would sensitize the rural population to the complexity and challenges of living in a multicultural society and, accordingly, enhance their level of ethnic tolerance.
4. The programming broadcast throughout the network is produced by 30 regional TV and radio stations, coming from different parts of the country and ethnic groups. Hence, pluralism and diversity are inherent in the regional network functioning. Expanding and enhancing the regional network's presence in the Moldovan media landscape could balance the concentration of media ownership that presents a new trend on the Moldovan media market and that threatens the media editorial independence, impartiality, and freedom of the press.
5. The network provides a unique platform for cooperation among journalists from both sides of the Nistru river: programming is shared among stations from both sides of the Nistru river and broadcast all over the country; programs on topics of interest are produced in partnership with Transnistrian stations, Transnistrian journalists are integrated in all project activities, including building the Association of Regional Broadcasters in Moldova. Taking into consideration the recent political changes in Transnistria, supporting deeper integration of Transnistrian media as a component of the network could provide a unique opportunity to link journalists from both sides of Nistru River to monitor and promote the conflict resolution process. Given the 20 years gap and massive propaganda in Transnistria and lack of information about the daily life of Transnistria in Moldova, broadcasting from both sides of the river to the both sides is a very important step for reducing the barriers between the populations on two parts of the country and build a bridge for more exchange and cooperation.
6. At the local level collaboration between media and other civil society groups is a means of achieving greater outcomes in promoting common goals. At the same time, to date the links between media and other civil society groups are still very weak and need encouragement and support. Partnerships with media would also benefit local NGOs by significantly increasing their influence and providing them with many opportunities to further their missions.

The SFM project team is dedicated to establishing local capacity as a part of our belief in sustainable development. Our main goal is to build the capacity of both regional stations and the hub to independently produce better programs on relevant community concerns. The SFM's assistance to the Regional Broadcasters Association will be implemented in a way that devolves authority and responsibility for its outcomes increasingly to the Association and its members – regional stations. To that end, all decisions about the Association/network development will be taken by consensus among the member stations. SFM's role will be to provide them with the appropriate tools to make the correct decisions about the Association's development and help the members implement these decisions.

Previous experience in supporting local electronic media, including the Sida/FSM project (December 2009 –January 2012):

The project benefits from the impact produced in the framework of the previous SFM/Sida strategy (2009-2012). Under the SFM/Sida Media Program, a media network has been set comprising 13 local radio stations and 17 local TV stations including two independent Transnistrian radio and two TV stations: "Novoaia Volna" and "Dnestr TV" from Bender and "Radio Jelannoie and "LIK TV" from Rîbniţa, as a means to promote media partnerships, exchange of information, best practices, and radio/TV programming. Due in part to the network's acquisition of state-of-the-art production equipment, as well as increased collaboration and content sharing, network member stations have achieved higher standards for news production and decreased the costs of media production. The professional capacity of Moldovan independent media in providing information in a professional, challenging and unbiased manner has significantly increased.

In the framework of the current proposal, we are going to build on the previous achievements in order to enhance the professional standards of the regional broadcasting in reporting on public issues through establishing partnerships with national and regional NGOs working in human rights, public health, gender equity, anti-discrimination, education and other relevant public fields. We also aim to support specific aspects of the network/Association's development including issues of sustainability, getting access to businesses for advertising and developing business plans.

In order to achieve this goal, the current project will focus on:

- providing assistance to the regional media network and its legally registered Association of Regional Broadcasters on institutional and strategic development
- providing technical assistance for business plan development and helping the network earn profit through developing and implementing a viable advertising and marketing strategy
- considering the use of the network' central production hub as basis of increasing advertising revenue for member stations in the Moldovan media market
- ensuring partnerships between the regional media outlets and civil society sectors with a focus on better social oriented programming with the purpose of acting as a platform for serious debate on education, gender equity, health, agriculture, causes of poverty, unemployment, corruption, etc.
- raising regional stations' professional standards of reporting on issues of public and community concern
- strengthening cooperation with Transnistrian media and facilitating the production of joint programs with Moldovan and Transnistria media outlets, identifying opportunities to better involve Transnistrian stations in managing the network and the Association of Regional Broadcasters.

Prospects for the re-integration of the two regional networks

Two years after the Soros Foundation – Moldova (SFM) announced the launching of the regional broadcasters' network with support of the Swedish Government through Sida, another implementing agency – the local IREX office, with funds from USAID, announced the implementation of a project also addressed to regional broadcasters, but with a different focus. The main purpose of the IREX project was to set up a new Chisinau TV station based on the regional TV network. Taking in consideration that most regional stations showed little interest in the idea of a Chisinau TV station and had serious concerns regarding its sustainability, Malin Lunden, Program Manager, Unit for Eastern Europe, Department for Reform and Selective Cooperation Sida, mediated the situation by addressing on May 6, 2010 a message to all regional broadcasters from Moldova about the projects run by IREX and SFM and mentioned that the regional TV and radio stations were free to belong to one of the networks or both networks. Five regional broadcasters joined the IREX project. 17 regional TV stations and 13 radio stations continued to develop the regional broadcasters' network, program exchange platform, and internal experience exchange and improve the quality of the programming offered to the regional audience in the framework of the SFM-SIDA project. One of the local companies („Pro Media" from Cimişlia), having both a TV and a radio station, joined both SFM and IREX projects. The latter ended on September 30, 2011.

