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July 15, 2003

Mr. Bruce Gelband
Contracting Officer
USAID Kiev
19 Nizhnyi Val sr.
Kiev 254701 Ukraine

RE: Contract No. EEU-I-00-99-00015-00, TO No. 806
UI Project 06901-007, Moldova Local Government Reform Project
Quarterly Task Order Progress and Cost Report, April to June 2003

Dear Mr. Gelband:

Please find enclosed the *Quarterly Task Order Progress and Cost Report, April to June 2003, Moldova Local Government Reform Project*. This report is required by Sections F.5 and F.6 of our Local Government Assistance Initiative Indefinite Quantity Contract.

Please direct any technical questions to Mr. Duane C. Beard, UI/Moldova, beard@lgrp.md, (3732) 234-722. Questions of a contractual nature should be addressed to me at 202-261-5396.

Sincerely,



Maria C. Andrade-Stern

Enclosures

cc: Bill Schlansker (USAID/Moldova)
Mr. Mike Keshishian (USAID/W)
Mr. Duane C. Beard (UI/Moldova)
USAID Development Clearinghouse
IAC Deliverables File (06901-007)
IAC Chron File

**QUARTERLY TASK
ORDER PROGRESS AND
COST REPORT**

**MOLDOVA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT REFORM
PROJECT**

APRIL TO JUNE 2003



Prepared for

Moldova Local Government Reform Project
United States Agency for International Development
Contract No. EEU-I-00-99-00015-00, Task Order No. 806

Prepared by

Duane C. Beard
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June 2003
UI Project 06901-007

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QUARTERLY TASK ORDER PROGRESS AND COST REPORT

APRIL TO JUNE 2003

MOLDOVA LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROJECT

Contract and Task Order No.: EEU-I-00-99-00015-00, Task Order No. 806

Date of Issuance: February 1, 2000

Amount Obligated Under Task Order: \$4,999,793

Total Potential Task Order Amount: \$4,999,793

Dollars Expended To-date: \$3,501,607

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Task Order Description

In February 2000, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) contracted the Urban Institute (UI) to implement a five-year Local Government Reform Project (LGRP) in Moldova. The project aims to support the government's reform agenda with training and technical assistance (T/TA). Specifically, the project is working to increase the amount and control of revenues for local governments, improve municipal services management, develop institutional support for local government and municipal services and improve transparency, citizen participation and strategic planning in local governments.

I. Highlights

- LGRP Senior Staff briefed the USAID Assistant Administrator for Europe & Eurasia Dr. Kent Hill on Local Government Reform in Moldova during his visit. The Chief of Party, Fiscal Decentralization and Democracy and Governance team leaders accompanied Dr. Hill, Regional Mission Director Crowley and Moldova USAID Country Representative Starnes on a visit to the city of Balti. The Mayor of Balti (Moldova's second largest city) joined LGRP staffers in summarizing the activities performed by LGRP in general, and to LGRP assistance to Balti, in

particular. Assistant Administrator Hill and other members of his delegations were provided a briefing book profiling LGRP's program and accomplishments to date.

- Together with LGRP facilitators, workshops to update the strategic plans in four communities (Colibasi (Cahul County), Gribova (Edinet County), Calarasi (Ungheni County) and Vatici (Orhei County)) were conducted.
- The Academy of Public Administration hosted two major LGRP training events in June. The "Trainings of Facilitators" for Community Strategic Planning were co-sponsored with the *Association of Mayors and Local Communities of Moldova* (AMLCM). These events were a precursor to a planned sub-contract under which AMLCM will assume the program of delivery of community strategic planning previously directly delivered by LGRP. A pool of approximately 50 facilitators was trained in two consecutive groups. From this group of trainees, seven teams of facilitators will be selected to provide facilitation of strategic planning process in the new LGRP partner communities and ultimately, annual updates to more than 50 community strategic plans. The AMLCM teams will also provide support in conducting public hearings on strategic plans and annual budgets in each community. This is part of the LGRP post donor funding "sustainability strategy".
- The LGRP Fiscal Decentralization team initiated intensive on-site training and technical assistance to Round V local government Partners. To enhance the communities' productivity and capabilities, Round V partners also received office automation equipment including computers, fax and copy machines, printers and modems.
- The LGRP Municipal Services team, together with a group of CCN trainers and the Training & Development Specialist conducted two additional rounds of training based on the *"Manual for Efficient Water Supply Operations"* (MEWSO) for the management personnel from another cohort of nine water utilities in Moldova. This was the first round conducted without the help of short-term assistance.
- The Economic and Organization Development Program of United States Peace Corps/ Moldova and LGRP co-sponsored an event devoted to the exploration of opportunities for collaboration between LGRP Partner communities and the Peace Corps community economic development program. The event was conducted in the LGRP partner community of Antonesti village, Stefan Voda County. Approximately 40 persons representing Mayors and NGOs from eleven (11) partner communities as well as the Peace Corps Economic Development Program Manager & LGRP Chief of Party participated in the event. A new group of Peace Corps Economic Development specialists will arrive in Moldova in September, and based on this initial exploratory effort, potentially some of these could be assigned to assist in the economic development of LGRP partner communities.

