Structural Funds in Romania: Success Stories

2007-2013
For sure, a wager that we have won and I think no one else thought that it is possible – to be honest, except for Eugen Teodorovici who believed that we would win it, I did not believe that either – was that of unblocking all European funds. I want you to know that the amount of almost 3 billion Euros that has arrived this year to Romania represents money that have reached private companies, money that have reached the teachers, money that have reached the infrastructure, in municipalities, and during the next year, based on this effort, 5 billion Euros will be arriving from European funds for all environment, regional development, human resources development projects. This is something that I can be proud of and for this I can further ask for your help, as this is an important achievement for Romania and a hope for the coming year.
The European funds absorption does not represent a goal in itself; however, it does represent a positive signal for foreign investors who shall recognize that as a sign of stability for the economic environment. When this level of absorption gets increasingly higher, those who wish to invest in this country shall have one more reason to do so, as they are going to take a look and think that it automatically translates into a better procurement process, higher levels of transparency, a coherent approach for the economic environment.
After Romania joined European Union in 2007, the Structural Funds represented an extraordinary chance for development, for closing the functional and infrastructure-related gaps. The extent to which our country succeeded or not in taking the most out of this historical opportunity may only be captured through a single measurement unit: the absorption rate, the institutional capacity of making use of these financial instruments for the benefit of every single citizen and community, instruments that amounted close to the value of 20 billion Euros for the 2007-2013 programming period.

The end of 2013 represents the best moment for a balance check, when we reflect on the dry reality of figures, as well as over the impact the projects implemented with the help of Structural Instruments had at national level, by creating opportunities and by financing ideas that could not have been shaped without the co-funding received from the European Union.

This is why the following pages serve, first of all, as an example. The projects presented here are not, probably, the most impressive from the point of view of their magnitude; these are probably not the projects that were awarded the highest number of points during the assessment stage or those which were always successful during the ordeals of procedural and on-the-spot verifications. However, these are some of the projects which proved that Romania can do it, as well. Romania is able to create new ideas, is able to build infrastructure, is able to capitalize on its cultural and touristic heritage, it can operate in the forefront of scientific research, it can innovate and, at the same time, it can help its vulnerable citizens during the most difficult moments of their lives.

The Ministry of European Funds has the duty and the honour to demonstrate these capacities: by encouraging the use of structural and cohesion funds, by creating clear and simplified procedures, by putting into place a more efficient institutional framework for the next programming period, by focusing on the added value that these projects bring to the Romanian economy and society.

As a result, this collection of success stories recorded during the implementation of structural funds has not been categorized starting from traditional criteria, such as financing sources or best practice used at micro-management level. These projects are presented here because they create perspectives. They represent an actual translation into reality of the chance that Romania has had and continues to have through the access provided to structural and cohesion funds. They represent the present, the extent to which Romanians have succeeded in manifesting their resourcefulness and solidarity, as well as the future, the extent to which Romanians shall succeed in building a modern and inclusive society.
sustainability and
development
Highway of the Sun

The Bucharest-Constanta highway represents a landmark for the Romanian national transport network, as it is included in the European TEN-T Corridor, which links the harbour of Constanta to the Western Europe. Therefore, the Highway of the Sun, as it was rightfully designated, does not represent only a key prerequisite for development of Black Sea-based tourism, as it is currently perceived by the Romanian or foreign travelers, but also a strategic element in ensuring the transit of goods to and from the biggest harbour in the country and for the social and economic development of the South East Region.

The Highway of the Sun is not necessarily a brand new project, however, it has earned itself the fame of a project that has always been delayed and never finalized. The first road segment between Fetesti and Cernavoda was inaugurated in 1987 and it had 18 kilometers. It represented quite a complex endeavour for the time, as the works included construction of bridges, highway viaducts and also the refurbishment of the Borcea branch and of the railway infrastructure built over the Danube River.

In 1990, a contract was signed for building the road segment between Bucharest and Fundulea. The overall value of the works back then was of 35.6 million dollars. The works should have been finished in two years, however, in 1992, they stopped because of lack of funds. Five years later, the works were resumed again, in order to have the new road segments ready only in 2004 (Bucharest-Fundulea and Fundulea-Drajna Noua, totaling 106 kilometers). Meanwhile, the 18 kilometers initially delivered had deteriorated and they had to be dismantled and fully refurbished.
Aceasta este prima iniţiativă din România pentru plasarea acestui animal maiestuos în condiţii de sălbăticie, cel mai greu animal terestru supravieţuitor în libertate din Europa. Vânat până la dispariţie între anii '20 şi '30 ai secolului trecut (în pădurile poloneze), el a fost reintrodus treptat în captivitate în mai multe ţări europene, după ce a fost clasificat drept specie vulnerabilă.

În România, refacerea acestui preţios element al faunei Munţilor Carpaţi a început în anul 1958, prin aducerea unei perechi de zimbri (Podarenk şi Polanka) din Polonia în pădurea Slivuţ-Haţeg, în judeţul Hunedoara. De acolo, exemplare s-au transferat în mai multe părţi ale ţării, de la grădini zoologice, până la rezervaţii şi parcuri naturale, trăind în captivitate sau în regim de semi-libertate (împrejmuiri de dimensiuni mari).

Proiectul de reintroducere în libertate a zimbrului se desfăşoară sub coordonarea Administraţiei Parcului Natural Vânători Neamţ şi a fost demarat în cadrul unei iniţiative de conservare a bio-diversităţii, finanţată prin intermediul Instrumentelor structurale alocate României pentru perioada de programare 2007-2013. Prima eliberare a zimbrilor a avut loc în martie 2012, când cinci exemplare au fost introduse într-un areal de aproximativ 5.000 ha, o zonă izolată cu păduri de foioase, ideală pentru supravieţuirea acestei specii.
Thus, in 2009, the Highway of the Sun was still missing the 52 kilometers to its point of destination, from Cernavoda up to the entrance to Constanta harbour. The final delivery of this road segment (made up from the Cernavoda-Medgidia and Medgidia-Constanta segments) was possible ahead of the deadline (first time for such works undertaken in Romania so far) in 2012 also due to the non-reimbursable contribution amounting to 297,232,537 lei from the European Union, through the Cohesion Fund.

The conclusion of these works allows the significant decrease of the travelling time between Bucharest and Constanta, which thus reaches a value of only one hour and 51 minutes, by increasing the maximum speed limit from 100 km/h (outside cities and other localities) to 130 km/h. Also, the road segment between Constanta to Cernavoda shall contribute to an improvement of the road safety and to the decrease in the number of road incidents on a route in very high demand, especially during the summer season that entails the travel of a very large number of vehicles from Bucharest to the Black Sea resorts.
Actually, only now, after the successful completion of these works and after commissioning the last road segment operating as a genuine highway, from Medgidia to Constanta, we can start talking about a true Highway of the Sun, a road with an overall length of 202 kilometers, which connects the sunrise to the sunset, from a Romanian perspective.

For more details, visit:
http://www.cnadnr.ro/

Project title: Cernavoda-Constanta Highway
Funding source: Sectoral Operational Programme Transport, other financing sources (EBRD)
Total budget: 1,486,158,338 lei
Beneficiary: Romanian National Company for Highways and Roads
Implementation region: South-East
There is no such thing as a modern capital without an efficient and fast transport system. For a city like Bucharest, with more than 2 million inhabitants, an underground transit system able to transport more than 600,000 passengers daily and to ease the surface transport congestion is a prerequisite for the smooth functioning of the entire city.

The Bucharest Metro is a project initiated in 1974 (in terms of surveys and design) and it was commissioned in 1979. The current metro network includes more than 69 km of double-track railway, 51 stops clustered along 4 lines and 4 depots. Although it covers only 4% of the length of the entire public transport network of the capital city, due to its superior transport capacity, speed and safety, the underground system manages to cover 26% of the total travel using public transport means in Bucharest.

During the nineties, the underground system developed slowly, due to the lack of funds, both for investment and for continuing the extension of existing lines or for building new connections. Therefore, only 3 new stops were commissioned in almost 10 years, all 3 being part of existing lines.
For the first time after 1990, the budgetary efforts of the Ministry of Transport will be supplemented by non-reimbursable structural funds for one of the most ambitious projects aiming to continue the works for the Bucharest Metro.

This involves a new link between the Western and the Eastern parts of the city, by building Line 5 which will initially connect the city centre with one of its districts (Drumul Taberei) that is as large as a medium-sized city, until now left without access to a viable public transport alternative.
The first stage of the project aims at building a line of 6.87 km, including 10 stops and 1 depot, to cover the distance Raul Doamnei – Eroilor which should be operational at the end of 2016 and should ensure the transport of approximately 64,000 passengers / day. Line 5 will be further extended to ensure connection with the Eastern part of the city, through the Universitate stop.
The project is co-financed by the state budget (a contribution of 197,525,763 euro) and through a loan granted by the European Investment Bank (in amount of 123,584,391 euro); a financing application was submitted to the European Commission in November 2013 for funding under the European Regional Development Fund (in amount of 409,503,441 euro).