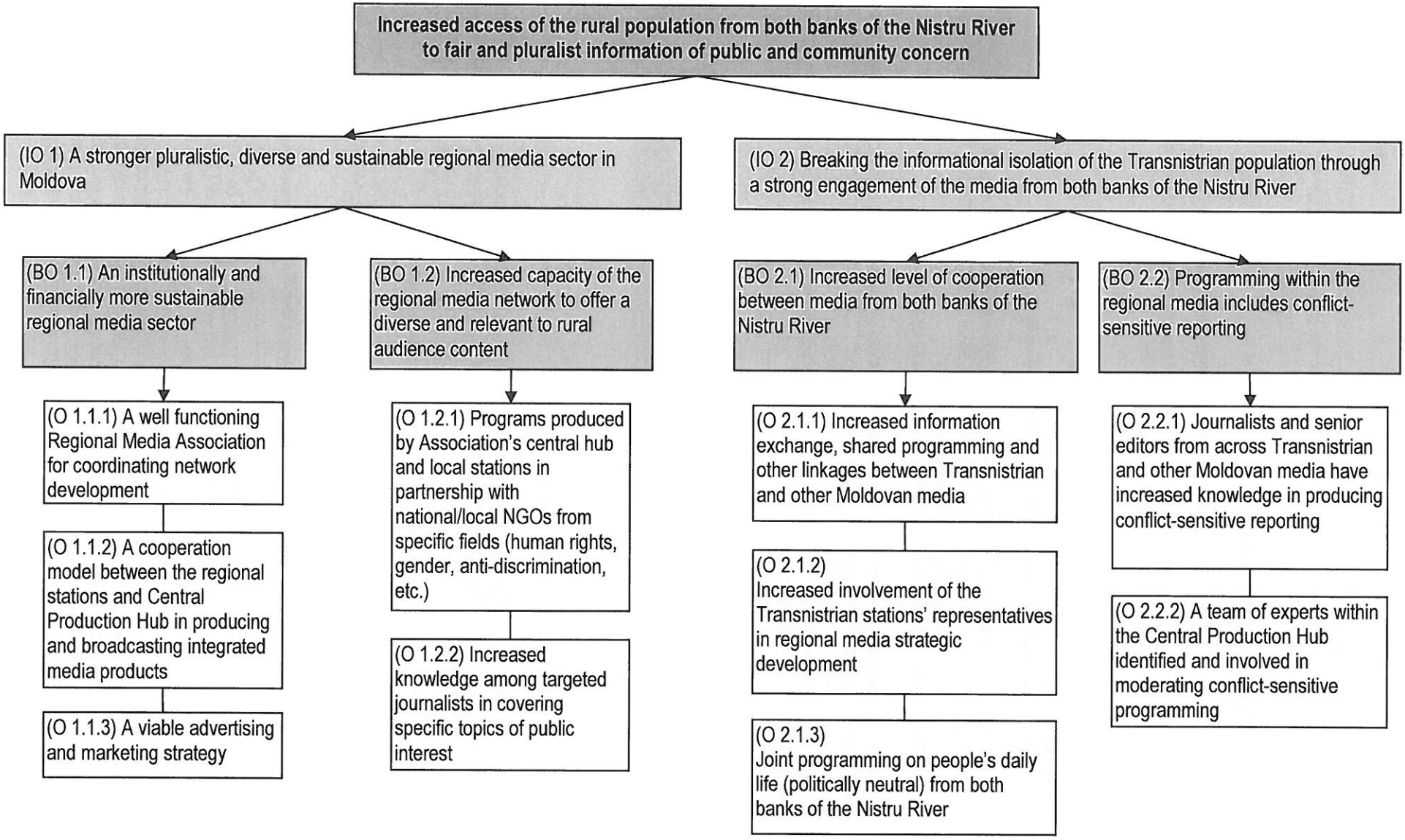
Within the current proposal, the implementation team will make concerted efforts to facilitate and support the re-integration of the regional broadcasters under one entity, which would be established by common agreement and would work with the support of all stations for their own benefit. After identifying the re-integration model, the Soros Foundation-Moldova will support all member stations in developing the organizational framework and a sustainable implementation strategy.

This approach is based on previous discussions with the Regional Broadcasters Association that revealed that the 5 local TV stations which had joined the IREX project have acquired valuable experience that can be very useful for the regional broadcasters' network which is now evaluating different options to ensure the network's sustainability on the Moldova's media market.

On the other hand, all regional broadcasters realize that a greater number of network members will ensure a better success in winning the desired market share, and a more efficient joint effort and resources. Therefore, the Regional Broadcasters Association from Moldova is ready to invite and accept the regional broadcasters who had joined the IREX project in the network and initiate jointly the process of a strategy development for regional media development.

The created Regional Broadcast Media Network and its professional Association will offer a critical basis for the proposed project first and foremost, as the core of the network, the project being willing to accept new members. The SFM team will further fulfill its role within the network, by facilitating its joint decision-making process with the participation of all regional stations from the country and by focusing on improving the network's professional capacity to provide unbiased information, foster social dialogue, and involve active citizenship in decision-making processes and developing effective networking.

PROJECT AREA III – INTERVENTION LOGIC:



PROJECT AREA III – IMPACT:

Increased access of the rural population from both banks of the Nistru River to fair and pluralist information of public and community concern.

PROJECT AREA III – INTENDED OUTCOMES:

Intended Outcome 1: A stronger, pluralistic, diverse and sustainable regional media sector in Moldova

Intended Outcome 2: Breaking the informational isolation of the Transnistrian population through a strong engagement of the media from both banks of the Nistru River.

PROJECT AREA III – BRIDGING OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS:

Bridging Outcome 1.1

A stronger and organizationally more sustainable regional media networking

Output 1.1.1: A well functioning Regional Media Association for coordinating network development
Output 1.1.2: A cooperation model between the regional stations and Central Production Hub in producing and broadcasting integrated media products
Output 1.1.3: A viable advertising and marketing strategy for the network

To reach this outcome, the Project Team will implement a three-phase program, as described below, concentrating on the Association of Regional Broadcasters and its members – regional TV and radio stations, including stations from Transnistria. This three-phase approach will benefit from continued technical assistance provided by project staff and local experts in journalism, TV production, and media business. Tailored technical assistance will ensure that the member stations and the production hub are prepared for each phase of development.

This work will include several activities described below.

Round-tables will be moderated at an early project stage in order to assist the Association members in defining their strategic decision clearly. While it is done, close assistance will be provided during the second project year, guiding the Association step by step through the process.

Activity 1.1.1 *Define the Association's organizational structure and regulations*

The Association members will be guided in the process of attaining important structural decisions and development of a strong, sustainable governance system. As a result, a clear and viable Association's organizational structure and regulations will be set up.

