
Changing Societies: Partnerships for Shaping Europe's Future

*An Evaluation of the Effectiveness, Relevance and
Efficiency of Social Transformation Projects in the
Russian Federation, Romania and the Slovak Republic*

**Within the Framework of the
Matra Projects Programme Evaluation 1999-2003**

May – July 2005

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Disclaimer

The evaluation presented in this report has been carried out by a team of international and national consultants who have been engaged for this purpose by the United Nations Development Programme Bratislava Regional Centre (UNDP/BRC). The consultants are not staff members of UNDP. Therefore, the information and opinions presented in this report are not *ipso facto* those of UNDP or the United Nations and its affiliated organizations.

List of Abbreviations

AIDS:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BRC:	Bratislava Regional Centre
CASPIS:	Commission for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion
CIS:	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSO:	Civil Society Organisation
DAC:	Development Assistance Committee
DSA:	Daily Subsistence Allowance
DZO/UM:	Division of Southeastern and Eastern Europe / Matra Programme Department
EU:	European Union
FDI:	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
HDI:	Human Development Index
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IARF:	Impact Assessment Resource Facility
ICJ:	International Court of Justice
IE:	International Expert
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
IOB:	“Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie (Development Cooperation Policy and Operations Evaluation Department)
ITC:	Information and Technology Center
ITL:	International Team Leader
KAP:	“Kleine Ambassade Projecten” (Small Embassy Projects)
kBq/m ² :	KiloBecquerel per square metre
KPA:	Matra Small Activities Programme
Matra:	“Maatschappelijke Transformatie” (Social Transformation)
MMP:	Matra Multilateral Programme
MOP:	Matra Training Programme
MPP:	Matra Projects Programme
MPPP:	Matra Political Parties Programme
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NUTS:	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OECD:	Organisation for International Cooperation and Development
OSCE:	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PIN:	Matra Programme for International Nature Conservation
PPP:	Purchasing Power Parity
RBEC:	Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS
RBM:	Results-Based Management
RF:	Russian Federation
ROL:	Romanian Leu
TOR:	Terms Of Reference
UN:	United Nations
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF:	United Nations Children’s Fund
US:	United States
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
VUC:	“Vyššie územné celky” (Higher Territorial Units)
WB:	World Bank

Executive Summary

1. Within the framework of the evaluation of the Matra Projects Programme over the period 1999-2003, commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands, the Bratislava Regional Centre of the United Nations Development Programme has been engaged to carry out the evaluation of the Matra Projects Programme (MPP) and the Matra Small Embassy Projects Programme (KAP) at the project level.

2. For this purpose it was decided to carry out the evaluation at project level in three countries, based on the following criteria:

- The countries should be in different stages of social transformation
- The countries should differ in size
- At least 15 projects should be under implementation at the time of evaluation
- For a long-term perception of MPP and better comparison with the previous evaluation, one of the countries covered in the IOB evaluation should be selected

3. This resulted in the selection of the following three countries:

- The Russian Federation, as by far the largest country of the region and the most important neighbour of the European Union, which moreover was included in the previous evaluation;
- Slovakia, as a small country that has acceded to the European Union;
- Romania, as a medium-sized country that is conducting accession negotiations;

4. An evaluation of each of the projects carried out during the time frame of the evaluation was considered as neither feasible nor cost-effective. It was therefore decided to select 18 MPP projects (including one Regional MPP) and 5 KAP projects in The Russian Federation, and Romania, and 12 MPP projects and 7 KAP projects in Slovakia. Therefore, the total sample for the three countries combined consists of 65 projects, reflecting to the extent possible the actual distribution among Matra-themes and geographical distribution within the countries. Also, the sample includes mainly projects that have already been concluded.

5. It was agreed that questions at project level should be largely the same as those used in the IOB evaluation of 1997, but that special attention should be paid to the local impact of projects since many of these have now ended, making it easier to answer impact and sustainability questions than in 1997. The questions largely fall into three categories:

Effectiveness:

1. Assessment of the quality of project documentation (i.e. the project document itself, changes to the document before and during project implementation, and project reports)
2. To what extent have project objectives been achieved? What are the achievements of the projects in terms of outputs and effects?
3. What can be said about the scope and sustainability of project impact as well as scope for duplicating project results in similar situations in recipient countries?

Relevance:

1. How does the projects relate firstly to the objectives of the Matra Programme and secondly to sectoral problems at country level?
2. Assessment of the project's relevance by the local partners, in the framework of alternative strategies (e.g. funding available from other sources) and otherwise.

Efficiency:

1. How can the choice of actual and budgeted resources/means be assessed in relation to achievements?
2. Could the same results have been achieved with fewer inputs, or alternatively, could more have been achieved with the same input?
3. Assessment of overhead costs of the Dutch partner in relation to resources that directly benefit local organizations.

6. At the project level, UNDP has made use of the initial project documentation, baseline indicators that described the situation or problem before the intervention, as well as the project outputs and objectives to assess the effectiveness of the projects. Special emphasis has been put on impact and sustainability of the projects. The evaluation has also made use of baseline indicators and country context to assess the overall change in the specific sectoral areas of the relevant projects during the period 1999-2005.

7. At the country level, the evaluation identified the impact of the different projects towards the overall objectives of the Matra Programme and towards the country context. In this way, the evaluation extracts lessons on how partnerships were contributing to the overall objectives and which other factors influenced the results. The overall results of each project evaluation have been synthesized into the country reports.

8. In order to make the information collected more accessible and to allow for comparisons between projects on different aspects of project execution, a system of scores has been developed for 12 main indicators of project effectiveness, relevance and efficiency, which the evaluators applied to each project based on the evaluation results.

9. The scoring system has been developed in order to quantify and systematize the analysis of the data and information collected during the evaluation. The main purpose is to make the information and data more accessible for interpretation. However, care should be given not to interpret the scores that were assigned to the projects too rigidly as expressing absolute values about indicators and overall project performance. For this, the developed indicators are not statistically rigid and quantifiable enough and are thus very much open for interpretation and debate. Also, the lack of time available did only allow for a relatively superficial evaluation of each project, while detailed data on budget breakdowns were often incomplete, making it very hard to assess project efficiency in many cases. Moreover, efficiency of Matra projects can only be really measured if compared with similar projects from other donors or if set against a standard of efficiency for Matra projects. In the absence of such tools, any interpretations and conclusions about efficiency are necessarily subjective.