**Project title:** Underground Line 5, Raul Doamnei - Eroilor (PS Opera) Segment, including Valea Ialomitei

**Funding source:** Sectoral Operational Programme Transport, Axis 2, KAI 2.2, other sources (EIB)

**Total budget:** 730,613,595 euro

**Beneficiary:** METROREX SA

**Implementation region:** Bucharest-Ilfov
"A Cleaner World" is not just a slogan, but something we all aspire to, something we can all contribute to. We benefit daily from the seemingly unlimited resources of this planet, taking it for granted as our birth right. Nevertheless, we hear every day of extreme weather phenomena, of tens of species that disappear due to pollution, of entire communities hit by floods or drought.

In the past years it has become more than clear that decisive intervention is needed, that we must find and implement solutions to prevent and remedy environmental damage. At European level, there are debates over a set of policies aiming at ensuring the balance between the need for economic and technological progress of each Member State and the impact they have on the planet resources. Various systems are implemented to foster development and biodiversity, environmental protection and development of green areas, industrial and community waste management and, last but not least, to raise awareness and educate the public on environmental issues and the necessary actions to be taken.
Through the project “Integrated Solid Waste Management System in Mehedinti County”, Romania takes a step forward to rendering the environmental processes more efficient and to achieving harmonisation with the European policies in the field. For the next two and a half years, Mehedinti County Council, as beneficiary of the funding provided by Structural Funds intends to undertake various activities aiming at implementing a modern and efficient waste management system at county level. The main characteristics of this system are selective recycling, reuse of household and industrial waste by turning it into raw materials for industry or even fertilisers for agriculture and provision of waste storage facilities built against the European environmental standards. This initiative will lead to building four transfer stations for the waste collected in Orsova, Baia de Arama, Strehaia and Vanju Mare, and a sorting and composting station in Malovet.
The European funding will also be used to close down and rehabilitate according to environmental protection legislation three non-compliant urban warehouses, thus protecting the inhabitants of these areas from the dangers posed by accidental pollution. A first result with immediate and direct effect will consist in the procurement of more than 10,000 bins to collect household waste, of more than 200 containers and of 9 vehicles to transport urban waste.
Due to the complexity and variety of measures implemented, this project is one of the most important investments made in the past 20 years at county level, thus contributing to the sustainable economic growth of the community and, finally, to ensuring better living conditions for each inhabitant of the county.

**Project title:** Integrated Solid Waste Management System in Mehedinti County

**Funding source:** Sectoral Operational Programme Environment, Axis 2, KAI 1

**Total budget:** 97,094,421 lei

**Beneficiary:** Mehedinti County Council

**Implementation region:** South-West Oltenia
Foundations for education
The non-reimbursable amounts granted by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund for the modernisation, development and endowment of educational infrastructure is a vital support for the Romanian educational system.

To this purpose, one of the most prestigious education institutions in Transylvania, “Bethlen Gabor” National College of Aiud currently benefits from the support provided by the structural instruments. The college is renowned as one of the historical educational centres beyond the Carpathians. In May 1622, the Transylvanian Diet convened in Cluj and approved the plan of Prince Bethlen Gábor to establish a higher education institution. This institution was named Academicum Collegium seu Gymnasium Illustre and was initially founded in Alba Iulia.

In 1662, Prince Apafi Mihály relocated the College from Alba Iulia to Aiud, on the domains donated by the founding prince. After Aiud was devastated by Austrian armies, Rector Papai Pariz Ferenc obtained, in 1711, funding in amount of 11,000 sterling pounds from Anglican Christians to rebuild the school. This funding was used to erect most of the buildings which are currently part of the Bethlen Gabor College.

Since its establishment until 1859 the College was considered an academic institution, including three faculties: Philology, Law and Theology. After these faculties were moved to Cluj in 1869 and 1895 respectively, the college became an upper secondary school, including a pedagogical profile. Currently, more than 580 students from Aiud Municipality and its adjoining localities study in “Bethlen Gabor” National College which includes a kindergarten, a school providing primary and lower secondary education, as well as a high school with sciences, vocational and technological profiles.

The college includes eight buildings with a lovely architecture rich in history, it provides courses in Hungarian and it has always been in a process of permanent change and development. Committed to provide educational services according to the highest European quality standards to all its students, “Bethlen Gabor” National College initiated in 2010 a vast project aiming at the structural rehabilitation and overhauling of three of its historical buildings.
The structural funds will also be used to procure modern specialised equipment for the classrooms, to build 7 more laboratories where the students can learn and use in practice the theoretical knowledge acquired, and to endow 13 classrooms with IT equipment (laptops, beamers, video cameras, interactive boards, audio books) which is so necessary in the educational context of the 21st century.

In the 48 months of project implementation Aiud Municipality intends to develop a real pre-university campus, following the model of other European countries. The modernisation and enhancement of accommodation areas provided by the college will facilitate access to education for more students from rural areas.

Any society which wishes to develop, both at individual and community levels, and to open new paths towards innovation and technology relies first and foremost on education. The rehabilitation of educational infrastructure is a prerequisite for success in this field, and the allocation of the generous budget from REGIO funds to such an initiative is yet another guarantee of success.
Project title: Structural Rehabilitation and Overhauling of “Bethlen Gabor” National College in Aiud, Alba County

Funding source: Regional Operational Programme, Axis 3, KAI 3.4

Total budget: 29,656,224.84 lei

Beneficiary: Aiud Municipality

Implementation region: Centre

For more information, visit:
www.bethlengabor.ro
Aceasta este prima iniţiativă din România pentru plasarea acestui animal maiestuos în condiţii de sălbăticie, cel mai greu animal terestru supravieţuitor în libertate din Europa. Vânat până la dispariţie între anii ’20 şi ’30 ai secolului trecut (în pădurile poloneze), el a fost reintrodus treptat în captivitate în mai multe ţări europene, după ce a fost clasificat drept specie vulnerabilă.

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The road to the Citadel

Former capital of the Principality of Transylvania and the very place where the unification with the Romanian Kingdom was ratified on the 1st of December 1918, Alba Iulia is without a doubt the city with the richest historical significance for Romanians.

Settled on the banks of Mures River, Balgrad (as it was called in the past) offers its visitors many attractions and tours around Alba Iulia Citadel. Having acknowledged the tourism development potential, in the past years local authorities have implemented important infrastructure development and rehabilitation projects, both for the city and its surrounding areas.

The road to the Citadel
Among the latest successfully implemented projects we mention the modernisation of the main access roads to the city, more precisely of the road connecting Alba Iulia and Cluj and improving the accessibility of the Alba Iulia urban centre and its links with adjacent areas. It is a vast project which goes beyond sterile figures, a number of kilometers or a standard terminology; it supports the Citadel inhabitants, restoring some of its old time glamour and contributing, at the same time, to increased employment in the county by providing jobs for more than 55 people during the works execution stage.
After more than 32 months of intense work, the Municipality of Alba County may proudly display a fully rehabilitated road system (38,823.48 ml) which allows for a more fluid traffic from the North area, including more than 7,500 sqm. of bicycle lanes built against European standards and abundant green areas which make access to the city more attractive.

The investment supported by the European Regional Development Fund, more precisely the axis for integrated urban development plans, led to the development of new sewerage networks and to the modernisation of the potable water supply system, involving the replacement of more than 2,950 ml water supply network.

The rehabilitation and modernisation works performed for the national road 1 (km 382+400 until km 385+160) are beneficial not only for the 5500 inhabitants of the area, but for all those transiting the city daily and for the Citadel visitors.

For more information, visit:
www.apulum.ro
The health system in Romania is seldom mentioned in a positive context. Whether we talk about insufficient pay of medical staff or of improper infrastructure of hospitals and medical practices, the conclusion is the same: there is urgent need of direct financial investment in this sector and of concrete interventions at legislative level to restore the prestige and dignity deserved by such a noble profession.
With the support of funding provided by the European Union to increase social cohesion between Member States, Romania started taking the first small steps of the national health system reform. One of the crucial actions to reinvigorate this vital field consists in the rehabilitation, modernisation and endowment of hospitals, medical practices and emergency centres, both from urban areas and from the most remote villages and communes, according to European standards.

This is the context of the project initiated in the spring of 2010 by Calarasi County Council, whose overall objective was to improve the quality of medical services provided by the Integrated Outpatient Care Unit of the Calarasi County Emergency Hospital.

The Outpatient Care Unit has been providing medical services to the 320,000 inhabitants of the county for more than 35 years. Consequently, its building was in a very poor condition, as a result of years and daily flow of patients. Moreover, the lack of modern medical equipment and instruments made the daily activities of medical staff even more difficult and turned the place into an unattractive workplace for experienced medical staff.
It took almost 3 years of intense work to replace and improve the utilities network, to perform the thermal rehabilitation works and to re-configure the spaces dedicated to medical practices in order to create a functional workflow, according to European quality standards. Another key element of the modernisation process of the outpatient care unit within the county hospital was the procurement of quality medical equipment which allowed for the diversification of services provided.