Activity 1.1.2 *Identify the best option for the central hub for producing and sharing programming within the network*

Member stations have chosen the option of developing the network around a centralized production hub. To strengthen the central production studio as a centralized network management and production facility will be an important project task with member stations gradually taking financial responsibility for the central hub operating. During year I of the project, a menu of options of how to air different programs produced by the hub will be developed and discussed. At the end of this stage, the Association will establish a collective creative vision for centrally produced programs and will determine and develop the roles and relationships that will form the basis of a stable, legitimate network and its central hub. Depending on the chosen option for the centralized channel, the project team will help the network develop and implement a viable advertising and marketing strategy. Perhaps the most sensitive issue in this context will be the contractual basis for sharing expenses and profits. The nature of such contractual relationships between the stations could differ for different options, and multiple variations on these are possible. The project team will work from the outset to facilitate the development of fair contractual terms for all stations that are tailored to the network-central hub structure chosen.

During phase II, a viable model for a centralized production studio (network hub) in its cooperation with the regional stations will be established and will facilitate sharing of new format programming for the regional audience all over the country, including Transnistria. This will ensure cost effectiveness and coherence with the network in the long term. The role of the network hub will be to manage a defined, shared program schedule of community concern within the network and to establish a common network broadcasting identity. A creative control of the central studio's (network hub) program production by member stations will be established. Once the production studio is fully operational, the project will concentrate on increasing the quality and quantity of programming produced at the hub to be shared within the network. It is anticipated that the member stations will have access to an additional four to six hours of programming per day. This will include the program produced by the hub as well as those produced by member stations to be shared throughout the network.

Within the previous regional media projects, the SFM team has established a functioning program sharing system through an Internet file transfer protocol (FTP) site, which allows each station to download programs or news stories produced by the others. This web-based mechanism for sharing programming both between the hub and the member stations could continue, given the very good Internet connectivity infrastructure in Moldova and its relative low cost. This site will help brand the network within Moldova, raise its profile as a national media entity, and provide access to local news to the many Moldovans working abroad, who may be interested in events taking place in their hometowns. If such a site gained a relatively strong following, it could sell web-based advertising to help defray the cost of establishing and maintaining the site. When developed, the site will also be housed in the hub, where network staff will manage it.

Activity 1.1.3 *Draft the Association's development strategy*

The project aims at providing on-going technical assistance, mentoring and working closely with the Association's managerial team in order to set up a viable development strategy for the network and strategic sustainable goals. With this purpose, the project will assemble a strong team of experienced professional media trainers to advise the Association and the network in drafting an efficient strategy for overcoming the constraints the network faces.

Activity 1.1.4 *Improving Business and Financial Management of the Association*

Advertising revenue will be critical to sustaining the network hub. Presently, the member stations have meager advertising sales. Most of the stations do not have an advertising salesperson on staff and rely on a demand-driven, rather than a proactive, marketing strategy. Raising advertising revenues is a prerequisite for the network survival. The professionalization of the Association and the network members by strengthening program quality and by supporting the development of a business strategy for a long-term profit and independence will be achieved by tailored technical assistance provided by the project through technical assistance and coaching. An intensive training on a range of issues - from advertising sales to business development and management - will be provided to increase the Association's members' knowledge and skills towards attaining important structural and business decisions.

Another business plan will be established for the network hub. The project team will meet with the Association's governance board to help drive a discussion of how the hub will be effective as a means of expanding advertising revenue from the network. Different models for selling national advertising for centrally-produced programs and for sharing the revenue for these advertisements will be discussed. The most important role of the project team will be to facilitate a conversation among the Association's governing board members concerning their long-term business vision. We expect that the best result of this discussion will be a business plan for the Association/regional media network for the three years after the end of the project.

Bridging Outcome 1.2
Increased capacity of the regional media network to cover more complex issues of public interest

Output 1.2.1: Programs produced by the Association's central hub and local stations in partnership with national/local NGOs from specific fields (human rights, gender, anti-discrimination, etc.)
Output 1.2.2: Increased knowledge among targeted journalists in covering specific topics of public interest

Activity 1.2.1 *Create partnerships between local stations and national/local NGOs*

Important strategic steps will be undertaken to ensure partnerships between the regional media outlets and civil society sectors with a focus on better social oriented programming and larger media market. In our opinion, establishing partnerships with the national and regional civil sectors responds to increasingly visible, interconnected and urgent media sustainability issues that can no longer be addressed alone or in isolation. If successful, partnerships with civil sector organizations will result in achieving greater outcomes and obtaining new sources of finance for media outlets operations. We will start with an exploration for a creative synergy with other SFM programs (Justice, Good Governance, Cultural Policy, Equality and Civic Engagement, Public Health) and will look for a paradigm shift that can lead to new ways of interacting and making collaboration across all sectors a competitive advantage. Local journalists' awareness of key issues such as governance, accountability, transparency, corruption and social integration will raise due to the established partnerships.

One of the most reliable partnerships between the regional network and the local civil society actors is the network of community-based paralegals, supported through Project Area I. Paralegals are a reliable and constant source of information about the daily life of rural communities. On the other hand, the regional media network is a reliable partner for sharing the success stories of the paralegals. By sharing the success stories, the regional media network will raise the interest and encourage other communities to engage in similar activities and hence the effects of paralegals' work will be rolled throughout the country.

Activity 1.2.2 *Provide assistance and training to local stations in producing programming on issues of public interest*

Once partnerships with local NGOs are established, the project team will assist member-stations in creating programs on issues of public concern to be shared network-wide in a sustainable manner based on governance, migration, gender, poverty, education, public health and other priority public issues. This media strategy will be made public and NGOs will be invited to cooperate. We realize that the stations have limited resources and cannot yet compete effectively with the larger national stations on production quality. However, the project team believes in the ability to produce inexpensive, creative and engaging programming on important community issues. To stimulate ideas for such programming and ensure their production, the project will engage member stations and the hub with both short-term and long-term technical assistance, challenging them to take on more vibrant programming. The project will call upon partners from NGOs to lend their experience when implementing social and reality TV shows focused on gender equity, inter-ethnic issues, education, discrimination and other issues. In addition, the specialized NGOs will be available to assist with projects as they develop. In a long term perspective, we expect that tensions will be defused between disparate groups by facilitating dialogue and a balanced exchange of views.