- Based on the invitation of Mr. Daniel Preston Parker from the Department of the Secretary of State of North Carolina, on behalf of the North Carolina – Moldova Partnership, LGRP staffers collected information on potential small project assistance needs in support of implementation of community strategic plans. The project assistance information was forwarded to the office of the North Carolina Secretary of State for placement on the website of the North Carolina – Moldova Partnership. It is hoped that this effort will result in an increase in community strategic plan implementation support from the N. Carolina-Moldova Partnership.
- Following meetings with Eurasia Foundation Regional Director Richard Shepard and Eurasia Foundation Moldova Country Representative Sorin Mereacre, LGRP entered into a *Statement of Cooperation* with Eurasia Foundation to cooperate in contributing to the development of civil society and a market economy in Moldova. Specific emphasis was made to the implementation of community strategic plans and development of eco-tourism projects to help with grass-roots community economic development.

II. Progress of Major Activities

Policy & Legislation

- In support of the Ialoveni effort in organizing the first ever held public land auction in this town, LGRP contracted for preparation of a legal opinion outlining the rights of local governments to conduct land auctions. The opinion was prepared by Dr. Maria Orlov, Doctor of Law, faculty member of the Academy of Public Administration and well-respected national expert on Public Administration Law.
- The final draft of the text of the Municipal Services Source Book (containing all current laws of Moldova governing the delivery of municipal services by local governments) in Romanian language has been prepared for printing. “Print Ready” formatting (desktop publishing) and actual printing will be outsourced.

Capacity Building: Training and Technical Assistance

- The Fiscal Decentralization team initiated the process of computer equipment delivery & installation to LGRP partner communities from Round V. Eleven new partners from Round V (Briceni, Soroca, Donduseni, Chadyr-Lunga, Biruinta, Glodeni, Ocnita, Cornesti, Taraclia, Basarabasca and Causeni) have already been delivered computer and office automation equipment including micro-computers and peripherals, fax and copy machines, a printer, modems and an initial complement of needed support supplies. Every equipment delivery also entailed on-site training and technical assistance provided to respective local governments by Fiscal Decentralization program specialists. Further, additional on-site follow-up training was provided upon equipment delivery by a local training contractor. This additional training is a new element of the Fiscal Decentralization program



and was provided to Round V local government personnel by trainers retained by LGRP in each community. Such additional on-site training greatly increase the pool of local government personnel who may access the computers to enhance their productivity. In addition, the above-mentioned partners were provided with a wide range of very useful financial spreadsheet applications developed by the Fiscal Decentralization team.