Currently, the inhabitants of Calarasi county benefit from a fully renovated outpatient care unit, including 26 medical practices adequately equipped for the 22 medical specialties providing medical services within the hospital.

The benefits of the investment have been enjoyed every day since the inauguration of the new building both by the medical staff, which increased from 14 to 30 medical specialists (who, in turn, generated increases by almost 100% in the hospital revenues), and by the patients, who can now benefit from quality services in a proper environment.
“The opportunity to rehabilitate the Outpatient Care Unit (which is the interface between the hospital and the population) opened unexpected prospects for beneficiaries – the medical staff and especially for the patients”

For more information, visit: www.calarasi.ro

Dr. Chiru Mariana
Medical Director of the County Emergency Hospital

Project title: Rehabilitation, modernisation and endowment of the Integrated Outpatient Care Unit of Calarasi County Emergency Hospital

Funding source: Regional Operational Programme 2007 - 2013, Axis 3, KAI 3.1

Total budget: 19,783,631.62 lei

Beneficiary: Calarasi County Council

Implementation region: South Muntenia
The wisents of Moldova, free again

Wisents, a legendary species for Neamt County, the heart of the historical province of Moldova, returned to wilderness. Currently, Vanatori Neamt Natural Park is the only place in the country where wisents live both in captivity (the Zoo of Vanatori commune), semi-wilderness conditions (The Wisent Management Centre) and in freedom, starting with 2012, in Chitele area.
This is the first initiative in Romania to set this majestic animal free, in the wilderness. Hunted to extinction in the ’20s and the ’30s (in Polish forests), the wisent was gradually bred in captivity in several European countries, after being declared vulnerable species.

In Romania, the recovery of this precious element of the Carpathians fauna started in 1958, when a pair of wisents (Podarenk and Polanka) was brought from Poland to the Slivut-Hateg forest, in Hunedoara County. Afterwards, more such animals were transferred to various parts of the country, from Zoos to natural reserves and wildlife parks, living in captivity or in semi-wild conditions (large enclosures).

The project aiming to reintroduce the wisents to wildlife conditions is implemented under the coordination of Vanatori Neamt Natural Park Administration and was developed under a biodiversity preservation initiative, financed with the support of the structural instruments allocated to Romania for the 2007-2013 programming period. The first attempt to set the wisents free took place in March 2012, when five animals were moved to an area of approximately 5,000 ha, an isolated deciduous forest, ideal for the survival of this species.
Each animal has around its neck a radio device which allows for monitoring their routes, using telemetry. Thus, this ambitious project moved from the phase of setting the wisents free to a new stage involving the follow-up of wisent behaviour and evolution in the wilderness.

Besides the preservation and management of the wisent population living in wilderness, the project entails various activities designed to attract the interest of visitors and to increase awareness and educate tourists on the importance of biodiversity preservation. Specific infrastructure was developed to allow tourists to observe animals in their natural habitats in the Vanatori Natural Park and the Secu Natural Reserve (educational tours, pavilions, information boards, rest areas, information facilities in the Visitor’s Centre).
The initiative is supplemented by the development of a manual for optional subjects entitled “The Land of Wisent”, which might have considerable impact on how the future generations understand the importance of the historical and cultural heritage and of biodiversity in preserving the local identity and the national specificity.

For more details, visit:
www.vanatoripark.ro

Project title: Common approach for preserving bio-diversity of community interest in two natural protected areas from Neamt county: Secu Natural Reserve and Vanatori Neamt Natural Park

Funding source: Sectoral Operational Programme Environment, Axis 4, KAI 4.1

Total budget: 1,465,121 lei

Beneficiary: Vanatori Neamt Natural Park Administration RA

Implementation region: North-East
“You shall not pass through here!”

For those familiar with the Romanian history, this title has a special resonance. It stands for the courage and abnegation demonstrated by the Romanian soldiers during the First World War, as they fought for the very existence of the Romanian state. While the government, the king and all other central authorities had retreated to Iasi, after the attack of Bucharest, the Romanians could only hope for defending the Moldova front line, Marasti-Marasesti-Oituz-Namoloasa.

This became reality due to the Romanian-Russian counter-offensive of August 1917, when the Central Powers lines were defeated. The Times stated then that “[...] the defense at Marasesti was the most brilliant armed action ever accomplished by Romanians.”

In order to preserve such glorious moments in the national conscience and to be able to commemorate with gratitude the 27,000 Romanian soldiers dead or disappeared in the bloody battles fought in the Moldovan hills and valleys, various monuments were built in 1923-1936, impressive works both in terms of their dimension and intrinsic artistic value. Thus, the Marasesti Mausoleum includes bas-reliefs carved by Ion Jalea and Corneliu Medrea, and the paintings were the work of Eduard Saulescu.
Nevertheless, time marked these monuments built to honour the soldiers of the Romanian army, therefore Vrancea County Council decided to perform the restoration, consolidation, and rehabilitation of mausoleums from Focsani, Marasesti, Marasti, and Sovaja, together with other religious and historical monuments, to be included in a tourist tour. The project includes 4 mausoleums and 5 historical monuments along the route entitled “The road to glory for the Romanian Army in the First World War”. The route will include the localities of Focsani-Marasesti-Panciu-Straoane-Varnita-Marasti-Soveja, in order to provide a tourist tour which would attract not only regional and national visitors, but also foreign tourists.

The works will take 36 months, including the rehabilitation and consolidation of mausoleums and museums hosted by them, through repair and modernisation works involving various activities, such as: building restoration, hydro insulation works, improvement of ventilation systems, electrical, thermal and plumbing works, hardscaping works, development of parking lots and tourist information points. The Marasti Mausoleum will include restoration of sculptures and landslide mitigation works.

The project benefits from co-financing from the national budget and from structural funds (European Regional Development Fund) in amount of 16,597,088.57 lei, and the contribution of Vrancea County Council to the eligible expenditure is of 530,079.29 lei.

Thus, due to the co-financing provided, the Structural Instruments contribute to a better reflection of the national historical and cultural heritage and support the tourist potential of Vrancea County and of the entire South-East Region.
At the gates of Danube
The Iron Gate is a natural bridge between the Carpathians and the Balkans, a succession of gorges covering more than 130 km, at the border between Serbia and Romania. The wild beauty of these places is celebrated in the legends of the Kazans or of the famous sunken island of Ada Kaleh, known as a free port and a smuggler’s nest. Anthropic influence added, with the building of one of the largest hydrotechnical systems in Europe, the Hydroelectric Power Stations Iron Gate I and II.

The area is among the most picturesque and attractive locations, both in terms of tourist potential and historic heritage. Here, Emperor Traian built a bridge over the Danube to invade Dacia, and any passionate in archaeology can visit the ruins of an impressive Roman camp in Drobeta Turnu Severin.

Many of these remarkable elements of the local cultural heritage were brought together under the generous umbrella of the Iron Gate Museum. The History Museum of Traian High School was established in 1912, to be moved, 13 years later, in the new building erected near the Roman camp, under the new name of Museum of History and Ethnography of Turnu Severin. After 1945, the institution received its current name and was extended to include departments of history, natural sciences and later on ethnography and arts.
Nowadays the museum is beneficiary of a vast rehabilitation project financed by structural funds which does not include only building renovation works, but was extended to cover various historical monuments of archaeological and religious significance. Thus, among the heritage pieces included in the rehabilitation project we may mention Traian’s Bridge (built in the 2nd century), the Roman baths and Drobeta Roman camp, a stone fortress built in 103-105 and rebuilt in the following centuries, as well as the medieval fortifications and the ruins of the church dating back in the XIII-XIV century.

So far, the project beneficiaries, Mehedinti County Council and Drobeta Turnu Severin Municipality managed to accomplish an important part of the works, starting with the rehabilitation of the sub-structure of the Museum and of the arts department, the consolidation of the Roman ruins, restoration of the medieval towers and of the Gothic church, as well as building a new Roman theatre of 730 seats, a tower with a lift, a bridge and a sightseeing platform for the visitors to admire the archaeological objectives.
This initiative aimed first and foremost at capitalising on the beauties of the past, but it also proved innovative capacities: the modernisation of structures related to the museum involves a spectacular conversion of the arts department of the museum into a multipurpose pavilion for exhibitions and conferences, equipped with high performance video and audio systems, as well as the development of an information and documentation centre near the medieval fortress.

Thus, the Iron Gate Museum benefits from one of the most complex and ambitious endeavours to revive the cultural heritage, an inspired combination of historical perspective and vision for the future.