10. Also, comparing scores between projects for individual indicators as well as overall performance is tricky, in particular between projects of different countries. The scores have been allotted by the individual experts involved in the evaluation for the projects that were assigned to each of them. It is therefore possible, indeed likely, that scores are systematically higher or lower awarded depending on the personal interpretation of each expert. Moreover,

the projects in the sample are very different from each other. Therefore, the score-tables and their interpretation should be seen as indicative and showing trends rather than hard facts. As such, it provides a tool for systematically extracting general conclusions and recommendations out of the qualitative information collected for each individual project.

11. For the purpose of carrying out the evaluation at project level, UNDP recruited an International Team Leader and an International Evaluation Expert, who worked with teams of three national experts in Romania and the Russian Federation and two in Slovakia. The evaluation was carried out between 11 May and 18 July 2005 and consisted basically of three parts:

- Desk-study of project files at the Embassies
- On-site project verification of results
- Interviews of local implementing organizations and other stakeholders

12. Looking at the results of the evaluation, it can be concluded that in all three countries, in overall terms, effectiveness, relevance and efficiency has been good, with perhaps only 8 out of 65 projects, or roughly one project in every eight, having been unsuccessful and another 9, or one in seven, having been merely “satisfactory”. On the other hand, more than half of all projects were evaluated as “very good” or “outstanding”. Moreover, high or low marks on effectiveness, relevance and efficiency generally coincided on all or most of the twelve indicators.

13. The success rate was highest in Romania and Slovakia and somewhat lower in the Russian Federation. It is tricky to make comparisons between countries, but the fact that Slovakia and Romania have gone through radical reforms in preparation for EU-accession, whereas Russia has followed a different course, may have played a role. More concretely, in countries where the rule of law, press freedom, respect for human rights, private initiative and private property, etc., are well-established, and where Governments are keen on reform, there is more likely to be an enabling environment in which Matra projects can be successfully implemented and achieve high impact and sustainability than in countries that are less advanced in this respect.

14. Thus, it can be expected that overall Matra projects would be more effective in countries like Slovakia and Romania than in Russia. At the same time, it is exactly in countries where the social transformation processes are weakest where Matra’s interventions are arguably most relevant, if perhaps not most effective.

15. In spite of this good overall result, the one in every four projects that has failed or that has merely been satisfactory often suffered from important flaws in design and implementation that may get overshadowed by the good or very good results of most other projects. Moreover, many of the successful projects still suffered from weaknesses that may not have had significant negative effects on results, but that should still be noted and analysed in order to further increase the overall quality of the Programme in the future.

16. In terms of project design, the following are the main conclusions and recommendations:

17. In all three countries it was observed that the quality of project documentation was generally good, but that there is scope for improvement on some important aspects:

18. The proposals were often weak on feasibility and sustainability mechanisms and in particular on risk assessment and analysis. This should receive more attention in the preparation of proposals.

19. In most cases, logical frameworks were not provided as part of the project proposal and measurable indicators of impact were poorly developed. It is therefore recommended to insist on the preparation of logical frameworks, as well as to develop a standardized system of measurable indicators and information/data to be collected that would enable more systematic impact assessment and outcome evaluation in the future.

20. A key weakness in the preparation of budgets is the lack of counterpart contributions. As a result most projects are 100% Matra-funded. This raises questions about real commitment for and ownership by the local partners of the project and ultimately its sustainability. It is therefore recommended that the inclusion of specified and quantified counterpart contributions in project proposals and budgets, as is already the practice in KAP, become one of the criteria for positively appraising MPP proposals.

21. Progress and final reports were generally of good quality, providing clear and detailed information, although there is sometimes a tendency to focus on reporting on activities and processes, rather than on overall impact and effects. Again, a well-prepared logical framework could greatly facilitate and improve reporting, as well as insistence from the side of Matra that the reports focus on overall impact and effects.

22. In terms of project management, the following are the main conclusions and recommendations:

23. The key determinant of project success – and failure – was the institutional capacity of the partners. Although the majority of Dutch organizations proved capable and performed satisfactorily, a minority of weaker and comparatively inexperienced organizations was clearly unprepared to assume project implementation. The introduction of procedures for verifying the applicants background and appraising ‘on the ground’ performance through the respective embassies would enable Matra to widen the diversity and scope of participating Dutch organizations - and not rely on the same “trusted” NGOs that recur throughout the MPP portfolio. This would additionally contribute to diversify project initiatives and enhance Matra’s “demand-driven” focus.

24. Projects were sometimes too ambitious in their expectations of the extent to which they could influence policy reform and institutionalization of results within the time-frame of the project. Matra could therefore encourage projects it would not like to get involved with beyond the regular timeframe to lower their ambitions on the policy front, while encouraging others, with a strong policy component, to come up with a realistic multi-phased strategy and timeframe for the proposed interventions, which can then be funded by Matra in clearly benchmarked phases, whereby the funding of each subsequent phase is contingent on the successful completion of the previous one. This would also avoid the occurrence of sometimes extensive time-gaps between the completion of one project and the start of the next phase.

25. The efficiency and cost-effectiveness of MPPs are influenced by the level of participation, transparency and national ownership. Although the participation of national

partner organizations in implementing project activities was consistently high, their inputs to project design, budgeting and strategic management were often lacking. As a matter of principle, projects that are designed to be driven by the national partner, whereby the Dutch partner provides specialized and locally not available expertise rather than overall management services, and whereby a substantial part of the funds are channelled through the national partner, should receive preference over projects that are mostly driven by the Dutch implementing partner. Maximizing the role of national partners is therefore desirable not only in terms of cost-efficiency, but also in terms of project effectiveness and sustainability.

26. there seems to be a gap between the KAP and the MPP sub-programmes that could perhaps be filled with a facility for providing larger-size grants for national organizations that have a proven track record of professionalism and success in carrying out projects and that could take the initiative in applying and leading MPP-style projects. The requirement for partnership with a Dutch organization should remain, but then specifically in terms of providing expert services, whereby the national organization determines the type and scope of services required. While the evaluators acknowledge that there are many practical obstacles to overcome before setting up such a facility, they think it is well worth exploring the possibilities.

