



USAID
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ACTIVITY BRIEF

Emerging Donors Initiative

Emerging Donors Symposium



April 2009: Romanian government officials participate in an exercise at Emerging Donors workshop in Bucharest

Geographic Targets:

Emerging donors in the Europe & Eurasia region: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, and Slovenia

Project Duration:

2006-ongoing

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SUMMARY

Since the RSC began its work with Emerging Donors, it has under-taken the following activities:

- Comprehensive overview of development programs of five Central European countries in 2006;
- Training & Orientation program hosted at the RSC for junior officers from these countries in May 2007;
- Emerging Donors Symposium hosted at the RSC for senior representatives from these countries in November 2007;
- Introductory workshops to USAID's best practices and processes to inter-ministerial working groups on Official Development Assistance in Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania held between February and April 2009;
- Partnerships established between USAID missions and various emerging donors

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U.S. Agency for International Development
Regional Services Center for Europe & Eurasia
Budapest, Hungary ♦ www.usaid.gov

Background

In keeping with their commitments as members of OECD and the European Union, the new EU member states are in various stages of establishing the structure and priorities of their nascent official development assistance (ODA) programs. As their foreign assistance programs were taking shape, USAID/RSC began a dialogue with a number of these emerging donors to gauge interest in collaborating on sustaining existing democracy legacies in the Southeast European (SEE) region, as well as possible future joint programming.

Objectives

RSC's interest is based on the following premises:

- (1) Sustaining US investment in democratic reforms in Eastern Europe is of critical interest, and Central and Eastern European countries in particular identify with the US approach to civil society, having recently been beneficiaries of USAID assistance in this area.
- (2) The EU's different approach to civil society development and the complicated process for accessing funds leaves a funding gap as USAID missions phase out, making it even more critical to forge new links now.
- (3) The transition experiences in the region are directly applicable to the reform process in the Balkans, and experts from these countries bring valuable lessons and instant credibility that USAID can leverage as well through partnering with Eastern European ODA programs.

USAID bilateral mission directors in the SEE region have expressed interest in establishing linkages with Emerging Donor programs of northern tier countries in Central and Eastern Europe. RSC has responded to this interest by compiling an overview of the development assistance programs of five new EU members: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia in February 2006 (updated in November 2006). Some of the common themes found in the overview are as follows:

- (1) Emerging Donors have a common desire to share their recent transition and accession experiences through their official development assistance programs.
- (2) All of the Emerging Donors have developed core partnerships with experienced NGOs or established new centers that play a key role in their delivery of foreign assistance.
- (3) All of the Emerging Donors – much like USAID today – have established systems for official development assistance but are open to incorporating new elements and/or adopting new models.
- (4) All of the Emerging Donors are struggling with the dual challenge of meeting EU obligations for reporting and coordination, as well as reporting to OECD DAC, while at the same time formulating strategies and establishing systems for foreign assistance – all on a shoestring and with very limited human resources.

The newest EU member states (Bulgaria and Romania), as well as aspiring member Croatia, have also reported similar challenges. Responding to requests from these countries, USAID began a dialogue with each to assess the status of their ODA programs, and formulated a strategy for initial assistance. A workshop has now been conducted in each country for all government stakeholders of ODA to convey some of USAID's methods and best practices, in February and April 2009.

Concurrently, USAID has been developing partnerships with various new donors in order to benefit from their recent transition experience as well as their experience as recent recipients of aid. An on-going partnership has been established between Hungary and USAID/Serbia, and project cooperation has occurred between USAID/Afghanistan and Croatia, with further discussions on partnerships under way.