Project title: Rehabilitation of the Iron Gate Region Museum and its capitalization as a touristic product
Funding source: Regional Operational Programme, Axis 5, KAI 5.1
Total budget: 51,739,132.69 lei
Beneficiary: Mehedinti County Council
Implementation region: South-West Oltenia
The Hunyadi from Banat
For Romanians, the Hunyadi name is first and foremost associated with Hunedoara, where Ioan Corvin (more famous under the name of Iancu of Hunedoara, or Ioan Huniade) built an imposing castle for the medieval times.

Nevertheless, the Hunyads, who gave the “Champion of Christ” (title given by Pope Callixt III), the conqueror of the Battle of Belgrade (1456), the Voivode of Transylvania and regent of Hungary, father of King Matei Corvin, left an indelible mark in Banat as well, where Ioan Corvin held two very important offices, Ban of Severin and Comes of Timisoara.

After 1443, Ioan decided to build a new castle in the city he ruled, on the ruins of a former royal palace which had been severely damaged by an earthquake. Thus, Hunyadi Castle was erected before 1447 to become what is nowadays known as the oldest building in this part of the country. Initially that location had been chosen as his place of residence by Charles Robert of Anjou, King of Hungary, following a visit made in 1307. The initial building was probably erected by Italian builders and was finalised in 1315.

The castle has faced many tribulations: architectural adjustments to cater for artillery weapons, the siege of Habsburgs to remove the Ottoman rule, conversion into a military storehouse until the Revolution of 1849, which destroyed it almost completely. The castle was rebuilt and renovated in 1856, with significant changes, especially for the facade. It was also partly renovated again in 1903, before becoming a part of the Banat Museum, in 1947.
Currently, the castle hosts the History, Archaeology and Natural Sciences Departments of the Museum. After more than a century of vast consolidation works, the castle was at risk to collapse, and the specialists indicated that the walls were damaged, the oak pillars supporting the foundation were rotten and the north-west wing and the vaults were affected by important fissures.

The solution was to apply for the non-reimbursable financial support provided by the structural instruments, more precisely assistance in amount of almost 34 million lei granted under the European Regional Development Fund. Besides an overall appraisal of this heritage building, the project aims at reviving and using some new spaces. Thus, the castle attic will be converted into a loft, without changes in the structure, shape or materials used. Thus, this new facility will be used to host itinerant exhibitions, and the rampart will also become part of the Museum. The castle will be equipped with an external lift in the inner courtyard which will facilitate access to the second floor of the building.
The project intends to capitalize on the significant tourist potential of such a building in an important city as Timisoara: a castle in the heart of the city is an amazing growth opportunity, due to the number of potential visitors it might attract. The restoration of the Hunyadi Castle will also contribute to strengthening the local identity, and is an important investment in the cultural heritage of Timisoara, which could not have been possible without the support provided by the structural funds.

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Project title: Restoration and refunctionalization of the Hunyadi Castle within the Banat Museum of Timisoara

Funding source: Regional Operational Programme, Axis 5, KAI 5.1

Total budget: 52,487,881.70 lei

Beneficiary: Timis County Council

Implementation region: West
The Transylvanian treasure

Ieud, Botiza, Barsana, Poienile Izei, Ocna Sugatag, just a few of the gems of the fairy tale land of Maramures, the historical heart of Romania. Time has stood still here and one feels that most intensely in a wooden church, seemingly springing straight from the depths of earth and forests.
The wooden churches from Maramures have specific planimetry, woodworking joinery techniques and shingle roofing, reflecting ingenuity at its highest artistic expression. They were built on high spots, where verticality imposed specific building solutions, which are obvious in the framework and in the design of turret spires. Usually this included the bell tower covered by an elongated dome daring the skies, displaying on top an elaborate cast iron cross. The Maramures church architecture evolved with time, according to the skills, experience and fantasy of local craftsmen, who managed to impose a certain style in the suggestive expression of shapes and ornamental motifs.

In order to become better known and appreciated, Maramures County Council initiated a project aiming at highlighting a true Transylvanian tour which would enhance accessibility to these living monuments: the project involves rehabilitation of access roads, building parking lots near the tourist objectives and development of related infrastructure. Such infrastructure includes development of information points, connection to water supply sources, sewerage, street lighting, and architectural lighting to emphasize the beauty of these slender but imposing structures.
All these actions will be complemented by information and promotion activities to raise awareness on this tourist tour, so that the treasures of Maramures become more visible. From carved wood candelabra to painted icons, to the oldest document written in the Romanian language – the Codex of Ieud, war flags, the coat of Pintea the Brave and engraved episcopal chairs, all found their place in these sanctuaries scattered along the historical Maramures. The wooden churches included in the Transylvanian tour range from 250-year old to more than five centuries ("Assumption of the Virgin Mary" Church of Sacalaseni, still preserving mural paintings from 1865). Each of them holds unique characteristics setting aside their extraordinary heritage value: church "Saint Nicholas" of Bogdan Voda (built in 1718) has a collection of rare books from the 18th and 19th centuries, while the "Holy Archangels" church of Sisesti displays one of the highest spires on a wooden building in Europe. Also known as the "wooden cathedral of Maramures", Ieud is one of the better known villages of the northern tour, for the church "Birth of the Holy Virgin" (1718). Its grandiose spire, the apparent massiveness of the pointed roof and the well balanced volumes give the edifice spectacular heights and led to the development of a discrete style entitled the "Maramures Gothic".
The Structural Instruments shall support the sustainable capitalization of these national and universal heritage monuments (7 of the churches included in the project are part of the UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites), which will lead to new and better quality types of tourism, with direct impact both on increasing the attractiveness of the entire region and on building its fame as European tourist destination.

For more details, visit:
http://www.cjmaramures.ro/

Project title: The tour of the wooden churches from Northern Transylvania
Funding source: Regional Operational Programme, Axis 5, KAI 5.1
Total budget: 19,783,631.62 lei
Beneficiary: Maramures County Council
Implementation region: North West
entrepreneurship and solidarity
Support for the elderly

Old age represents a challenge to the quality of life and of the medical care that our elderly may benefit from and that they are entitled to. The old age is a difficult threshold for many families, that do not have the time and resources needed when looking after a parent, a grandparent or a lone relative. In order to answer to these needs, in July 2012, a Residential Care Centre for Medical and Social Assistance to the Elderly was inaugurated in the Racovita village from Dambovita county, coordinated by a non-profit association, the “Soul for People” Association Romania.

The Centre was set-up with the support of structural instruments and it is targeted at dependent old people, with chronic diseases, with mental health problems or with chronic somatic illnesses, in various advanced development stages that require ongoing surveillance and palliative care.

This is the first center of its kind in the South Muntenia region and it can host 24 patients in 15 rooms fitted with proper equipment and medical instruments. The location of the centre is ideal for its beneficiaries, as it is placed in a quiet area, with clean air, near the forest, 65 km away from Bucharest and 15 km away from Targoviste, in the rural area.
The patients benefit from permanent social and medical care, from behalf of a properly trained staff, that is able to provide the required therapeutic treatment, as well as specialized counseling.

The funding provided by Structural Instruments helped equipping the Centre with medical and domestic furniture, with equipment for daily preparation of food, household appliances and environment protection equipment. The services are properly adapted to accessibility requirements, as the building has its own elevator and access ramps.
The rooms include IT equipment, as well, each of them having wired or wireless Internet and satellite TV. As a sign of innovation, in order to decrease the energy consumption, the building was fitted with solar panels for heating the water and also with a generator which makes sure that the equipment keeps working in case a power supply failure should occur.

The services delivered here include body care services provided by nurses and medical aids, cleaning services, laundry services, a diversified catering, properly adapted to the illnesses of each patient, and also procurement of prescribed medication.
The project succeeded in ensuring a higher standard of living to its direct beneficiaries and it had a positive impact over the lives of indirect beneficiaries, among whom one may find the family members of the dependent elderly persons, the employees qualified for the provision of medical and social services, the local community and the social services system, overall.

For more details and photos, visit:
http://www.asoromania.ro/

Project title: Residential Care Centre for Medical and Social Assistance to the Elderly

Funding source: Regional Operational Programme, Axis 3, KAI 3.2

Total budget: 3,202,545.16 lei

Beneficiary: “Soul for People” Association

Implementation region: South Muntenia
Entrepreneurship on a regional scale
After freedom had been won and democracy had been restored at the end of 1989, Romanians also won one of the most important rights associated to a market-based economy, the right to organize and operate entrepreneurial activities. Each individual who wishes to translate into reality an innovative idea, to create a product or a service, now has the opportunity to open his/her own business.

However, the Romanian economy (and it is not the only one in this situation) demonstrates on a daily basis that, in order to be truly successful, a good idea is not enough; one needs discipline, sound economic knowledge, marketing, even sociology... in one word, one needs entrepreneurial culture. Those who have flair in business but, however, do not benefit from the support of local communities or from a minimum aid from central authorities and those who do not have a proper entrepreneurial education, unfortunately, do fail in the end. This is why organizations for supporting and developing businesses were established at a regional and local level, based on the initiative of the private business environment representatives, of local authorities and of the banking sector. Such an example is represented by the “Centre for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises (CDIMM)” Foundation from Baia Mare, Maramures county.