27. Lack of systematic dissemination and expansion of successful projects limits the overall impact of Matra assistance. Projects that are similar in scope and objectives, even within the same country, often do not know about each other. The Matra programme therefore suffers from fragmentation. More systematic monitoring and evaluation, for example through focus group or other “cluster” arrangements could help in widening the scope of project monitoring, improving implementation quality and disseminating impact of MPP and KAP projects in a cost-effective manner.

28. There are also opportunities to support horizontal collaboration and partnering between MPP and KAP initiatives with common themes as well as engage national consultants to assist M&E between annual missions from The Hague. The experience of other donors (including UNDP) in managing small grants programmes and establishing selection/steering committees with national representation could help in managing the large numbers of dispersed KAP projects in each country. Newly approved projects could further benefit from “inception” workshops organized periodically to assist partners in reviewing work plans, timelines, institutional roles and stakeholder responsibilities before beginning implementation, to anticipate problems and make timely adjustments. The additional investment required for such activities would pay off in terms of impact, sustainability and dissemination - contributing to higher rates of project success.

29. More detailed information can be found in the main report comprising Chapter 1 – Introduction, Chapter 2 – Country Report for the Russian Federation, Chapter 3 – Country Report for Romania, Chapter 4 – Country Report for the Slovak Republic and Chapter 5 – Conclusions & Recommendations.

1. Introduction

1.1 Matra Projects Programme Evaluation at Project Level

Within the framework of the evaluation of the Matra Projects Programme over the period 1999-2003, commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands, the Bratislava Regional Centre of the United Nations Development Programme has been engaged to carry out the evaluation of the Matra Projects Programme (MPP) and the Matra Small Embassy Projects Programme (KAP) at the project level. The results of the evaluation, as reflected in this report, will be an integrated part of the overall evaluation report prepared by the Dutch consultancy firm “Berenschot”.

The part of the evaluation carried out by “Berenschot” mainly focuses on the effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of the MPP and KAP sub-programmes as well as the organization and management of the programme in general, whereas UNDP focused on the effectiveness and efficiency of individual projects, as well as the sustainability and relevance of their results. One of the overall aims of this evaluation will be to determine the extent to which the Matra Projects Programme subsidy scheme as it currently stands is the most effective way of achieving these objectives, at least for the two sub-programmes that are the subject of this particular evaluation.

1.2 Country Selection

The Matra programme differs somewhat in each of the 15 countries in Central and Eastern Europe in which it was active, just as these countries have characteristics which make them unique and different from one another. Nevertheless, it was not considered efficient or necessary to carry out individual evaluation studies for all Matra countries, especially given that relatively few projects were carried out in some of these. It was therefore decided to carry out the evaluation at project level in three countries, based on the following criteria:

- The countries should be in different stages of social transformation
- The countries should differ in size
- At least 15 projects should be under implementation at the time of evaluation
- For a long-term perception of MPP and better comparison with the previous evaluation, one of the countries covered in the IOB evaluation should be selected

This resulted in the selection of the following three countries:

- The Russian Federation, as by far the largest country of the region and the most important neighbour of the European Union, which moreover was included in the previous evaluation;
- Slovakia, as a small country that has acceded to the European Union;
- Romania, as a medium-sized country that is conducting accession negotiations;

1.3 Project Selection

An evaluation of each of the projects carried out during the time frame of the evaluation was considered as neither feasible nor cost-effective. It was therefore decided to select 18 MPP projects (including one Regional MPP) and 5 KAP projects in The Russian Federation, and Romania, and 12 MPP projects and 7 KAP projects in Slovakia. Therefore, the total sample for the three countries combined consists of 65 projects.

In order to be able to measure impact and sustainability, it was decided to look specifically at projects which have already concluded (although in a few cases projects included in the country samples were still ongoing or not yet fully closed). Also, the samples for each country should adequately reflect the distribution of projects across Matra-themes¹, as well as the geographical distribution within the countries, in particular as concerns capital versus other cities and urban versus rural areas.

1.4 Questions at Project Level

It was agreed that questions at project level should be largely the same as those used in the IOB evaluation of 1997, but that special attention should be paid to the local impact of projects since many of these have now ended, making it easier to answer impact and sustainability questions than in 1997.

The questions largely fall into three categories:

Effectiveness:

4. Assessment of the quality of project documentation (i.e. the project document itself, changes to the document before and during project implementation, and project reports)
5. To what extent have project objectives been achieved? What are the achievements of the projects in terms of outputs and effects?
6. What can be said about the scope and sustainability of project impact as well as scope for duplicating project results in similar situations in recipient countries?

Relevance:

3. How does the projects relate firstly to the objectives of the Matra Programme and secondly to sectoral problems at country level?
4. Assessment of the project's relevance by the local partners, in the framework of alternative strategies (e.g. funding available from other sources) and otherwise.

Efficiency:

4. How can the choice of actual and budgeted resources/means be assessed in relation to achievements?
5. Could the same results have been achieved with fewer inputs, or alternatively, could more have been achieved with the same input?
6. Assessment of overhead costs of the Dutch partner in relation to resources that directly benefit local organizations.

¹ i.e., legislation & law, public administration, public order & police, human rights & minorities, environment, public housing, information & media, culture, human welfare, health care, labour & social policy, and education.

1.5 Research Method

The monitoring of project performance, the evaluation of outcomes and the assessment of a project's impact on the development conditions in the target area are different aspects of the challenge to scrutinize development activities more rigidly. This should allow for the comparison of cost-effectiveness among different activities and help to identify both problems and successful practices. UNDP's corporate policy in monitoring and evaluation is based on "Results-Based Management" (RBM), which provides a coherent framework for strategic planning and management.

UNDP has followed the methodology suggested by Matra, while at the same time focusing more on impact evaluation and sustainability aspects. The effectiveness and efficiency of projects as well as the sustainability and relevance of the project's results have been evaluated. Given that UNDP was asked to evaluate up to 20 projects in each country and to summarize the results in country reports, a mixture of project and outcome evaluation methodology has been applied. This way also ensured close cooperation with the Dutch company that evaluated the overall programme results.