- Fiscal Decentralization program specialists provided technical assistance to the Mayor of Ialoveni in organizing the first ever held land auction in the town of Ialoveni. The town of Ialoveni was provided with technical materials relevant to land use rights auctions supported by USAID in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, the Mayor was provided a copy of training video developed in Kyrgyzstan. LGRP specialist carefully monitored the land auction in Ialoveni and ultimately discussed the experience with the Mayor addressing several apparent strengths and weaknesses in the initial process. Fiscal Decentralization specialists also discussed with Ialoveni municipal officials appropriate and inappropriate uses for the significant “one-time” revenues were generated by the auction
- At the invitation of the Mayor of the City of Comrat, the Chief of Party and the Fiscal Decentralization Team Leader visited to this partner community. The meeting was prompted by a presentation by the mayor at the 4th Quarterly LGRP Financial Applications Users Group meeting. The Mayor of Comrat had presented to the participants new fiscal techniques applied by the town for purposes of increasing tax revenues while simultaneously stimulating local investment and economic development. During the visit to Comrat (the capital of the autonomous region of Gagauzia), LGRP representatives participated in round table discussions with the Mayor and invited local entrepreneurs, learned about new fiscal approach to local businesses applied by the town.
- As part of preparation for the official visit of USAID Assistant Administrator for Europe & Eurasia Dr. Kent Hill to Moldova LGRP compiled a briefing book. A summary of LGRP activities and accomplishments to date by component was prepared. The information was complemented with photos and graphics that clearly illustrated LGRP at work. Also the slide presentation that the Mayor of Balti prepared for the first-ever formal budget hearing conducted by Balti officials for the 2003 municipal budget was appended to the briefing book. The brief presentation demonstrated progress in Balti and outlined success achieved in cooperation with the City of Balti as Local Government Partner of LGRP.
- The water utility accounting and billing system designed and created for Zberoaia Village by Fiscal Decentralization program specialists became operational during the month of May. Following the development and installation of water users database in Zberoaia for local water users association, a Fiscal Decentralization program specialist paid a visit to this community and introduced further improvements into the software. These improvements enabled local specialists to easily issue their first-ever run of water consumption billings at the end of June. These billings were distributed to all water consumers in Zberoaia. It is

considered very likely that Zberoaia is the first village in the history of Moldova to operate a fully metered water system with computerized accounting and billing.

- Fiscal Decentralization Specialists prepared and disseminated weekly electronic financial management newsletters to all LGRP partner communities that have Internet access. The newsletters informed government officials on the latest legislative amendments relevant to local governments as well as on current and upcoming LGRP activities such as users group meetings, competition sessions to be organized during the upcoming users group meetings, public hearings on budget or strategic plans, etc.
- The first “independent” delivery of water utility training (without STA expert assistance) based on *“Manual for Efficient Water Supply Operations”* (MEWSO) for management personnel from another cohort of five water utilities in Moldova took place on April 15-17 in Chisinau Municipality, Kentford Building, Conference Room. Nineteen (19) top-management specialists from 5 water utilities (Ungheni, Nisporeni, Cantemir, Edinet and Leova) attended the three-day seminar. The participants displayed a strong interest in the subjects addressed in the MEWSO.
- The LGRP Municipal Services Team and Chief of Party, D. Beard met with Seema Manghee, World Bank Team Manager for the World Bank Water and Sanitation Project in Moldova and also Alexander Danilenko from OECD on 20 May. Discussions centered on LGRP/World Bank collaboration in the area of special LGRP MEWSO financial training for four larger towns (Orhei, Cahul, Stefan Voda & Soroca) that will receive World Bank credits for utility renovation. Also discussed was provision of MEWSO–SS (“small systems) training & technical assistance for up to 10 villages that will receive World Bank water system rehabilitation grants. Special LGRP assistance in leak detection was also discussed. Finally LGRP reconfirmed its willingness to extend training and technical assistance to the villages to be selected for water supply grants. LGRP indicated that would need to rely on World Bank funding sources for such items as tools/spares and perhaps even office automation equipment and software.
- The fourth delivery of MEWSO training together with the CCN trainers took place from June 17 to June 19 in Chisinau Municipality, Academy of Public Administration Building. Senior management specialists from 4 water utilities (Vulcanesti, Anenii Noi, Ceadir Lunga and Riscani) attended the 3-day seminar. Specialists from Comrat were scheduled to attend and had so confirmed. However, their participation was cancelled at the last moment due to complications arising out of a crisis in the water system and their very limited staffing resources. This fourth MEWSO seminar was the first one organized in Russian language. Overall, the seminar was well received. The participants displayed strong interest in the new approaches to water utility management that were introduced during the MEWSO training.
- During this reporting period updates of community strategic plans were commenced in four communities, i.e. Colibasi (Cahul judet), Gribova (Edinet judet), Calarasi (Ungheni judet) and Vatici (Orhei judet). The group process with



the community strategic planning committee was completed but the public hearings on these updates will be deferred to the post election period. This is for two reasons: 1) during the election campaign there is always the possibility that one or another political faction in a community might choose to attempt to “politicize” the hearing process on a partisan basis, 2) In the event of a change in community leadership via the electoral process, a post election public hearing will afford an opportunity for the new leadership to “put its stamp of approval” on the updated community strategic plan, thus increasing the sustainability of the process.