Bridging Outcome 2.1
Increased level of cooperation between media from both banks of the Nistru River

Output 2.1.1: Increased information exchange, shared programming and other linkages between Transnistrian and other Moldovan media
Output 2.1.2: Increased involvement of the Transnistrian stations' representatives in regional media strategic development
Output 2.1.3: Joint programming on people's daily life (politically neutral) from both banks of the Nistru River

Activity 2.1.1 *Create platforms and opportunities for increased Transnistrian and Moldovan program* exchange

The Transnistrian stations will also be given an opportunity to share news information and other programming with the member stations, allowing both parties to access information in Moldova and Transnistria. The project will support the development of the resources on the www.canalregional.md, www.dnestrtv.com and www.liktv.com websites with a view to informing and stimulating a wider debate over the Transnistrian conflict. Consultancies on the job will be provided at the central production hub and independent stations in Transnistria in order to develop co-production programming skills. Staff from Transnistrian stations will have an opportunity to apply to the production-oriented grants for assistance. As the project develops, however, we also hope to attract interest from other independent Transnistria TV stations and/or production studios. Any stations that demonstrate an interest will be invited to appropriate common trainings. The project will also encourage the network to consider expanding its relationship with any participating Transnistria stations and studios, including potential program sharing.

Activity 2.1.2 *Involve Transnistrian stations' representatives in Regional Broadcasters Association's development*

The project will exploit the potential of the Association of Regional Broadcasters and its members – regional stations – to act as a catalyst for peace-building and democratic change by responding to the needs of the population from both sides of the Nistru River. This process will develop the potential of regional stations by encouraging participatory debate and by reducing distrust and misinformation in Transnistria about the state of affairs in Moldova and in Moldova about the state of affairs in Transnistria. The project team will initiate work immediately with the two radio stations and two web-TV in Transnistria —"Novaia Volna" and "Dnestr TV" from Bender and "Radio Jelannoie" and "Lik TV" from Rîbniţa — current partners of SFM, members of the radio, respectively, TV network projects. The mentioned stations from Transnistria are also members of the Regional Broadcasters Association and will be actively involved in the development of the Association (Bridging Outcome 1 of the project area III).

The director of the "Novaia Volna" RTV company from Bender was elected on the Board of the Association. The project will continuously support the targeted media outlets from Transnistria in gaining access to new training opportunities, technical assistance etc., as well as in organizing various activities within the network, such as reciprocal study visits to the network colleagues with the purpose of experience exchanges etc.[27]

Activity 2.1.2 *Support local stations in producing programming on daily life issues from both banks of the Nistru River*

The project will seek to initiate the production of a program emphasizing daily life issues on both sides of the Nistru river (the network central studio will assume the coordination of "small bridge media projects" etc.). The apolitical program would emphasize daily life on both sides of the river, producing mini-documentaries on a day in the life of ordinary people in both Moldova and Transnistria. The program would likely be shot by member stations and by participating Transnistria production studios, but it would be packaged at the hub with a host and other elements. The final product will be broadcast by the network stations and on partner Transnistrian TV Internet resources. The project will support the central production studio and stations from Transnistria in co-producing a total of ten debate programs.

This program will meet several important objectives simultaneously: it will add to the locally produced programs of the network, it will build capacity among Transnistria broadcast journalists, and it will serve to help foster connections across the Nistru River among populations on both sides. While the project realizes that the implementation of this aspect of the program will depend upon political tensions over the Transnistria issue, we believe that it is possible to carry it out under present conditions.
We expect that due to the provided technical assistance, consultancy and co-production, the project will:

- Develop standards for editorial and technical excellence which will serve as a benchmark for other broadcasters in the region;
- Increase the number of debate programs and social documentaries produced by Transnistria participating broadcasters during and after the project;
- Increase the level of information of Moldova's population about the life in Transnistria and vice-versa.

[27] As provided under objective 1 of the project area III, media outlets from Transnistria will be involved in developing the Association of Regional Broadcasters development strategy, participating in the Association meetings and brainstorming.

Bridging Outcome 2.2
Programming within the regional media includes conflict-sensitive reporting

Output 2.2.1: Journalists and senior editors from across Transnistrian and other Moldovan media have increased knowledge in producing conflict-sensitive reporting
Output 2.2.2: A team of experts within the Central Production Hub identified and involved in moderating conflict-sensitive programming

Activity 2.2.1 *Produce debates and other programs on conflict sensitive issues*

One component of this project involves launching a new debate program at the Central Production Hub. Its purpose is to shape and mentor a high-profile show that will be based on sound editorial principles and broadcast all over the country. High quality experts will help select the themes for discussion and appropriate guests for the panel. The Association will develop this program in partnership with the field NGOs which will boost its credibility. The plan is to develop and mentor a quarterly show focusing on conflict-sensitive aspects. The show will have as guests various experts and public opinion representatives who will share their visions on conflict resolution. During the show, the guests will also discuss experiences and practices of other countries.

The 45-minute program will be aired by the regional TV stations members of the network and broadcast on-line by the Transnistrian partners – stations in Bender and Ribnita. Each program will look at a specific social, economic or political issue by inviting a panel of guests to share their opinions with a studio audience. Viewers will also be able to interact with the panel by telephone and SMS.

Activity 2.2.2 *Establish an expert team for mentoring the stations in covering conflict-sensitive and other programming*

The program will have three components:

- A highly professional consultant team will help the Central studio team design the program's visual elements and advice on a range of technical issues. During this phase, sets will be built and graphics developed. The technical staff will collaborate with the consultants to develop an effective workflow.
- A pilot program will be developed as a co-production between the network central studio and the Transnistrian stations team.

After the project has been launched, the experts' team will continue mentoring the program on an ad hoc basis (offering ongoing support and consultancy).

PROJECT AREA III - HYPOTHESIS AND RISK ANALYSIS:

The project needs several preconditions for its successful implementation: a friendly legal framework, qualified human resources, and a needs-resources balance. These three preconditions are fulfilled. The Republic of Moldova has a relatively acceptable legal framework for the functioning of the broadcasting media outlets. The independent media outlets and non-governmental organizations envisaged as partners are well organized with a rather good experience in project implementation and grants management. The requirement of balance between needs and resources is also met since the project is dedicated to establishing local capacity as a part of our belief in sustainable development. Unlike many media assistance programs, we will not produce TV and radio programs for local stations. Instead, we will build the capacity of both stations and Chisinau-based production center to produce better programs independently.