Established in 1994 with the support received from another batch of non-reimbursable funding measures from the European Union, the PHARE Programme, then ongoing, the CDIMM Foundation is currently providing business consulting services for SMEs as well as for independent entrepreneurs, training services and exchange of experience for the managers who wish to improve their skills in business management and, last but not the least, it supports the development of business incubators.
With the aid of the European Social Fund, the CDIMM Maramures Foundation together with the Trade and Industry Chambers of Bistrita Nasaud and Brasov counties have expanded the coverage area for the services currently provided to all the 12 counties included within the RO-1 development Macro-region (which encompasses the North-West and Centre regions). Thus, through the implementation of the BISNET strategic project, the coverage of an area with over 5 million inhabitants was reached, where approximately 116,000 companies operate.
The project mainly targeted one of the most dynamic economic sectors, that of small and medium enterprises, by providing professional integrated training services for entrepreneurship and business consulting who aimed overall at increasing the adaptability of such companies to market needs. An operational service provider network was created in order to develop businesses, which rejoins 3 Regional Centres and 16 information offices, where the representatives of newly established SMEs and independent entrepreneurs may benefit from project services. This network was also supported in the on-line environment through the www.robisnet.ro e-services platform, where anyone is able to find numerous useful training and information materials during the process of starting-up and managing a proper business.

The project can be considered a genuine success in promoting entrepreneurial culture and in supporting the business environment for SMEs, due to the breadth of the undertaken activities, that led to the establishment of 46 new businesses and to training and improving entrepreneurship skills for over 240 individuals from the targeted development macro-region.

For more details, please visit:
www.robisnet.ro

**Project title:** BISNet – Support for developing the private business initiative within the RO1 Macro-region

**Funding source:** Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development, Axis 3, KAI 3.1

**Total budget:** 3,940,600 lei

**Beneficiary:** Centre for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises Foundation Maramures

**Implementation region:** North West, Centre
Businesses for the future

The "business incubator" is a concept that the Romanian public is still largely unfamiliar with. However, due to the large number of European funding programmes available for establishing and promoting such entities, they become more and more visible within the Romanian economic landscape. The definition of business incubators places them among the support structures for start-ups, as common work spaces where young entrepreneurs are able to benefit from a series of services and facilities that increase their chances for development and survival in a competition-based business environment. Also, they may easily become a space encouraging innovation, creation of new products and services that may shape the technologies of the future.

The first business incubator was created within the European Union in Great Britain in 1972, when the local authorities initiated the refurbishment and transformation works for some old derelict buildings, turning them into work spaces for start-ups. In our country, the first attempts to establish business incubators took place in the nineties when, through the PHARE programmes, 16 such structures were created in cities like Bucharest, Sibiu, Timisoara, Brașov or Miercurea Ciuc.
Aceasta este prima iniţiativă din România pentru plasarea acestui animal maiestuos în condiţii de sălbăticie, cel mai greu animal terestru supravieţuitor în libertate din Europa. Vânat până la dispariţie între anii '20 şi '30 ai secolului trecut (în pădurele poloneze), el a fost reintrodus treptat în captivitate în mai multe ţări europene, după ce a fost clasificat drept specie vulnerabilă.

În România, refacerea acestui preţios element al faunei Munţilor Carpaţi a început în anul 1958, prin aducerea unei perechi de zimbri (Podarenk şi Polanka) din Polonia în pădurea Slivuţ-Haţeg, în judeţul Hunedoara. De acolo, exemplare s-au transferat în mai multe părţi ale ţării, de la grădini zoologice, până la rezervaţii şi parcuri naturale, trăind în captivitate sau în regim de semi-libertate (împrejmuiri de dimensiuni mari).

Proiectul de reintroducere în libertate a zimbrului se desfăşoară sub coordonarea Administraţiei Parcului Natural Vânători Neamţ şi a fost demarat în cadrul unei iniţiative de conservare a bio-diversităţii, finanţată prin intermediul Instrumentelor structurale alocate României pentru perioada de programare 2007-2013. Prima eliberare a zimbrilor a avut loc în martie 2012, când cinci exemplare au fost introduse într-un areal de aproximativ 5.000 ha, o zonă izolată cu păduri de foioase, ideală pentru supravieţuirea acestei specii.
Starting with this year, the map of Romanian business incubators shall also include the Technological Centre for Business and Innovation from Satu Mare city, which was established by using the funds allocated to supporting the city sustainable growth process – urban growth poles, with the aid of co-financing provided by the European Regional Development Fund. In the fall of 2012, the Satu Mare Municipality, as main beneficiary of this project, started the refurbishment and upgrading works of a former secondary school that would be turned into an ambitious architectural and exterior design project.

The investment project aimed to support the local community, mainly the business environment in the area, by ensuring a properly designed space at higher quality standards, where the SMEs are able to benefit from basic services, such us rental of offices and administrative infrastructure for daily business. The Technological Centre for Business and Innovation includes in its structure office space, conference and meeting rooms as well as four production workshops and four storage rooms for the products delivered here.
Also, the Centre makes available to the companies hosted here assistance and consulting services specific to various areas of operation, covering the financial and legal aspects of a business, as well as those related to drafting a business plan or designing a funding plan for SMEs. In order to make sure that the services of the Centre are provided only to newly established SMEs (a maximum of 2 years of operation), the project also developed a specific methodology for selecting its beneficiaries, thus ensuring a chance for development to this fragile economic sector.

Thus, the material conditions for a stable and sustainable environment of operation were created. It is now the time for the creative and innovative spirit of the Satu Mare citizens to manifest itself, by making the most out of this opportunity for creating businesses for and with a future.

For more details, visit:
http://www.centrultehnologic.ro/

| Project title: | Technological Centre for Business and Innovation in Satu Mare city |
| Funding source: | Regional Operational Programme, Axis 1, KAI 1.1 |
| Total budget: | 3,916,551.92 lei |
| Beneficiary: | Satu Mare Municipality |
| Implementation region: | North West |
Romania is the EU country with the largest share of its population living in the rural area, mostly based on subsistence farming activities. After the failure of forced industrialization attempts made during the communist regime and targeted at the Romanian villages, important gaps were still preserved between the rural and urban population from the point of view of accessibility to education, jobs and material resources. In this context, it is only natural to display a sense of preoccupation towards moving to a genuinely healthy rural economy, where each of the human and natural resources available should be properly put to use. The actions of the Caras-Severin Chamber of Trade, Industry and Agriculture were targeted to this purpose, as well, by taking the first steps in promoting and bringing more technology in rural entrepreneurship, with the support of structural funds dedicated to human resources development.
The purpose of the project was to promote entrepreneurial culture in the rural area and to create the premise required for starting-up and developing new businesses, with the main objective of increasing the number of rural people who own a job or their own business. The consortium led by the Caras-Severin Chamber of Trade, Industry and Agriculture established 10 Rural Centres for Business Development in various areas with a relevant entrepreneurial development potential in Caras Severin, Alba and Valcea counties. These Centres (that were equipped with furniture and electronic equipment required for proper operation) represent support structures for local initiatives, where people coming from the rural areas may benefit from vocational training and consulting services. Thus, almost 700 persons from the villages of Farliug, Teregova and Racadasia in Caras-Severin county, Sutesti, Diculesti, Maladaresti and Buesti in Valcea county and Ighiu, Craciunel de Jos and Unirea in Alba county, graduated the skills upgrading courses (mainly in the field of IT and entrepreneurship). The 177 participants to the study visits organized in Italy were selected from among the inhabitants of the rural areas, in order to demonstrate the business opportunities that people living in such villages may have anytime.

The capitalization of skills acquired as a result of information & technology courses is to be seen also in the large number of users benefiting from the services of the virtual network for rural entrepreneurs developed within the project, which, besides the general and specific information related to business development, also provides a place for communication, a debate and work forum among entrepreneurs or future entrepreneurs and business consultants.

Without any doubt, the strongest achievement of this project of upgrading the human resource from the Romanian rural area is represented by the fact that, as a result of successful graduation of a series of vocational training programmes (including “IT skills”, “Computer and network operator”, “Entrepreneurial skills”), 93 persons among the project participants have already found a job for themselves and 66 of them have started their own business or independent economic activities as a result of receiving specialized consulting. The financial tool that provided this initiative with the required amplitude and quality was in this case, also, the European Social Fund, bringing a co-funding of approximately 7.7 million lei.
Project title: Promoting entrepreneurship in order to increase employment in the rural area

Funding source: Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development, Axis 5, KAI 5.2

Total budget: 9,091,560 lei

Beneficiary: Caras-Severin Chamber of Trade, Industry and Agriculture

Implementation region: West, South West Oltenia, Centre

For more details, visit:
http://www.e-rural.eu/
“I am convinced that the idea of a European professional card – an electronic certificate – represents the proper solution, as it will simplify and speed up the procedures for recognition of qualifications for mobile professional workers”.