- A group of LGRP personnel consisting of Chief of Party and the Democracy/Governance Team Leader and a Specialist from the team participated in a meeting organized by the Social Investment Fund of Moldova (SIFM) aimed at receiving feedback from the strategic planning assistance provided to 16 municipalities. Representatives of LGRP, SIFM, “Contact Center” and British Aid (DFID) reported on their findings and shared with the audience their thoughts about perspectives of future collaboration. After discussion, there was a general consensus for every organization should contribute to creation of a database of different strategic planning approaches currently operational in Moldova , so that local governments might select the method most appropriate one for their needs. The approach used by the LGRP was very highly rated by the Vice Executive Director of the SIFM. He very much liked the notion of creating a strategic-plan-in-brief and disseminating it widely to citizens well before the community meeting, thus giving them more time for considering proposals and suggestions. He observed that some community meetings organized by strategic planning providers other than LGRP had lasted 8 hours or more and become very tedious. This was primarily because citizens came to the meeting with no advance knowledge of the provisions of the draft community strategic plan.
- A number of follow-up steps in community strategic plan implementation in several communities have been reported: 1) Democracy and Governance Program Specialist met with the Mayor of Antonesti and developed plans the upcoming event on sharing their experience of collaborating with a Peace Corps Volunteer in community strategic plan implementation to other LGRP partners. 2) Also the implementation of an item from the strategic plan, and namely the updating of the Antonesti urban plan, was discussed, 3) As a strategic plan implementation activity, an LGRP Development Advisor has completed a report on alternatives for automated cultivation of sorghum for the LGRP partner of Rosu, specifically a rice/sorghum hybrid called soriz. In April he organized two meetings in Rosu with two local entrepreneurs, the Mayor, and a Peace Corps Agriculture specialist from Hincesti. It was decided that it would be in the best interest of all parties to start a sorghum association. The Peace Corps volunteer has agreed to consult with Rosu about making the necessary preparations. They are also planning to submit a proposal on soriz development to the Eurasia Foundation, 4) Finally, the reports on strategic plans implementation in the communities of Suruceni, (Chisinau County) and Cimisia (Lapusna) were completed.

- As part of the LGRP plan to create a sustainable indigenous capacity for community strategic planning via the Association of Mayors and Local Communities of Moldova (AMLCM), interviews with applicants for trainer/facilitators on community strategic planning were conducted. An interviewing panel consisting of 5 members (3 Democracy and Governance Specialists, LGRP Training and Development Specialist and the Chairperson of the AMLCM) interviewed in total 114 applicants for trainer/facilitators in community strategic planning. The interviewing process lasted for 8 days. As a result of interviews, the panel selected fifty finalists and 12 candidates for reserve pool.
- The Economic and Organization Development Program of United States Peace Corps/ Moldova and LGRP co-sponsored an event devoted to the exploration of opportunities for collaboration between LGRP Partner communities and the Peace Corps community economic development program. The event was conducted in the LGRP partner community of Antonesti village, Stefan Voda County. Approximately 40 persons representing Mayors and NGOs from eleven (11) partner communities as well as the Peace Corps Economic Development Program Manager & LGRP Chief of Party participated in the event. Several mayors and community-based NGOs expressed a strong desire to pursue the possibility of having a Peace Corps economic development volunteer assigned to their community to help them in implementation of their community strategic plans.
- During the month of June the Training of Facilitators (TOF) was conducted at the Academy of Public Administration. The program consisted of two consecutive sessions from June 14-21 and June 22-29. A total of 45 candidates were selected to be trained as potential facilitators in community strategic planning. Local Government Reform Project specialists conducted the TOF program, which was designed and adapted from training materials originally developed for LGRP by TRG consultants. The training program was facilitated by a team of master trainers consisting of the LGRP Training and Development Consultant, the President of the AMLCM and of two Democracy and Governance Specialists. Upon evaluation of the performances of the trainees during these two TOF sessions, an LGRP/AMLCM panel will make a final selection of the approximately 30 facilitators, who will be contracted for provision community strategic planning assistance via the AMLCM sub-contract with LGRP.
- Preparations were finalized for the First Quarterly Mayor's Meeting of LGRP partner communities. The event, which is scheduled for the 3-4 of July 2003, will focus on sharing information about good practices from LGRP local partners. A preliminary agenda and an invitation letter were sent to 51 mayors. The program will include an additional four-hour orientation session on strategic planning for mayors from the eleven new LGRP partner communities.