Internal Risks

Internal risk factors are related to eventual mismanagement and miscalculation of time and necessary human resources. Taking into account the SFM's 20 years of media project running experience, the above mentioned risk can be qualified as a low level category one. We also have learned in the framework of the previous projects that it is critical to choose an expert team that is skilled at building and maintaining relationships with all the media outlets involved in the project. We will continuously choose a project team skilled at managing critical relationships and at building and maintaining open communication channels with key stakeholders, trustworthy and pro-active in their communication with the network, having the ability to build and maintain relationships with a variety of different actors—the TV and radio stations, Association governance structure, Chisinau-based production facility, partners and local authorities officials.

A generally low risk that may occur is that the project output will not reach the intended target group. Even so, in order to prevent it, SFM will implement its activities through the Association of Regional Broadcasters and its members - regional independent outlets developed in the framework of the previous SFM/Sida projects when SFM has successfully developed a strong working relationship with the 30 regional radio and TV stations in Moldova, including Transnistria. The SFM staff and project experts' team

directly reviewed and monitored stations' editorial policy and broadcasting programming. In the framework of the previous projects, the SFM trained journalists to report on issues of community and public concern. Through this experience, SFM has learned that the Association of Regional Broadcasters is very willing to enter into partnership with international development projects as long as the implementer is careful to provide the necessary technical assistance and training component and maintain open, regular communication with involved stations and their Association.

Partner media outlets will be requested to have a transparent managerial system to exclude any risk of corruption. This will be achieved through the following interventions:

- ✓ The narrative and financial activity reports are presented regularly to the donor,
- ✓ The decision to allocate new installments from the projects in course of implementation is based on the submitted preliminary and progress reports;
- ✓ The accounting is conducted in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Moldova;
- ✓ Employment of the personnel is carried out on a competitive basis;
- ✓ The substantial procurement of goods and services is performed on an open tender basis;
- ✓ Activities carried out are permanently submitted to media for coverage;
- ✓ Capacity building on financial and project management will be provided.

External Risks

A medium risk that may occur in the area of media development is related to the new tendency in Moldovan media landscape aimed at monopolizing the public opinion and, thus, the informational space, which foresees the liquidation of the independent media from the information field. To counteract this risk, the SFM will seek to consolidate the Association of Regional Broadcasters' efforts in organizing watchdog activities and opposing monopolizing actions that contravene public regulations.

The successful implementation of the project objectives regarding the Transnistrian conflict will depend upon political context regarding the Transnistria problem and continuation of independent Transnistrian media companies' activity in spite of difficult political and economic context. For a long period of time, the political and economic situation in Transnistria were considered high risk factors. However, we hope that recent political changes in Transnistria will offer more opportunities for expanding media outlets cooperation and reaching a bigger impact. Therefore, we dare to believe that the level of political risk decreased to a medium level one.

Nevertheless, even if in spite of these favorable political changes, one of the two stations, from different reasons, permanently stops its activities as a broadcaster, the project will continue to promote its objectives and spread information to Transnistrian residents. But the risk that one of the stations could stop working is rather low. Moreover, we will continue looking for new cooperation opportunities with other independent Transnistrian broadcasters.

Even if the project cannot get enough openness and access to new stations and build a network of stations in Transnistria, the mere cooperation and capacity building of the two media companies that are currently open and willing to work with the SFM will be a success in itself. Through these stations, the regional media outlets in Moldova will receive and will be able to broadcast information from Transnistria to the population in Moldova, hence increasing the level of awareness of, as well as interest in Transnistria to the majority of the population.

PROJECT AREA III – PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK:

INTENDED OUTCOME 1	Indicators	Means of verification	Baseline	Targets
A strong, pluralistic, diverse and sustainable regional media sector in Moldova	Trust level of the population in the regional media	Analyse official statistics (Media indexes for Moldova), Pre- and post-intervention surveys[1] focused on trust carried out by specialized companies	January 2011: 46,85 %	2014: increased with at least 10%
	Level of objectiveness[2]	Average network indicator related to the number of sources used in the regional stations' news, thematic shows and debates from January 2012 based on monthly monitoring reports by independent experts hired within the project.	January 2012: 70%	2013: 85%
	Impact of the reporting on decision making at the local/regional level (rate of solved problems)[3]	Stations' reports twice a year	2011: 5%	2013: increased with at least 5% 2014: increased

[1] Level of trust will be derived from Public Opinion Surveys carried out by specialized media research agencies. The pre-intervention regional media survey was done in January 2011. The post-intervention survey will be conducted in Autumn 2014

[2] This is one of the most relevant indicators of the media independence. It increased continuously during the previous regional media projects. Within this project, the purpose is to improve even further the level of objectiveness across all regional media

[3] Within the previous regional media project a new type of reporting was introduced. In these reports, the stations mention the programming which criticizes the local public authorities or public funded service providers and taken actions following the media interventions.

				with at least 10%
Bridging Outcome 1.1	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Targets**
An institutionally and financially more sustainable regional media sector	Regional broadcasters' capacity to compete with bigger national media outlets in the quantity of delivered media products[4]	Performance indicator of the TV network for 2011 (Number count of programming) based on stations' reports and monthly monitoring reports by independent experts hired within the project.	2011: Volume: 7583 programs	2013: +5 % 2014: +10 %
	Regional broadcasters' capacity to compete with bigger national media outlets in diversity of delivered media products (Complex social and investigative programming vs. other issues)[5]	Diversity indicator (Social issues vs. other issues) of the TV network for January 2012 based on stations' reports and monthly monitoring reports by independent experts hired within the project.	January 2012: 16 %	2013: 20% 2014: 25%
Outputs	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Target**
Output 1.1.1 A well functioning Regional Media Association for coordinating the network development	Level of participation of the network members in developing Association's structure and decision making processes	Percentage of stations' representatives involved in Association's strategic planning meetings from attendance and adherence lists	25%	70 %
	Number of new services critical to RBA members established[6]	Association's activity reports	0	At least 3 established

[4] The quantity of delivered media products will be derived from the regional stations' monthly reports and those of the independent experts hired within the project. The quantity of media products delivered by major national media outlets will be derived from their online broadcasting.