Michel Barnier
EU Commissioner for Internal Market and Services
Solutions for the labour market

Romania’s accession to the European Union brought to the ordinary citizen an entirely new horizon of opportunities and expectations, ranging from free movement to the right to work and to be paid accordingly in any other EU country. However, all these rights and freedoms are not taken for granted; they must be preceded by the application of standardized procedures and regulations at the level of all EU Member States. One of the most important objectives of this economic and political partnership entitled the European Union was and shall continue to be a common labour market. The EU policies in the field of vocational training and mutual recognition of qualifications are focused on a clear target: that of ensuring a labour force that has equal rights and comparable skills.

The European professional card is one of the recently adopted measures at EU level, that wishes to use this tool in order to make more efficient the activity of the Public Employment Services within each of the Member States and to come to the aid of employers by facilitating the process of verification and certification of information included in the CV of any potential employee. The European professional card is, at the same time, a modern tool for shortening the efforts and time required by job seekers when accessing the services and opportunities provided by the labour market. The use of the professional card does not have negative repercussions over the cross-border mobility of the workforce, as it does not represent a prior condition for getting access to the jobs available on the European market; it merely constitutes an advantage in the direct relation with the employer.
The implementation of this system represents a lengthy, costly and time-consuming project and this is the reason why the National Agency for Employment (ANOFM) asked for the support of the European Social Fund by accessing the funds dedicated to the improvement and upgrade of public employment services (PES).

The activities of the projects aimed at two complementary levels of intervention, starting with the design of the specific card and the actual development of the required electronic infrastructure (databases synchronized with all available information of individuals registered in ANOFM records, a user-friendly interface, etc.), as a result of consultations organized with all relevant stakeholders in this field, especially the direct users of the system. At a later stage, the activities initiated by the main project beneficiary were focused on providing training services for using the software to 47 users inside ANOFM, who process information about job-seekers on a daily basis.
Once the technical and legal infrastructure required had been created, it became essential to inform the general public, the employers and the unemployed about the benefits of using the European professional card and about the job-mediation services provided in association with the card. The result of such activities was translated into issuing over 570,000 professional cards for the applicants already registered in ANOFM records and implicitly, in a quality improvement for the employment services that these applicants benefit from.

Project title: European Professional Card – a European solution for job-seekers

Funding source: Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development, Axis 4, KAI 4.1

Total budget: 20,949,794.95 lei

Beneficiary: National Agency for Employment

Implementation region: Bucharest-Ilfov
One click away from the perfect business

A generic acceptable definition of the perfect business is difficult to find, as this is a category subjected to the assessment of a number of ingredients mostly related to human subjectivity. For some, the perfect business is the one that ensures quick profits, for others, the key feature of the ideal business is sustainability. However, there is certainly a common ground for defining this concept, namely the ratio between the investment made into human and material infrastructures and the return from services or products delivered. On a daily basis, the company managers attempt to find solutions to increase the effectiveness of the capital invested in their business, to decrease the time allocated to financial and administrative activities and to facilitate ongoing access to relevant data and statistics for their field of activity.
This is also the approach applied by SAN Software, a company operating in the field of software development. As beneficiary of a non-reimbursable funding provided with the support of the European Social Fund, the company aimed to encourage the entrepreneurial sector in the Centre Region by developing the skills for using online electronic tools for management and by providing free of charge consulting services for starting-up and developing a business.
Thus, the company initiated an ample project that contributed with its results to an increased level of employment in the center of Romania, even if it aimed to deliver such a large number of activities in a relatively short amount of time (24 months), by establishing over 150 new businesses in this area. Taking into consideration the economic profile of the beneficiary and also the needs for improvement of management skills among employees and managers of micro-enterprises, the project had to focus most of its activities on providing vocational training services in the field of business management by using specialized electronic tools. The training courses for using the San.ERP IT system, an on-line accounting and management instrument designed and delivered within the project, were attended by over 200 individuals out of whom over 100 had the opportunity to manage their business in an effective and modern manner by using for free this piece of software for 6 months.

An important piece of the project consisted from free of charge provision of preparatory services for establishing a new line of business, ranging from consulting for drafting a business plan and identifying the financial sources needed up to delivering the promotional tools required for marketing a business. Overall, over 300 persons received access to such services and 24 of them benefited also from free of charge consulting for accounting and financial management over a 6 months period.

Through this initiative, the start-ups or the developing businesses had the chance to get free access to a usually costly electronic tool, while the beneficiary had the opportunity to develop a potential market for its own product, ensuring the proper promotional activities alongside, as well.
For more details, please visit:
http://www.san.ro/posdru/

Project title: IT for development of management and entrepreneurial skills
Funding source: Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development, Axis 3, KAI 3.1
Total budget: 1,889,139 lei
Beneficiary: SAN Software SRL
Implementation region: Centre
performance and innovation
A well-developed society can be also assessed according to its speediness and consistency in solving emergency situations. A quick and professional response in case of disaster, be that fire, flood, accident or earthquake, has immediate and visible consequences on the life of every individual and the community it belongs to. Therefore, the development of the emergency response system at national and county level represents a natural necessity of a civilized country that seeks to better protect its citizens. At European level a set of measures and policies that regulate the actions and reactions of Member States in such situations was created, including the implementation of the single European emergency call, 112, equipping the specialized intervention units according to standards and, not least, the unification of response times of bodies in charge of dealing with emergency situations.
The safety and the economic development of a community, as well as the wellbeing of its citizens depend directly on the infrastructure and the equipment available for these intervention units, both at national and at county level. Until 2004, in Romania the civil protection and firefighting measures were provided by two different institutions, namely the General Inspectorate of Military Firefighters and Civil Protection Commanding Body, but once the need for a unitary structure able to respond quickly to the needs of citizens was acknowledged, the two institutions merged into one, the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations (IGSU). Currently this institution comprises over 40 operating units and 280 operative sub-units distributed throughout the country. The key objective of IGSU activities aims at improving preventive actions and the management of emergency situations.

In this context, one may also find an initiative from the Euronest Intercommunity Development Association, an association-based structure of County Councils in the North East region, created for the purpose of attracting European funds, which, as beneficiary of a grant of over 45 million lei, aimed at modernizing the infrastructure of six county inspectorates for emergency situations in order to improve their capacity and response time across the region.
During the 24 months of project implementation, it purchased the necessary equipment, from water and foam trucks to special cars for extrication missions and complex cars for multiple interventions. In order to achieve the project objective, the Association created a mobile command and control centre in Iasi. These investments have significantly reduced response times of emergency mobile units for both urban (4.52 minutes) and remote rural communities (18.35 minutes) and improved the ratio between the number of potential beneficiaries of the emergency services (inhabitants of the North East region) and the number of available emergency vehicles.

Today, the North East region can boast with an emergency situations management system equipped to European standards in each county, and also with properly trained and motivated staff.

For more details, please visit:
http://www.proiecte.inforegionordest.ro

Project title: Purchasing specific equipment to improve the capacity and quality of emergency situations management system, medical assistance and qualified first aid

Funding source: Regional Operational Programme, Axis 3, KAI 3.3

Total budget: 45,655,725.10 lei

Beneficiary: EURONEST Intercommunity Development Association

Implementation region: North East
The Romanian aviation industry was often a source of pride and competitiveness less common in the industrial landscape before 1990. At the time specialized plants for aircraft parts and components were operational in Craiova, Bucharest, Ghimbav or Bacau (some of which managed to successfully survive the turmoil of the first years of market economy in Romania).
Much of this economic sector of activity has been naturally devoted, from the start, to the operation and maintenance of aircraft equipment for the Ministry of Defense, but, as the market competition sharpened, companies have sought alternative solutions to survive, which were later to turn even into prosperity, through contracts with leading international partners.

One of the survivors of this fierce competitiveness battle is Aerostar Bacau. The company has developed aiming to obtain a valued supplier status in civil aircraft maintenance and conversion, domain in which it aims at achieving a third of its total turnover.

In this context, the access to structural tools has become essential to ensure an innovative and at the same time, eco-efficient production system. The company appealed to the European Regional Development Fund support (through a state aid scheme for large enterprises), which allowed it to focus on expanding the manufacturing and assembly capabilities for civil aviation. The main goal of the project was the creation of a new production facility to develop cargo planes on structures coming from passenger planes. Also, own and attracted resources were used to expand the capacity for manufacturing sheet parts and structural assemblies.
The impact that an investment of this size has on society and its employees translates primarily in the possibility of keeping some jobs that require a high degree of skill and generate products with high added value, in creating modern working conditions consistent with the health and safety standards, and not least, in increasing the overall competitiveness of the products offered by the company on the aviation market. All these elements contribute to the sustainability of such initiatives in support of innovation and to the increase of economic performance.
The project was implemented in two distinct stages, which involved the purchase of software and machinery (from lathes and milling machines and computerized numerical control to 3D measuring equipment, presses and CAD/CAM software), setting up the installation and operation thereof, and respectively, the actual construction of a new hangar for the final assembly and installation of cargo aircrafts.