Targeted Assistance in Strategic Areas

- On 9 April a liaison meeting between the Municipal Services team and the representatives of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation was held. A number of topics related to SDC/LGRP collaboration was discussed. These included

discussion of a technical assessment of the water system in the village of Balauresti, one of the LGRP partners. Also, the possibility of working together on a technical assessment of the Water Utility in the LGRP partner community was discussed. The Chief of Party felt this might (together with Floresti) be an opportunity to field-test the “technical audit” element of the MEWSO. It is critical that the CCN MEWSO specialist/trainers play a major role in this activity, as they will represent the ongoing sustainability element for Moldova.

- Several miscellaneous items of targeted assistance were provided during this reporting period: 1) the Municipal Services team helped the representatives of Zberoaia village to prepare an application for a grant from the Social Investment Fund. The grants will be used in the implementation of the strategic plan, Zberoaia being one of the partner communities of LGRP. 2) On the 30th of April Cristian Murariu participated in a common effort with Orhei Water Utility on field-testing leak detection and pipe location equipment. 3) The translation and editing of the pipe locator user’s manual into Romanian language was completed.
- In the period of 19-26 May 2003 the LGRP Municipal Services team was involved in the procurement of spare parts and tools necessary to create an ongoing operation and maintenance capacity for the water users association and village in Zberoaia. The team was also involved in creation of the maintenance shop. The shop, tools and spares will be used to maintain the new water system of the village of Zberoaia in good working condition. The main infrastructure investment in the system was financed by the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development. The municipal services team supervised the procurement process of spare water meters, spare pipes, fittings, tools, and construction materials. Also in Zberoaia village, the Municipal Services team together with V. Iovita, of the Fiscal Decentralization team, provided technical assistance to the water users association and village administration in commencing the billing process for water consumption based on meter readings for the first month of water system operations. On 20 June 2003 the first monthly water bills were calculated printed and are ready for distribution. This is very likely the first water meter-based, computer generated water billings in a village in the history of Moldova.
- At the request of Floresti Water Utility, the MS team conducted on-site technical assistance and training in leak detection and pipe/cable location. Those activities are part of the follow-up activities related to MEWSO implementation. On 11 June Cristian Murariu, LGRP Municipal Services Engineer together with the utility staff from Floresti water utility conducted a series of leak and pipe/cable detection activities within the town and at the pumping station. (Also, the chief engineer from Floresti received training in the LGRP office, based on demonstration available on tape). Following the on-site training, for three weeks the LGRP leak detection and pipe locator equipment will be used by the utility to conduct fieldwork in Floresti. Initial positive results were confirmed for both pipe and/or cable location and for the process of leak detection. At the end of the three-week period, the Floresti water utility will prepare a report outlining the results of its activities. It is anticipated this

will be very useful to LGRP in designing additional leak detection technical assistance.