At the project level, the evaluation made use of internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, if these were available, which makes information available through specific impact indicators monitored regularly. In this regard, UNDP has made use of the initial project documentation, baseline indicators that described the situation or problem before the intervention, as well as the project outputs and objectives to assess the effectiveness of the projects. Special emphasis has been put on impact and sustainability of the projects. The evaluation has also made use of baseline indicators and country context to assess the overall change in the specific sectoral areas of the relevant projects during the period 1999-2005.

At the country level, the evaluation identified the impact of the different projects towards the overall objectives of the Matra Programme and towards the country context. In this way, the evaluation will extract lessons on how partnerships were contributing to the overall objectives and which other factors influenced the results. The overall results of each project evaluation have been synthesized into the country reports.

In order to make the information collected more accessible and to allow for comparisons between projects on different aspects of project execution, a system of scores has been developed for 12 main indicators of project effectiveness, relevance and efficiency, which the evaluators applied to each project based on the evaluation results. The selected indicators and corresponding definition of scores are the following:

Indicators of Effectiveness:

- Completeness and quality of project documentation
Fully/Mostly=5, Partly(some essential info missing)=3, No=1
- Quality of project documentation
Excellent=5, Good=4, Satisfactory=3, Poor=2, Bad=1
- Achievement of goals and results
More than expected=5, As expected=4, Somewhat less than expected=3, Rather less than expected=2, Little/no achievement=1

- Project impact and effects
More than expected=5, As expected=4, Somewhat less than expected=3, Rather less than expected=2, Little/no impact/effects=1
- Sustainability of results
Excellent=5, Good=4, Satisfactory=3, Poor=2, Bad=1
- Replicable elsewhere
Yes=5, Partly=3, No=1

Indicators of Relevance:

- Relevance of project in relation to Matra and host-country strategies and goals
Very relevant=5, Relevant=4, Somewhat relevant=3, Not so relevant=2, No relevance=1
- Relevance of project in they eyes of local stakeholders
Very relevant=5, Relevant=4, Somewhat relevant=3, Not so relevant=2, No relevance=1
- Continuing relationship between Dutch and national partner
Yes, intensively=5, Yes, sporadically=3, No or rarely=1

Indicators of Efficiency:

- Appropriateness of budget/inputs in relation to achieved results/outputs
Excellent=5, Good=4, Satisfactory=3, Poor=2, Bad=1
- Could more have been achieved with the same level of inputs or could the same results have been achieved with fewer inputs?
About right=5, Some more could have been achieved=3, Same results with some less inputs=3, Much more could have been achieved=1, Same results with much less inputs=1
- Share of budget/expenditures on inputs from/in The Netherlands versus the recipient country
>50% local=5, >35% up to 50% local=4, >20% up to 35% local=3, >10% up to 20% local=2, 10% or less local=1

The value “-“ is indicated when certain indicators are not applicable, such as Continuing Relationship with Dutch Partner and Share of Budget/Expenditures on Inputs from/in The Netherlands versus the Recipient Country for KAP projects, or when insufficient information was available to the evaluators. While the evaluators recognize that these are two entirely different issues, it was decided that in both cases these values should not be taken into account when calculating overall or average scores. This is obvious when indicators are “not applicable”. In most cases of “insufficient information available”, this was the result of the information for a variety of reasons not having been made available to the evaluators at the time of the evaluations and not necessarily because the information is *de facto* not available. Sometimes, a report was missing or it turned out to be impossible to set up a meeting with the local implementing organization. Given more time, the lacking information could probably have been obtained, but would have resulted in unacceptable delays in completing the

evaluation. Where there was evidence that reports were missing because they were never produced, or when a local implementing partner no longer existed a (low) score was given which was then taken into account in calculating the overall/average scores.

Averages of the scores for effectiveness, relevance and efficiency are calculated at the end of each bloc, as well as for the projects as a whole. In calculating the average score for “effectiveness”, the first two indicators (i.e. completeness and quality of project documentation) have been given a weight of 0.5 each, while the other four indicators have been given weights of one each. This reduces the weight of project documentation to 20% rather than 25% in the average score, which makes project documentation as an indicator equally important to the other four. Regarding “relevance”, the first two indicators more subjective than the third one. It has therefore been decided to allocate weights of 0.5 to the first two and a weight of 1 to the last indicator for calculating the average score. For “efficiency”, all three indicators have the same weight.

The Total Average Scores are calculated by adding up the average scores for each of the three main criteria, whereby “effectiveness” receives a weight of 50% and the other two weights of 25% each. This can be justified by the fact that there are more indicators for “effectiveness” as opposed to the other two, but also because a project’s effectiveness ultimately determines the success of a project. If a project was poorly designed, did not achieve its objectives and results, had little impact, proved to be unsustainable and cannot be replicated elsewhere, it does not really matter that much if the project was considered relevant and carried out efficiently. In this sense, relevance and efficiency can enhance the effectiveness of a project, but by themselves have little meaning. A Total Average Score of less than 2.0 is considered “very poor”, from 2.0 to 2.9 “poor”, from 3.0 to 3.4 “satisfactory”, from 3.5 to 3.9 “good”, from 4.0 to 4.4 “very good” and higher is considered “outstanding”.

The scoring system has been developed in order to quantify and systematize the analysis of the data and information collected during the evaluation. The main purpose is to make the information and data more accessible for interpretation. However, care should be given not to interpret the scores too rigidly as expressing absolute values about indicators and overall project performance. For this, the developed indicators are not statistically rigid and quantifiable enough and are thus very much open for interpretation and debate. A good example is the indicator of “replicable elsewhere”: in general it is assumed that if a project can be replicated elsewhere, this would be a good thing, and that it would be bad if it cannot. However, some projects, in particular KAP projects, are very limited in size and scope, very localized and focused on single issues rather than more complex problems that have nationwide implications. They never even aspired to be replicable. So, applying a low score to such a project may not be entirely fair or accurate. On the other hand, the evaluators do believe that a project that would not be replicable elsewhere (even in theory) would have very little overall impact and added value and relevance for the Matra programme as a whole. So this example illustrates the sometimes subjective decisions that had to be made in determining indicators.