For more details, visit:
http://www.aerostar.ro

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<th><strong>Project title:</strong></th>
<th>Expansion of production and assembly capacities of aerostructures for civil aviation</th>
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<td><strong>Total budget:</strong></td>
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The patient comes first

Medicine is the professional sector in which investments in training health professionals and support staff or management staff have a major and direct impact on patients. In a market economy based on consumption and production, the resources we invest in sectors the outcomes of which are reflected in social services must be carefully managed in order to assist as many individuals as possible.

Therefore, training of the management staff of hospitals in areas such as financial management, human resources or identifying and accessing new sources of funding are essential to streamline expenses incurred for maintaining the health of the nation, as highlights Health Minister Eugen Nicolaescu:

“When I first spoke about the reform that we started in the health system, one of the main objectives announced was the training of competent managers to take over and solve financial and administrative issues of a hospital”
Starting from this general objective of the system, Constanța County Council, through the European Social Fund, implemented the first project focused on training management staff of hospitals in the county, between May 2010 and April 2011. The project aimed at providing specialized training in areas of concern to the current health system, with the ultimate goal to improve the quality and efficiency of the services provided to patients. Also, the project team of experts provided, through the five training sessions delivered, the knowledge necessary for managers to better organize their daily activities and, more importantly, to identify sources of funding to develop projects aimed at increasing the incomes of medical units they manage and at improving the working environment and the quality of services provided.
After participating in project activities, 60 health professionals in Constanta understood the mechanisms of ensuring a rigorous and effective financial management and were able to draft development strategies for the hospitals they managed. Over half of the 60 participants came from Constanta Emergency Hospital, the largest hospital in the region. Moreover, Constanta is among the first counties in Romania in what concerns the number of health care facilities (18 hospitals) operating on its territory, which demonstrates once again the need to find viable solutions to their financing and to ensure a quality management.
Although the measures undertaken by the County Council focused primarily on the staff within the health care system, in the long-term, the beneficiaries of the project are the patients, the ordinary people who wish to be provided in this sector as well with real quality at European standards.

For more details, visit:
http://www.cjc.ro
In May 1964 the Romanian Railways Company and the Swedish company ASEA (later Asea Brown Boveri) signed a delivery contract for 10 full railway engines and electrical installation for another 28 railway engines that were to be built in Romania. At that time the Romanian company appointed for the execution of the general assembly and mechanical and electrical parts was Electrotutere Craiova, which already held the license to produce diesel-electric railway engines of 2100 HP.
The electrical railway engine model for the equipment of Romanian railways was chosen through a competition organized on one of the most challenging railway lines of the country, Brasov – Predeal. The most efficient product at that time was chosen: the 060 electrical railway engine.

The last of these 10 railway engines built in Sweden and delivered in April 1967, 060-EB-008, was a prototype railway engine equipped with mixed bridge rectifiers fitted with regenerative braking systems. After several years of trials and commercial use on heavy lines, the prototype was converted by Electroputere into the 060-EA series engine.

More than 40 years after the production of the first electrical railway engine in Romania, a Romanian company has the courage to continue, through innovative research and development activities aimed at developing a new, substantially improved product, compared to the existing version, to be sold on the market. Softronic has already gone through this process successfully, from the production of electrical and electronic equipment for railway engines, continuing with the repair and upgrading of railway engines already in use.
This project is made possible with the support of the Structural Funds dedicated to promoting innovation and research activities through the European Regional Development Fund (with a contribution of 1,589,686.55 lei). Its objective was the modernization of the Romanian LE 5100kW railway engines by changing the current traction system (DC engine) with the AC-based engine and the introduction of a centralized command and control system - LEM CASCC.

The project contributes to the creation of new jobs (10 in total, out of which 2 R & D jobs and 8 specialized workers) but, equally important, has a contribution to increasing the competitiveness of Romanian companies on the international markets. Thus, until now, Softronic managed to produce 12 railway engines, nine of which were acquired by companies in Germany and Hungary.
The modernization will result in an electrical railway engine which is clearly superior to the classical model, the advantages of which are represented by lower maintenance costs, reduced electricity consumption and increased availability. The ultimate goal is to achieve a zero-series prototype and to test it in order to prepare the serial production.

For more details, visit:
http://www.softronic.ro/

| Project title: Modernization of Romanian-made LE 5100Kw electrical railway engines |
| Funding source: Sectoral Operational Programme “Increase of Economic Competitiveness”, Axis 2, KAI 3.3 |
| Total budget: 3,957,960 lei |
| Beneficiary: SC SOFTRONIC SRL Craiova |
| Implementation region: South West Oltenia |
The “IT on the Nera river canyon” project is part of a longer series of initiatives that defy conventions often encountered in funding ideas, being implemented by a beneficiary whose cultural and social mission goes beyond local boundaries set by the title. However, the geography of the project is particularly relevant because many activities of Metamorfoza Association, including those set out in this project, take place in a rural area known as a corner of Romanian paradise.

The association seeks to contribute to the development of this area, by involving several entities and structures that provide social services (ranging from placement centers and city halls, to foundations, monasteries and other religious bodies), by encouraging the participation of young people to a Christian life, by performing fundraising activities and even actually helping to build cultural and educational establishments, by conducting humanitarian activities and assistance programs.
In this context, the beneficiary has identified the need for developing and improving the work of the organization by harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies.

Thus, it was easily demonstrated that the technology can be used in the service of intense social activities, especially when it is necessary to improve communication within the organization (or between the organization and the external environment), or when it is necessary to facilitate the access of the association to databases and information relevant for both its members and beneficiaries of services provided by the organization.
The project was conducted to improve the transfer of information between headquarters and volunteers working in the field to assist people in need, to ensure a better organization and internal evidence, reduced costs for other projects implemented by the association, by internalizing the activity of production and multiplication of promotion materials needed.

In terms of equipment and technologies installed at the beneficiary headquarters, a broadband Internet connection was set up, a server and the network, as well as other equipments were installed and configured, and a web site created in order to present the organization and the projects developed.

Thus, through the integration of modern information systems in the daily work of an organization with a strong social profile, technology has helped identify new activities, projects, and target groups in order to diversify the portfolio of activities and make more effective the communication with current and prospective donors, collaborators, partners in the country and abroad.

For more details, visit: http://www.asociatiametamorfosis.ro/proiecte/

**Project title:** Hardware, software and Internet access for social and cultural assistance in the rural area of the Nera river canyon

**Funding source:** Sectoral Operational Programme “Increase of Economic Competitiveness”, Axis 3, KAI 3.1

**Total budget:** 127,720 lei

**Beneficiary:** Association Metamorfosis

**Implementation region:** South-West Oltenia
One of the ERDF-supported projects implemented by CNAS refers to the Electronic Health File (DES), which will be a collection of electronic records accumulated from various sources and locations regarding the medical history, allergies, immunizations, lab test results, documents produced during medical procedures of each insured person in Romania, to be used in taking medical decisions.
Managing a national health insurance system involves a number of challenges, especially in a more and more transparent and computerized society, as tends to become, finally, the Romanian society. In this context, the national manager of the health insurance system, CNAS, needs a tool to assist it in making rapid decisions with impact on the health system and an up to date statistical database, which allows it to monitor the real needs for services and medicines at the level of the whole population.

To this end, CNAS called, in turn, to the funding opportunities offered by the European Regional Development Fund, one of the most important structural instruments available to Romania.
This file will document any diagnostic or therapeutic measure in a standardized manner, avoiding the generation of redundancy in medical records and will reflect the chronology of medical events experienced by the patient concerned. These data will be available both for the physician and for the insured person, from specific perspectives.

Once introduced, the system will allow medical institutions to communicate more effectively (by organizing an interdisciplinary consultation), based on the complete medical history and will improve the effectiveness of medical assistance activities.
Furthermore, DES will play the role of general medical information provider for healthcare stakeholders (through an integrated web portal) and will at the same time host the electronic application used by family doctors in relation to their patients.

For more details, visit:
http://www.cnas.ro

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Project title: Electronic Health File

Funding source: Sectoral Operational Programme “Increase of Economic Competitiveness”

Total budget: 81,743,927.80 lei

Beneficiary: National Health Insurance House (CNAS)

Implementation region: Bucharest-Ilfov
The Electronic Health Insurance Card (CEAS) is a second component that complements the initiative of CNAS of defining a global vision of health services provided to patients and insured beneficiaries.
The card is issued free of charge to all persons aged above 18 years and is the method of identifying an insured person in the national system of health insurance. This tool will facilitate faster and correct access of a patient to the services it is entitled to and, at the same time, will help prevent errors and fraud, introducing greater transparency in the system and better predictability regarding requests for medical services for a given period and a defined geographical area.