[5] The diversity of media products delivered by regional broadcasters compared to bigger national media outlets will be based on the regional stations' monthly reports and those of the independent experts hired within the project on one side, and programming from national media outlets' online broadcasting.

[6] Examples of services critical to RBA members: a) Legal consultancy and advocacy; b) ICT development; c) Broadcasting monitoring d) Training and capacity building e) Marketing f) Network developmental projects, etc

				services
Output 1.1.2 Cooperation between regional stations and the Central Production Hub in producing and broadcasting integrated media products on a regular basis	Percentage of programs produced for the network through cooperation between local stations and the Central Production Hub out of the total volume of regional broadcasting	Number count of programs based on stations' reports, monitoring reports by independent experts hired within the project.	2012: 0%	2013: 15% 2014: 20%
	The number of programs on public interest offered by each station to the network members.	Number count of programs based on stations' reports, monitoring reports by independent experts hired within the project.	2011: 4464 programs	2013: +10% 2014: +15%
	The number of programs on public interest taken over by each station from the volume of programming offered by the network members.	Number count of programs based on stations' reports, monitoring reports by independent experts hired within the project.	2011: 12030 programs	2013: +10% 2014: +15%
Output 1.1.3 A viable advertising and marketing strategy for the network	Percentage of the Association's members stations involved in developing a marketing strategy for advertising and revenue generation developed as part of larger strategic plan	Association's activity reports	0%	2013: 60%
	Level of advertising revenues on a quarterly year basis (based on new marketing strategy)	Stations reports	0	2013: +8 % 2014: +15%
Bridging Outcome 1.2	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Targets**
Increased capacity of the regional media network to offer a diverse and relevant to rural audience content	The level of concern showed by the audience towards regional stations' content on public and community interest topics	Percentage of views for public and community interest topics from regional broadcasters website statistics	2012: n/a	2013: 15% 2014: 25%
	Level of gender diversity in regional programming (the percentage of women vs. men participation in news/shows)	Monthly reports of the stations, monitoring reports by independent experts hired within the project.	2011: 48 %	2013: at least 50% 2014: at least 50%
Outputs	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Target**
Output 1.2.1 Programs produced by Association's central hub and local stations in partnership with national/local	Number of shows produced by the regional broadcasters in partnership with national/rural civil sector organizations	Monthly reporting from stations. Random verification done by independent experts	2011: 2	2013: 8 2014: 10

NGOs from specific fields (human rights, gender, anti-discrimination, etc.)		hired within the project.		
	Number and variety of NGO's involved in regional broadcasters' partnerships	Monthly reporting from stations. Random verification done by independent experts hired within the project.	2011: 3	2013: 5 2014: 8
	Types of activities organized in partnership (debates, round tables, contests)	Number count of activities organized within the project	2011: 2	2013: 5 2014: 7
Output 1.2.2 Increased knowledge among targeted journalists in covering specific topics of public interest	Number of technical assistance days in specific programming	Trainers/consultants' reports on activity	0	2012: 10 2013: 15 2014: 10
	Number of participants receiving technical assistance in specific programming	Number of people that attended the training sessions, disaggregated by gender.	0	2012: 50 2013: 75 2014: 50
	Number of professionals from local media satisfied with the acquired knowledge in covering specific topics of public interest	Before and after knowledge assessment questionnaire for participants, trainers/consultants' reports on activity	0	2012: 20 2013: 45 2014: 50
INTENDED OUTCOME 2	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Targets**
Breaking the informational isolation of the Transnistrian population through a strong engagement of the media from both banks of the Nistru River	Percentage of stations, members of the networks, which commit to the project proposal dedicated to approach the Transnistrian conflict	Contracts signed by stations regarding the commitment to produce programming on Transnistrian conflict	5%	2012: 8% 2013: 10% 2014: 15%
	Number of programs dedicated to the Transnistrian conflict based on multiple sources	Average indicator related to number of sources from monitoring reports of independent experts hired within the project.	n/a	2012: at least 25% 2013: at least 30% 2014: at least 40%
Bridging Outcome 2.1	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Targets**

Increased level of cooperation between media from both banks of the Nistru River	Number of activities involving stations' representatives from both banks of the Nistru river (meetings and others)	Minutes of the meetings and other internal documents	2011: 8	2013: at least 10 2014: at least 12
	Satisfaction level of journalists regarding the cooperation between Transnistrian and Moldovan stations	Questionnaires for journalists (on a scale from 1 to 10) developed by project experts team	n/a	2013: 7 2014: 9
Outputs	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Target**
Output 2.1.1 Increased information exchange, shared programming and other linkages between Transnistrian and other Moldovan media	Number of broadcasted news and shows in Transnistria produced by Moldovan stations	Transnistrian stations, member of the network reports, monitoring reports by independent experts hired within the project	2011: TV: 230 Radio: 1086	TV: 2013: +5% 2014: +10% Radio: 2013: +8% 2014: +10%
	Number of broadcasted news and shows in Moldova produced by Transnistrian stations	Stations member of the network reports, monitoring reports by independent experts hired within the project	2011: TV: 595 Radio: 564	TV: 2013: +5% 2014: +8% Radio: 2013: +8% 2014: +10%
	Percentage of Transnistrian broadcasters in project meetings, trainings and other activities.	Transnistrian stations member of the network bi-annual reports	65%	75%
Output 2.1.2 Increased involvement of the Transnistrian stations' representatives in regional media strategic development	Percentage of the Transnistrian representatives in the Association's structure development and decision making processes	Attendance lists	2011: 25%	2012: 30% 2013: 40% 2014: 45%
Output 2.1.3 Joint programming on people's daily life (politically neutral) from both banks of the Nistru River	Number of talk shows produced on issues of common interest for audience from the both banks of the Nistru river.	Stations reports, monitoring reports by independent experts hired within the project	2011: 5	2012: 4 2013: 8 2014: 10
Bridging Outcome 2.2	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Targets**