Also, the lack of time available did only allow for a relatively superficial evaluation of each project, while detailed data on budget breakdowns were often incomplete, making it very hard to assess project efficiency in many cases. Moreover, efficiency of Matra projects can only be really measured if compared with similar projects from other donors or if set against a standard of efficiency for Matra projects. In the absence of such tools, any interpretations and conclusions about efficiency are necessarily subjective.

Also, comparing scores between projects for individual indicators as well as overall performance is tricky, in particular between projects of different countries. The scores have been allotted by the individual experts involved in the evaluation for the projects that were assigned to each of them. It is therefore possible, indeed likely, that scores are systematically higher or lower awarded depending on the personal interpretation of each expert. This is of course unavoidable when using a team of evaluators. Hard comparisons between projects would only be possible if all projects would have been evaluated by one and the same persons. Also, the projects in the sample are very different from each other. The most obvious difference is that between MPP and KAP projects. They differ fundamentally in size, execution, implementation and management arrangements, as well as in scope, strategy and objectives. In fact, the KAP programme would probably merit a separate evaluation altogether. But there are also big differences between MPP projects which make comparisons a hazardous undertaking.

While these limitations of using a scoring system must be recognized, it is difficult to think of another relatively simple and straightforward method to bring some system in the large amounts of information and data collected, while at the same time not turning the evaluation exercise into a simple statistical analysis. Ultimately, it is the qualitative analysis that matters most and that can do justice to the enormous variety of projects carried out through the Matra programme and the variety of the contexts in which these are being implemented. Therefore, the score-tables and their interpretation, as provided at the beginning of section 2.3, should be seen as indicative and showing trends rather than hard facts. As such, it provides a tool for systematically extracting general conclusions and recommendations out of the qualitative information collected for each individual project.

1.6 Organizational Arrangements and Implementation Strategy

For the purpose of carrying out the evaluation at project level, UNDP recruited the following personnel:

- an International Team Leader (ITL), who was responsible for the preparation of the implementation plan and questionnaires, the overall management and coordination of the evaluation, and the preparation of the final report. The ITL also spearheaded the evaluation in Russia.
- an International Expert (IE) who would support the ITL in his tasks, while focusing in particular on the evaluations in Romania and Slovakia.
- Teams of three National Experts in Romania and Russia and two in Slovakia to carry out the individual project evaluations under the supervision of the ITL and IE.
- A Programme Assistant, located in Bratislava, to provide administrative and logistic support to the evaluation team, in coordination with focal points at the UNDP Country Offices in Russia, Slovakia and Romania.

Furthermore, overall supervision as well as technical and managerial backstopping was provided by UNDP BRC, while inputs and data for country background sections were provided by the Programme Assistant and the UNDP Country Office focal points in Russia, Romania and Slovakia.

The time-frame of the evaluation was as follows:

11-25 May 2005:	Preparation of detailed evaluation plan and questionnaires by ITL and recruitment of other experts
26-27 May 2005:	Orientation Meeting of evaluation team at UNDP BRC
30 May – 8 July 2005:	Country evaluations, followed by wrap-up meetings in each country with the national teams and in Bratislava with UNDP BRC
9 July – 18 July 2005:	Preparation of draft final evaluation report (incl. Country reports) for review by UNDP BRC and subsequent submission to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

On 14 June, a meeting was held at the Ministry in The Hague between members of the Steering Committee established for the evaluation, the Dutch company “Berenschot”, UNDP BRC and the UNDP evaluation team to coordinate and agree on final arrangements.

The project evaluations at country level in Russia, Romania and Slovakia consisted basically of three parts:

- Desk-study of project files at the Embassies
- On-site project verification of results
- Interviews of local implementing organizations and other stakeholders

For this purpose, the guidelines provided in the evaluation plan were followed. For more details, please consult the evaluation plan provided in annex to this document.

1.7 Outline of Report of Evaluation at Project Level

This remainder of this report has been prepared in accordance with the following structure:

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 constitute the Country Reports for the Russian Federation, Romania and Slovakia respectively. Each of these chapters is divided into the following sections:

Section 1: Country Background – provides a brief overview of recent development trends, in particular in relation to social transformation processes, and a number of key data and indicators.

Section 2: Selection of Projects for Evaluation – provides an overview and analysis of Matra MPP and KAP projects in the country, followed by a justification and presentation of the projects selected for the evaluation sample.

Section 3: Evaluation Findings – provides the main findings of the project evaluations, starting with a quantitative presentation of the twelve main indicators of project effectiveness, relevance and efficiency in a table showing the scores of each project, followed by a detailed qualitative presentation of evaluation results on overall project performance, effectiveness, relevance and efficiency.

Chapter 5: Conclusions & Recommendations - provides an overview of general conclusions and recommendations resulting from the country evaluations.

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation as well as the detailed Evaluation Plan are provided in Annex 1 and Annex 2 respectively.

For the purpose of protecting the privacy of Dutch and local implementing organizations, their names have not been mentioned in this report. Their details will only be provided at the discretion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2. Country Evaluation Report – Russian Federation

2.1 Country Background – Russian Federation²



2.1.1 The specific challenges of transition in Russia

Over a decade after embarking on a dramatic transition in which the very structure of the socioeconomic model would transform, Russia faces challenges of contemporary development shared by many countries in the world. In the case of Russia, however, the challenges are particularly difficult. This is the only country that does not have living generational link with pre-socialist socioeconomic reality. Concepts and approaches that are obvious (not requiring explanation) in societies with market economies and pluralist democracies were difficult to “restore” in Central Europe – but were even more difficult to “reinvent” in Russia.

The geopolitical aspects of transition are no less dire. Former Soviet Union was (and acted) as an empire. Despite the egalitarian socialist make-up, it was replicating in a peculiar way the centralist structure of the former Russian empire changing primarily the mechanisms of recruiting and legitimizing the political (party) elites. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and particularly the lost direct control over Ukraine was the end of an empire with all its psychological burden on the society and the newly-emerging elites.

² This information was compiled mainly from the National UNDP Human Development Reports 2002-2003 (biannual) and 2004, and UNDP country brief.

2.1.2 Civil society development and the strong state

This is an area where transition was particularly difficult. Both the nature of Russian despotism of prior to 1917th revolution and totalitarian rule after that (particularly the 1920s and 1930s) were extremely anti-individualistic. It is difficult to judge to what extent this anti-individualism is an outcome or a cause of the totalitarian roots (or both). In the context of transition however it makes the task of erecting and developing CS structures particularly difficult.