- Three draft Statements of Cooperation with the Academy of Public Administration (APA) regarding the perspectives of future joint activities were drafted and considered by LGRP and the APA. These agreements are aimed at involving the APA in joint activities regarding the training of newly elected local councilors, renting training facilities for conducting the training of facilitators (TOF) on community strategic planning and for the Academy to host the planned Quarterly Mayors Meetings, of LGRP partner communities.
- The civil society organization “Junii” from Edinet presented LGRP with five issues of the community newsletter entitled “Vocea Comunitatii” (“Voice of Community”). This newsletter is co-sponsored by the Mayor’s Office from Edinet. Issues of the newsletter contain information on the potable water supply in the municipality as well as information about the local elections. Information about community activities and civil society organizations in the municipality were also covered in the newsletter. This effort is supported by a micro-action grant from LGRP

General activities

- As per an inquiry from the Department of Secretary of State of North Carolina in charge of North Carolina – Moldova issues as well as relevant guidance and suggestions of the Chief of Party the LGRP staffers contacted their respective liaison partner communities and obtained detailed information on community project needs from the partners’ community strategic plans. This information provided details of needed goods and materials required for successful implementation of community projects. These community submissions were translated into English and made a part of the larger LGRP submission to the North Carolina-Moldova partnership.
- The Chief of Party and V. Manic of the Municipal Services Team participated at the official opening ceremony of the Free Economic Zone “Ungheni Business” on 15 May, in Ungheni municipality. The Chief of Party along with the Deputy Minister of the Economy, Mayor Vrabie of Ungheni, FEZ Director Scutaru and the TACIS “Cross-Border Trade Advisor” were guest speakers at this event. LGRP has provided initial material assistance (furnishings and “re-cycled” computers from a previous USAID project) and ongoing consulting assistance from the Lisakovsk Kazakhstan Special Economic Zone to strengthen this economic development effort in Ungheni.
- The Chief of Party delivered a series of lectures on Comparative Public Policy Analysis at the Academy of Public Administration. These were multiple three-hour lectures delivered to the 4th year students upon the request of the Rector of this institution. The students’ and lecturers’ feedback was very positive, and the topic was well received. Students were especially interested in learning examples of public policy development and implementation in the United States.
- The Chief of Party and Democracy and Governance specialists met with the Eurasia Foundation to discuss grant funding available through the Eurasia Foundation. It was decided that LGRP staff would inform their designated LGRP partner communities about this funding. Staff will review of strategic to determine if goals of the

communities warrant applying for these grants. Following the meeting with Eurasia Foundation Regional Director Richard Shepard and Eurasia Foundation Moldova Country Representative Sorin Mereacre, LGRP entered into a *Statement of Cooperation* with Eurasia Foundation to cooperate in contributing to the development of civil society and a market economy in Moldova. Specific emphasis was made to the implementation of community strategic plans and development of eco-tourism projects to help with grass-roots community economic development.

- Local elections were held across the Republic of Moldova on 25 May. A matrix of final results of local elections in LGRP community partners was compiled. Generally speaking there were no big surprises. A great majority of the strongly reform oriented mayors who cooperate actively with LGRP won their local electoral races. Overall, thirty-six mayors were re-elected for four-year terms. Fourteen LGRP communities elected new mayors.

III. Deliverables and Reports

Preliminary List of work products produced in Q2 2003

Briefing Book for Dr. Hill USAID Assistant Administrator

Municipal Services Financial Management Activity Report – STA Augustin Boer

Economic Development Site Development Recommendations for Peace Corps, A. Schumacher

Newspaper Article Singera Strategic Plan Implementation 2003, N. Motili

Facilitator's Guide for Strategic Planning, N. Motili, L. Tverdun

Trainers Manual for Training of Facilitators in Strategic Planning, L. Tverdun

IV. Problems or Delays Affecting Task Order Performance

None at this time

V. Work Planned for Next Reporting Period

- Organize and conduct the 5th LGRP Financial Applications Users Group Meeting.
- Finalize the Report on recommendations regarding implementation of Municipal Financial Software.



- Provide on-site training and technical assistance to Round V local government partners.
- Organize and conduct 1st Quarterly meeting of Mayors of LGRP partner communities.
- Completion of strategic planning activities under sub-contract with the Association of Mayors and Local Communities of Moldova (AMLCM), i.e. environmental scans for 19 localities; round tables with community stakeholders in 12 localities; strategic planning workshops in 8 new localities.
- Prepare the first draft of the MEWSO-Small Systems (MEWSO-SS) and related training materials for use in improving the management and operations of the public water supply in smaller communities that may lack a formally organized water utility or is operating as an NGO (Water Users Association, etc.)

VI. Specific Action Requested

None at this time