Programming within the regional media includes conflict-sensitive reporting related to Transnistria	The number of programs addressing conflict-resolution issues in the local Moldovan media, including Transnistrian broadcasters	Reports of the stations, monitoring reports by independent experts hired within the project.	2011: 0	2013: 6 2014: 6
Outputs	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**	**Baseline**	**Target**
Output 2.2.1 Journalists and senior editors from across Transnistrian and other Moldovan media have increased knowledge in producing conflict-sensitive reporting	Number of technical assistance days on conflict-sensitive reporting	Trainers/consultants' reports on activity	0	2012: 5 2013: 10 2014: 5
	Number of participants receiving technical assistance in conflict-sensitive reporting	Number of people that attended the training sessions, disaggregated by gender.	0	2012: 5 2013: 15 2014: 8
	Number of professionals from local media satisfied with the acquired knowledge in covering conflict-sensitive issues	Before and after knowledge assessment questionnaire for participants, trainers/consultants' reports on activity	n/a	At least 60%
Output 2.2.2 A team of experts within the Central Production Hub identified and involved in moderating conflict-sensitive programming	Number of experts involved in moderating conflict-sensitive programming	Number count of experts	2011: 0	2013: 4 2014: 5
	Number of shows produced with the involvement of the expert team	Number count of programming	2011: 0	2013: 4 2014: 6

PROJECT AREA III - GENDER ANALYSIS:

SFM recognizes that development programming needs to address gender and gender issues with the goal of promoting gender equity. SFM media program is designed to do so. However, in patriarchal societies such as Moldova, focusing solely on women's empowerment instead of on gender equity would address only half of the problem. Clearly marginalization of women affects both men and women, and development programming implementers need to promote gender equity in their own practice well as in the practice of its beneficiaries.

The SFM's Media program is particularly well-placed to do both. Media—and especially TV—play a substantial role in creating gender stereotypes which both reflect and shape how a society thinks about gender and gender roles. Currently in Moldova, men and women are portrayed very differently in mainstream media: in general men are depicted as professionals, as sports heroes, sometimes in violent roles; women are depicted as housewives, mothers, victims, glamour girls. These "on-screen" gender stereotypes are reflected in popular perceptions of gender. It is not surprising that the 2011 survey[34] identified that 80% of interviewees from the general population said men are breadwinners and women should care for the family; 33% said women have less skills and are not able to perform public duties and are useless in politics.

We believe that through modeling equitable practices and delivering technical assistance and thoughtful mentoring to Moldova's media outlets these stereotypes and the biases behind them can be dislodged. A 2007 report[35] found many journalists were unaware of key gender issues and how to report in a non-gendered way. The 2011 survey, mentioned above, recommended that media organize gender equity public awareness campaigns. To address gender inequity issues, SFM Media program includes several interventions designed specifically to help the participating TV stations develop the capacity to produce programming that supports gender equity and avoids gender stereotyping:

- The SFM media program will establish a close cooperation with the Empowerment of Women from Rural Community project component that will be run by the SFM Equality and Civic Engagement Program (Project Area II). That will provide additional well-versed expertise in the field of gender-neutral media reporting and addressing gender inequity issues.
- In mentoring stations through residencies, joint trainings, and monthly meetings, the SFM team and our international consultants will offer not only an external perspective on assumptions and behaviors that promulgate gender inequities but also a model for how to report news and current affairs in a more gender-sensitive way. SFM will ensure that discussions about media presentations of gender stereotypes become a regular topic at the network meetings, facilitated by the experts.
- The SFM project team will provide a consistent, hands-on mentoring that is necessary to combat entrenched stereotypes of how men and women are presented on the stations—for example, by ensuring that men and women debate together on a public affairs talk show or are portrayed in professional roles other than "breadwinner" and "housewife."

Combined, our strategies will sensitize Moldova's media practitioners to the prevalence of gender stereotyping and to rethink how men and women are represented. Our media program will pave the way for a socially constructive role for media: one that promotes gender equity throughout the production process and reduces gender stereotypes on screen.

PROJECT AREA III – SUSTAINABILITY:

As a result of long-term Swedish Government's and the Soros-Foundation Moldova's support in strengthening regional media in Moldova, we expect that by the end of this project we will be looking at a strong and viable regional TV and radio stations network. The network will be managed by the Association of Regional Broadcasters that will have a functional management structure and a long-term development strategy. This strategy, along with the learned skills during the project, will enable the network to gather the funds necessary to function on the Moldovan media market and to match their programming with the audience expectations. All the above mentioned aspects will ensure the sustainability indispensable for the successful development of the regional broadcast media in Moldova. Within this project, the Association will receive starting operational support from the project, but it will reduce this dependence step by step by increasing the number of network members and their membership dues that will help sustain the Association's daily operations.

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[34] Perceptions of the Population of the Republic of Moldova on Discrimination: Sociological Study, Soros Foundation-Moldova, 2011, available at http://www.soros.md/files/publications/documents/Studiu_sociologic_EN.pdf

[35] Loretta Handrabura, Gender and mass-media. Study. For a more gender-sensitive press, National Center for Studies and Information on Women Issues "Partnership for Development", Chisinau, 2007, available at http://www.progen.md/files/1573_gen_si_mass-media.pdf.

Establishing social development driven partnerships with civil sector organizations will be one of the responses aligned with media sustainability. We expect it to become an integrated part of their mainstream business planning and a way to create the desired change. This will provide enormous opportunities to be more proactive and effective in achieving both media and NGOs goals through shared visions and strategies for implementation. Moreover, cooperation between media institutions and NGOs can be seen not only to offer a means for media to do what is best for them, but also what is best for the society: exactly the type of alignment required in a sustainable future. In a long term perspective, we expect an evolution in Regional Broadcasters Association as its member organizations will increasingly realize that they will be defined more by the relationships they have with their stakeholders. Already established partnerships will be an example for other organizations to follow.