In the late 1990s this task was additionally complicated by the consistent attempts on the side of the government (actively supported by Russian Orthodox Church) to redefine the new “Russian identity” in the context of the strong state. This – in addition to long-lasting issues like the Chechen wars reinforcing attitudes in favour of a stronger state) – makes the dialogue between the state and CSO extremely difficult (if possible at all). Alternative thinking is much easier perceived as jeopardy than in other transition countries in Europe.

Those difficulties are reflected in the levels of development of CSO. The value of the Civil Society Index (monitored by Freedom House) has deteriorated from 3.75 in 1997 to 4.75 in 2005.³ A similar tendency is reflected in the USAID NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia (deteriorated from 3.4 in 1998 to 4.2 in 2004⁴). In the economic area the state has retained opportunities for arbitrary state control executed in a selected way through pressure from the government on selected businesses

2.1.3 Market reforms and shocks

The transition to a market economy in Russia was done also in a Russian way – abrupt and going from one extreme to another. After a shock privatization at the beginning of the 1990s almost “overnight” the most centralized economy turned into its diametrical opposite. Vast natural resources and world-scale production facilities moved from “collective” (egalitarian state) ownership into the ownership of a few hyper-rich “oligarchs”.

Despite privatization, the Russian economy retained much of its pre-transition features – primarily its oil and raw material exports dependence. The share of oil is 31% of primary energy production, 50% of primary energy exports. It is estimated that oil is responsible for 20% of total state budget revenue and 40% of exports revenues.

After the 1998 financial crisis and rouble depreciation economic growth resumed also in other sectors albeit at slower rate. A sharp rise of oil prices in 1999-2002 made possible boosting social spending and restoring some of the losses in living standards witnessed in the first years of transition.

³ The civil Society Index uses a seven-point scale, with 7 indicating a low or poor level of development and 1 indicating a very advanced Civil Society sector

⁴ The NGO Sustainability Index uses a seven-point scale, with 7 indicating a low or poor level of development and 1 indicating a very advanced NGO sector.

2.1.4 Economic outlook

According to official data, year-on-year real GDP growth slowed to 6.4% in the third quarter of 2004, from 7.4% in the first half of the year, as industrial output growth dropped to below 5% in the third quarter. The decline in GDP growth has been the result of slowing growth in both exports and fixed investment. Growth would have been even slower were it not for the continued buoyancy of services, especially retail trade, which in volume terms has continued to expand at double-digit rates. Although the growth slowdown in the second half of 2004 was sharper than had been forecast at the beginning of the year, it was not as serious as some observers began to predict after a particularly poor performance in September and October. Indeed, there were some signs of recovery in the final months of the year, and the services sector has continued to expand strongly.

For 2005-2006 average annual real GDP growth is expected to slow, in line with declining international oil prices. Energy remains the main driver of the economy. Recent surveys show that the operating environment for small firms has improved, but this improvement has not been of sufficient magnitude, and the economy, in any case, continues to be dominated by large firms. Despite the reforms of recent years and deliberate attempts on the side of the government, improvements in the business environment are still not significant enough to sustain high growth in the non-oil sector. Hence economic performance in mid-term perspective will remain dependent on trends at international energy markets.

2.1.5 Human development trends

In 1990, Russia, as most countries in the former “socialist camp” (with the exception only of Romania) had high (above 0.800) levels of human development. This was reflecting the pattern of socialist-type development characterized by full employment, high levels of welfare benefits, decent education and health care. With the transition Russia witnessed sharp fall in the living standard and deterioration of the demographic situation (decreased life expectancy particularly of men). The situation with education is slightly better: the education index for Russia improved back in the past 2—3 years.

2.1.6 The particular challenge of HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is of particular concern for Russia. The number of newly reported HIV infections doubled every six to twelve months during 1995-2001, when the number peaked with a record 88,336 new HIV cases. By August 2003, the Russian Federation had reported over 248,000 HIV infections. The spread of infection is primarily drug-use related - of the 134,000 cases with documented transmission routes, 90 percent are attributable to injecting drug use, 6 percent to heterosexual contact, 3.5 percent are children born to HIV-infected mothers, and the remainder are attributed to male-to-male sex. Heterosexual contacts however are increasingly the mode of transmission – of all the 24,000 new infections with documented transmission routes reported in 2002, the shares are 76, 12, 12 and 0.2 percent, respectively.⁵ Still the two groups most at risk remain injecting drug users (estimated number 1,500,000 –

⁵ Reversing the Epidemic, UNDP regional report (2004).

3,500,000 with HIV estimated prevalence rate 1.01-2.4%) and prisoners (estimated number 875,000 and prevalence rate 0.61).

2.1.7 Socioeconomic Data

Geography:	
Total Area	17,075,400 sq. km
People:	
Population	143,782,338 (July 2004 est.)
Life expectancy at birth: total population	67.66 years (2003 est.)
Life expectancy at birth: male	62.46 years (2003 est.)
Life expectancy at birth: female	73.11 years (2003 est.)
HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate	>1.1% (2003 est.)
People living with HIV/AIDS	420,000 – 1,400,000 (2003 est., UNAIDS)
Federal AIDS Centre Registered Cases	306,000 (end 2004 est.)
Economic Indicators (2004):	
GDP (\$US bn)	555.5
GDP real growth (%)	6.7%
Total external debt (\$US bn)	179.0
Human Development:	
Human Development Index 2004	Rank: 57 – Value: 0.795
Human Development Index 2003	Rank: 63 – Value: 0.779

2.2 Selection of Projects for Evaluation - Russian Federation

2.2.1 Matra Projects Programme (MPP)

Since 1994, when the Matra Projects Programme started in the Russian Federation, a total of 66 projects have been initiated with a total budget of € 20,000,184. The average budget per project is € 303,033, which is 43% of the maximum awardable amount of € 700,000. Budgets range from € 2,000 for the smallest to € 699,034 for the largest.

If we compare amounts committed for new projects in each year, as is done in the following table, we can see that there is a big increase as of 1999 (on average more than twice the amounts in previous years) and that there is a further increase in average budget starting in 2003.