The card will carry essential medical data (which are introduced only by the family doctor): blood group, RH-type, life threatening diseases and chronic diseases, and the organ donor option.
These two projects implemented at system level financed from non-reimbursable funds represent the best examples of the huge importance innovation and deployment of advanced technologies have in the life of ordinary citizens: they will allow for a real simplification of the access to medical services and will reduce the possibility of recurrence of administrative or professional errors that can at some point jeopardize the life of the insured person. Thus, the medical system takes the first steps in implementing an approach that should prevail at all times at central or local authorities level: the quality, the efficiency and the safety of the medical care act must come first, for the benefit of the taxpayer.

For more details, visit:
http://www.cnas.ro

Project title: Electronic Health Insurance Card
Funding source: Sectoral Operational Programme “Increase of Economic Competitiveness”
Total budget: 87,636,000.03 lei
Beneficiary: National Health Insurance House (CNAS)
Implementation region: Bucharest-Ilfov
“We have high hopes for the ELI-NP project. Through this project, Romania has the opportunity to be placed on the European research map, to keep inside the country highly-qualified workers, turning the brain drain into brain circulation and attracting new companies in the region.”

Johannes Hahn
European Commissioner for Regional Policy
A chance for Romanian research and development

Just a few kilometers away from Bucharest, the largest scientific research centre in the history of Romania is about to be built, close to the old buildings of the “Horia Hulubei” National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering on Magurele Platform. The construction was officially started this year, but funding will be made available both from the current 2007-2013 programming period, from the European Regional Development Fund, as well as from the next programming period (2014-2020), given the magnitude and the scope of such a project.

ELI-NP (Extreme Light Infrastructure - Nuclear Physics) is one of the four pillars of the most courageous existing European research infrastructures, similar in terms of importance to the scientific world with the realization of the well-known CERN in Geneva. Unlike CERN, which operates in the field of elementary particles, ELI will work in the interaction between matter and electromagnetic radiation.
The Romanian pillar will be represented by the construction of the most powerful laser in the world, with a consumption that reaches thousands of times in millionths of a second the annual electricity consumption of the entire planet. The other pillars of the infrastructure will be built in Hungary and the Czech Republic, these countries also using the co-financing provided by Structural Instruments. Romania was chosen also because its remarkable tradition and expertise in the field of nuclear physics accumulated over the years, being among the first countries in the world that put into operation a laser system in 1964.

The applications of such a facility are very numerous, ranging from the possibility of building particle accelerators greatly reduced in size, that can be successfully used in anticancer therapies, to the creation of radio-pharmaceuticals (radioactive isotopes for treatment of diseases), testing of nuclear reactors without taking them out of service (a very expensive operation nowadays) and to the accelerated neutralization of radioactive waste. Researchers have even considered assumptions which, until recently, seemed just the privilege of science fiction writers: creating a new way of energy production, starting even from the concept of “breaking the vacuum.”

The scientific centre in Magurele is expected to become operational from 2017, when it should turn into a technological park of first importance in Europe. The centre will focus on applied research, the results of which can be easily transferred to companies specialized in high-tech production.

The complex of buildings and labs will initially cover an area of over 31,000 square meters and will include special technical structures (radiation protection, electromagnetic pulse protection, vibration protection, clean rooms etc.), the initial construction costs rising at about 79 million Euro.

The Extreme Light Infrastructure project represents an historic opportunity for all development and innovation activities in Romania: beyond top research, the Magurele centre could literally break the barriers of physics.
Project title: Extreme Light Infrastructure - Nuclear Physics

Funding source: Sectoral Operational Programme “Increase of Economic Competitiveness”

Total budget: 356.2 million Euro (180 million Euro for the 2007-2013 programming period)

Beneficiary: “Horia Hulubei” National Institute for Research & Development in Physics and Nuclear Engineering

Implementation region: Bucharest-Ilfov
Achievements and outlooks for the implementation of Structural Funds

Romania has received over 2.88 billion EUR from the Structural and Cohesion Funds throughout 2013, an amount higher than the one received over all the past years of the current programming period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2,884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.88 billion EU, the amount reimbursed by EC for 2013
Romania, a European leader

The amount received by our country from the European Commission during the first ten months of 2013 is 115% over the amount reimbursed for the entire 2008-2012 period. Thus, Romania is ranked the first among European Union countries in terms of the increase of reimbursements coming from the Commission:
The amount requested for reimbursement by Romania, over 3.56 billion EUR

Another record of 2013 is represented by the funds requested for reimbursement to the European Commission: 3.56 billion EUR for 2013. From this point of view, as well, Romania’s performance for this year surpasses those recorded during the previous years:

The current rate of absorption reaches 34%

The current rate of absorption for European funds has increased rapidly throughout 2013 due to the measures implemented by the Romanian Government, reaching by the end of the year a value of 33.47% from the total Structural and Cohesion Funds earmarked to Romania for 2007-2013:

The current absorption rate, four times higher compared to May 2012
Solutions adopted for achieving such results

- Funds of approximately nine billion lei were earmarked by the State Treasury for payment of beneficiaries, supporting the continuation of projects developed from European funds, the jobs thus created and the overall Romanian economy.

- The mechanism for reimbursement of payment claims was created for all project beneficiaries, no matter the Operational Programme that they work with. This mechanism allows for the direct reimbursement of provider invoices, from the funds earmarked by the State Treasury; thus, in a first stage, the beneficiaries do not have to cover the payment of these invoices from their own funds.

- The EU funds beneficiaries were exempted from the payment of penalties, penalty interests and associated fees applied by the state for unpaid fiscal obligations should the authorities responsible for management of European funds had not paid the amounts these beneficiaries were entitled to after the expiry of deadlines stipulated within the financing contracts.

- The artificial constraints imposed for procurements performed by beneficiaries from the private business environment within the projects implemented with European funds were cancelled. Currently, these operators must observe a simplified procedure: for procurement of goods over 30,000 EUR, of services with a value ranging from 30,000 to 200,000 EUR, respectively of works with a value ranging from 100,000 to 500,000 EUR, the beneficiaries from the private sector must publish a notice in a specialized section of the Ministry of European Funds website. The beneficiaries choose the tender that they consider to be the most competitive one and they support their choice through a written memo.

- A Guide regarding the main risks identified in the field of public procurement and the European Commission recommendations that must be followed by the Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies during the process of verifying the public procurement procedures was drafted and published. This Guide represents a useful working tool for all those involved in the European funds implementation system and it will prevent the further application of financial corrections.

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**February**
- European Commission resumes payments to Romania for the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development

**April**
- European Commission unlocks the Regional Operational Programme

**June**
- European Commission resumes payments to Romania for the Sectoral Operational Programme Transport

**October**
- European Commission unlocks the Sectoral Operational Programme “Increase of Economic Competitiveness”
European funding amounts to approximately 43 billion EUR

Romania was allocated for the 2014-2020 programming period an overall amount of approximately 43 billion EUR, amount expressed in current prices, that will support the development of economy and the creation of new jobs.

### Indicative distribution of Structural Instruments for 2014-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohesion Policy</strong></td>
<td>Approximately 22.7 billion EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policy</strong></td>
<td>Approximately 7.8 billion EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Agricultural Guarantee Fund</strong></td>
<td>Approximately 10.4 billion EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Reserve</strong></td>
<td>1.9 billion EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Thematic objectives for EU Cohesion Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>Approx.</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Regional Development Fund</strong></td>
<td>10.9 bln. EUR</td>
<td>Strengthening research, technological development and innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhancing access to and use and quality of information and communication technologies</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhancing the competitiveness of SAEs, the agricultural sector and the fisheries and aquaculture sector</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhancing institutional capacity and ensuring an efficient public administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohesion Fund</strong></td>
<td>6.8 bln. EUR</td>
<td>Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting climate change adaptation and risk prevention and management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Social Fund</strong></td>
<td>5 bln. EUR</td>
<td>Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhancing institutional capacity and ensuring an efficient public administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policies for attracting European funds for 2014-2020

In order to ensure a swift absorption of the European funding earmarked for the next financial framework, the Romanian authorities shall simplify the institutional structure of the entire system for project implementation. This will be better coordinated, while the tasks of the current Managing Authorities are to be performed by only three ministries:

✔ **Ministry of European Funds**
  for the management of four operational programmes: Large Infrastructure (Transport, Environment and Energy); Competitiveness (Research & Development, Digital Agenda); Human Capital and Technical Assistance;

✔ **Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration** for the management of regional development programmes, of programmes dedicated to European cross-border cooperation and of the Administrative Capacity programme;

✔ **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development** for the management of programmes dedicated to agriculture, rural development, fisheries and aquaculture.
Structural Funds in Romania: Success Stories

2007-2013

The content of this publication does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union or of the Romanian Government

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Structural Funds in Romania: Success Stories