The Association of Regional Broadcasters will support other regional TV and Radio stations in building the capacity of training citizen journalism at the rural level. A new dimension and possibility for the sustainable future is linking rural NGOs to rayon radio and TV stations that may play the role of an important media partner as well.

PROJECT AREA III: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Project Area III Title: **STRENGTHENED REGIONAL MEDIA NETWORK FOR INFORMED CITIZENRY, PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Impact: ***Increased access of the rural population from both banks of the Nistru River to fair and pluralist information of public and community concern***

Intended Outcomes	Bridging outcomes	Outputs	Activities	Timeframe	Input/Resources/$	
1) A stronger pluralistic, diverse and sustainable regional media sector in Moldova	1.1) An institutionally and financially more sustainable regional media sector	1.1.1) A well functioning Regional Media Association for coordinating network development	Provide technical assistance to the Association in developing an efficient management to operate the network: training program on basic general management, finance management, marketing, PR, promotion, project management and fundraising skills.	Year 1-2	Training and technical assistance costs (international and local trainers' fees, accommodation and meals, training venue rent (including equipment), supplies, materials / services, international and local travel costs, implementation costs	20,000
		1.1.2) A cooperation model between the regional stations and Central Production Hub in producing and broadcasting integrated media products	Supporting the Association in establishing a viable model for a centralized production studio (the network hub) in its cooperation with the regional stations and facilitate sharing of new format programming for the regional audience all over the country, including Transnistria	Year 1-2	Managing daily programming exchange within the network - organizing live bridges, media campaigns, interactive programming: investment of labor and resources, including the recruitment of staff (production fees), establishing of a physical space for production (organizational costs, office rent, office supply)	75,000
			Develop an interactive web-based portal, develop a reliable program distribution system for the network	Year 1-3	Maintaining the web portal domain, hosting, play-out ingest/system, soft video editing, NAS server , Back UP Encoder, portal up-dating (fees)	14,304
		1.1.3) A viable advertising and marketing strategy for the network	Provide assistance and support the Association in promoting the network, establishing sustainable partnerships, branding the central studio, developing content distribution system, establishing Association's departments (PR department, cooperation with international organizations and local NGOs department, advertising	Year 1	TA and support (investment of labor and resources) for public relations, fundraising, cooperation and other activities to be initiated by the Association of Regional Broadcasters: provision of working place equipment, recruitment of staff, establishment of a physical space for operating: office rent, office supplies and	10,000

			department etc.)		communication costs	
	1.2) Increased capacity of the regional media network to offer a diverse and relevant to rural audience content	1.2.1) Programs produced by Association's central hub and local stations in partnership with national/local NGOs from specific fields (human rights, gender, anti-discrimination, etc.)	Assist the Association's members - both central production hub and local stations - in establishing partnerships with national/local NGOs and develop collaborative approaches in reporting on governance, migration, poverty, education, public health and other public interest issues, produce in a shared format talk-shows and other programming based on cooperation	Year 1-2	Launching regional stations co-production with the central network hub: initial support for the central hub in its work with the stations on a quarterly talk show on specific topics to be shared by the network (reporting on governance, migration, poverty, education, public health and other public interest issues)	62,016
		1.2.2) Increased knowledge among targeted journalists in covering specific topics of public interest	Association's member stations' meetings facilitate by NGO-s representatives to discuss new series of programming (capacity building, discussing means of cooperation, standards for producing specific programming etc.)	Year 1-3	Quarterly Association's member TV stations meeting (accommodation & meals, local travel)	15,000
			TV Programming on public and community concerns monitoring and coordination, monthly evaluation	Year 1-2	Monitor, fees	23,000
					Sub-total Intended Outcome 1:	219,320
2) Breaking the informational isolation of the Transnistrian population through a strong engagement of the media from both banks of the Nistru River	2.1) Increased level of cooperation between media from both banks of the Nistru River	2.1.1) Increased information exchange, shared programming and other linkages between Transnistrian and other Moldovan media	Facilitating the programming and experience exchange through the network between Transnistrian and other Moldovan media	Year 1-3	Internet costs for programming exchange, exchange visits with other stations within the network	5,000
		2.1.2) Increased involvement of the Transnistrian stations' representatives in regional media strategic development	Supporting Transnistrian stations' representatives participation in network's strategic meetings	Year 1-3	Quarterly Association's member stations' meetings (accommodation & meals, local travel, 10 meetings)	1,200
		2.1.3) Joint programming on people's daily life (politically neutral) from both banks of the Nistru River	Providing support to 4 Transnistrian stations for producing responsibly news and programming to be shared within the network (integrated network	Year 1-3	Convergent TV/Radio/Internet news and talk-shows on migration, poverty, education, gender and other public issues to be offered to the network	55,000

			schedule)		common programming package (production support)	
	2.2) Programming within the regional media includes conflict-sensitive reporting	2.2.1) Journalists and senior editors from across Transnistrian and other Moldovan media have increased knowledge in producing conflict-sensitive reporting	Capacity-building and technical assistance to individual TV and radio stations from Transnistria (technical assistance program for journalists and senior editors focused on conflict-sensitive reporting, economics and social affairs	Year 1-3	Technical assistance, In-house sessions & advice on the spot: trainers' fees, accommodation and meals, supplies, materials / services, travel costs, implementation costs	8,000
		2.2.2) A team of experts within the Central Production Hub identified and involved in moderating conflict-sensitive programming	Launching a new quarterly debate program on conflict-sensitive topics.	Year 1-2	Partnering production on Transnistrian conflict: network central production facility team (reporter, camera-man, editor, 3 persons), experts fees, coordinator/reporter from station in Transnistria, fees for program production for the network shared schedule, production fees, charges for central studio rooms' rent	64.000
					Sub-total Intended Outcome 2:	133,200
Project direct costs			Project implementation costs	Year 1-3	Project coordination & finance management 1218$x32 months (38979$) Project assistance 929$x32 months (29,728$)	68,707
			Stationery, communication, equipment	Year 1-3		1,496
			Final external evaluation	Year 3		10,000
					Sub-total Project direct costs:	80,203
SUB-TOTAL: STRENGTHENED REGIONAL MEDIA NETWORK FOR INFORMED CITIZENRY, PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY:						432,723.00