In terms of numbers of new projects per year, the average is six, with less than average during the period 1994-1996 and in 2002 and more than average in 1999 and 2001. 2001 was clearly a peak year, with 11 new projects approved.

However, because of the significant increases in average budgets per project, first in 1999 and again in 2003, we can see that the yearly amounts of resources committed during 2003 and 2004 are actually higher than in 1999 and that the amount in 2001 is only 15% higher than in 2003, even though the number of projects in 2001 was almost double that of 2003.

Table 2.1: Number of MPP projects, total and average budgets per year for Russian Federation

Period	No.	Total Budget (€)	%	Average Budget (€)
1994	4	509,982	2.5	127,495
1995	5	520,432	2.6	104,086
1996	3	609,427	3.0	203,142
1997	6	994,064	5.0	165,677
1998	6	879,626	4.4	146,604
1999	8	2,530,752	12.7	316,344
2000	6	1,877,299	9.4	312,883
2001	11	4,243,518	21.2	385,774
2002	5	1,579,816	7.9	315,963
2003	6	3,703,987	18.5	617,331
2004	6	2,551,281	12.8	425,214
1994-2005	66	20,000,184	100.0	303,033

If we look at the distribution of projects per Matra theme over the years (see the next table), we see that in the Russian Federation almost half of all projects (47%) are concentrated in three themes: Health, Environment and Information/Media. Another one third of projects comprise Law/Justice, Welfare and Labour/Social Policy, while Culture, Housing, Public Administration and Human Rights/Minorities cover the remaining 20%.

Notable is that there have been only two projects specifically categorized as addressing human rights and minority issues. However, one must be careful in drawing conclusions from this as many projects in practice combine several themes. For example, many projects categorized as media/information have a clear human rights component as well. The same applies to some projects in Law/Justice, Education, Culture, Health and Welfare. Thus, the vast majority of projects are actually addressing or incorporating human rights issues in one way or another.

Table 2.2: MPP projects in Russian Federation per Matra theme

Theme \ Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total	%
Health		1	1	1		2		2	2	2		11	16.7
Environment					3	1	2	2		1	1	10	15.2
Information/Media		1		2	1	1		2	2		1	10	15.2
Law/Justice	1			1		1	2				2	7	10.6
Welfare		1				2	1			1		5	7.6
Labour/Social Policy	1		1		2						1	5	7.6
Education				2		1		1			1	5	7.6
Culture	1							2	1			4	6.1
Housing		1	1				1	1				4	6.1
Public Administration		1						1		1		3	4.5
Human Rights/Minorities	1									1		2	3.0
Total	4	5	3	6	6	8	6	11	5	6	6	66	

It is difficult to detect significant trends in changing emphasis in certain themes over the years, other than that health-related projects seem to have become more prominent since 1999 and that environment-related projects see a concentration in the period 1998-2001.

The present evaluation covers the period 1999 – 2003 and focuses mainly on completed projects (meaning in practice that none of the projects approved in 2003 are included in the sample). Twenty-five projects (37.9%) fall into this category, representing a total budget of € 8,090,958 (40.5% of the total) and an average budget of € 323,638 per project. Their distribution per theme is as follows:

Table 2.3: Completed MPP projects in 1999-2003 in Russian Federation per Matra theme

Theme	No. of Projects
Environment	5
Information/Media	5
Health	4
Welfare	3
Law/Justice	3
Housing	2
Public Administration	1
Labour/Social Policy	1
Education	1
Total:	25

As can be seen, the distribution per theme is not radically different from the one presented in the previous table for the whole period from 1994 to 2004, with projects related to environment, information/media and health still comprising over half of all projects.

In terms of geographical distribution, some 60% of the 25 projects are based in Moscow, although many of these also have activities in other parts of the Russian Federation. The remaining 40% are based primarily in other cities, including St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod and others.

From these 25 projects, 17 have been selected to be included in the evaluation in accordance with the above thematic and geographical distribution (see the table at the end of this section). Also, to the extent possible, an equitable distribution over the individual years of the period under evaluation has been taken into account. The sample comprises 68% of all completed projects initiated during the period 1999-2003 and a quarter of all MPP projects since 1994. Therefore, the sample can be considered representative of MPP projects over the period 1999-2003 as well as over the entire lifespan of the MPP programme in the Russian Federation.

2.2.2 Regional MPP projects and Small Embassy Projects (KAP)

While the present evaluation mainly focuses on the Matra Projects Programme, it was felt that the inclusion of some projects from the other Matra sub-programmes that are carried out in the countries themselves with a key role for local partners, i.e. the Regional Matra Projects Programme and the Small Embassy Projects Programme, would add value to the overall evaluation. It was therefore decided to include one Regional MPP project with activities in the Russian Federation and five KAP projects to the sample.

Given the fact that since 1994, a total of 19 Regional MPP projects had part of their activities in the Russian Federation and that between 1999 and 2003 there have been 326 KAP projects carried out by the Embassy in Moscow and 72 by the Consulate General in St. Petersburg, it is of course not possible from the limited sample to draw any general conclusions about the Regional MPP and the KAP programmes. On the other hand, the regional MPP project in the sample can be considered as part of the overall Matra Projects Programme. KAP projects, however, are very different in size, scope and implementation arrangements from MPP projects, but it is hoped that nevertheless some useful comparisons can be drawn between the two types of projects. In fact, the KAP programme would merit a separate evaluation, which, however, due to time constraints, was not feasible within the present scope of the Matra Projects Programme evaluation.

From the Regional MPP projects, it was decided to add the environment project “Wings across Europe” to the sample. This project has been a constant feature of the Regional programme since 1995 when the first phase was approved. It is now in its third phase, which is planned for completion in July 2005.

Concerning the KAP projects, the table on the next page provides an overview per year and per theme of the 326 projects carried out by the Embassy in Moscow (i.e. excluding those carried out by the Consulate General in St. Petersburg).

Here, it can be seen that projects directly addressing human rights and minority issues stand out, with almost 36% of the total. With another 20% of projects addressing Good Governance, these two themes comprise 55% of the total. Social Welfare and Environment are also well represented with 35% of the total. Regarding the thematic distribution, the same caution must be applied in interpreting these data as with the MPP projects, namely that many projects combine more than one theme. Thus, while media and education projects are few, there are many others which have information and education components built into them. Also, a number of projects (7% in 1999, 3% in 2000, 5% in 2001, 7% in 2002 and 2% in 2003) are strongly gender-related. However, as gender is typically a cross-cutting theme, these projects have for the purpose of this evaluation not been treated as a separate category.

Table 2.4: KAP Projects in Russian Federation per Matra theme

Theme / Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total	%
Human Rights/Minorities	23	20	16	32	25	116	35.6
Good Governance	11	20	8	12	13	64	19.6
Social Welfare (incl. Health)	14	10	18	9	7	58	17.8
Environment	14	12	11	10	9	56	17.2
Information/Media	3	4	2	4	5	18	5.5
Education	2	2	3	6		13	4.0
Culture					1	1	0.3
Total	67	68	58	73	60	326	
Total %	20.6	20.9	17.8	22.4	18.4		
Total Budget (€)	364,179	433,229	449,963	623,808	578,152	2,449,331	
Average budget per project	5,436	6,371	7,758	8,545	9,636	7,513	

It can also be observed that the distribution of projects over the years has been fairly constant with an average of 65 new KAPs per year. By contrast, during the years 1995 to 1998, the number of approved projects was 54, 55, 60 and 58, while in 1994 it was 28. During the period 1999-2003 a total of € 2,449,331 has been committed, comprising an average of slightly over € 7,500 per project. At the same time, each year the average budget per project has increased by more than 10%, from almost € 5,500 in 1999 (up from less than € 5,000 in the early years) to more than € 9,600 in 2003, with many project budgets approaching the maximum amount of € 11,500. This trend partly illustrates the rationale behind the subsequent increase in the ceiling of grants to € 15,000.

Regarding the KAP programme in North-West Russia, under the Consulate General, in 2003, there were 17 projects with a total budget of € 150,680 and an average of € 8,864 per project. The projects focused mostly on human rights issues, health, welfare, good governance and NGO-strengthening. For the other years, there is no breakdown by themes but the number of projects per year was 10 in 1999, 12 in 2000, 10 in 2001, 23 in 2002 and 17 in 2003, making a total of 72 projects over the evaluation period.

It is also interesting to note that both the Embassy in Moscow and the Consulate General in St. Petersburg have managed to spend their allocated yearly budgets, which were € 550,000 for Moscow and € 150,000 in St. Petersburg in 2002 and 2003. In St. Petersburg, the budget was less than € 100,000 per year for 1999, 2000 and 2001, while actual delivery in terms of approved projects was one third of that in 1999, two thirds in 2000 and almost 100% in 2001.

The consolidation and strengthening of the KAP programme in the Russian Federation over time can further be illustrated by the fact that until 1996, the Embassy in Moscow still approved more project proposals than it rejected, while this trend got spectacularly reversed in the following years. In 2003, only 13% of proposals were approved and funded, while the total amount of approved projects per year, as we have seen, showed a slightly upward trend. The fact is that the number of applications has increased dramatically, from a mere 37 in 1994 and 79 in 1995 to a whopping 460 in 2003. In fact, while a total of 502 applications were received over the period 1994-1998, over the years 1999-2003 the amount was 1,824. In St. Petersburg, the trend is similar: while only 25 applications were received in 1999, this increased to 52 in 2000 and over 80 each year since 2001.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this is that (1) the KAP programme has become increasingly well-known and popular over the years with local organizations, in particular since 1999, (2) the number of applications now outstrip the available resources, which (3) allows the Embassy in Moscow and Consulate General in St. Petersburg to apply ever higher standards in reviewing applications and awarding grants, which, in turn, should result in better quality projects in each subsequent year.

In terms of Geographical location, the distribution of the projects over the enormous territory of the Russian Federation is equally impressive. In 1999, for the projects managed by the Embassy in Moscow, 73% of projects were located outside the city of Moscow. For 2000, the percentage was 82%, for 2001 74%, for 2002 64% and for 2003 it was 67%. For the whole period, the percentage was 72%. Moreover, KAP projects can be found virtually in all corners of the country, including in Siberia and the Far East, from Kaliningrad to Kamchatka. Again, this is quite a feat giving the truly exceptionally vast expanse of the Russian Federation, stretching over 11 time zones, and the corresponding challenges of transportation and communication. While roughly half of the projects managed by the St. Petersburg Consulate General are based in the city, they have also been able to ensure quite an impressive spread across North-West Russia.

As only 5 projects could be selected from this wealth of experience for the purpose of this particular evaluation, it is impossible to ensure that these provide a proper representation of the KAP programme as a whole. Nevertheless, in selecting the projects, the evaluation team has tried to take thematic and geographical distribution somewhat into account. Thus, a project was selected from each year of the period 1999-2003, of which three related to human rights (one related to gender), one related to Good Governance and one related to Social Welfare. Also, two of the projects are located in Moscow, one in St. Petersburg, one in Nizhniy Novgorod and one in Kaluga.

The authors would like to refer the reader to the excellent “Matra/KAP Annual Report 2003”, available on the web site of the Embassy, from which most of the information presented in this section has been obtained. Other data has been obtained from detailed updated lists of KAP projects, made available by the Embassy staff in May and June 2005.

2.2.3 List of Selected MPP and KAP Projects

Based on the above, the final list of the selected MPP and KAP projects included in the evaluation sample is as follows:

Table 2.5: Selected MPP and KAP Projects – Russian Federation

Project Code	Start Year	Project Title	Theme	Location
Matra Projects Programme				
RU001601	1999	Training of local activists and democratic leaders	Labour/social policy	Moscow/Other
RU000501	1999	Support to development of drug treatment options in the Russian Federation	Health	Moscow/Other
RU000901	1999	Information network for media & NGOs in N.W. Russia	Media	N.W. Russia
RU001101	1999	Support to the improvement of civic education in Kaluga Region	Education	Kaluga Region
RU003501	2000	Public participation, effective communication and environmental management	Environment	Moscow
RU003601	2000	Deaf Pro-Active	Welfare	Moscow/Other
RU003902	2000	Criminal investigation and prosecution: The European perspective	Law/Justice	St. Petersburg
RU006401	2000	Juvenile Law in Russia	Law/Justice	Moscow
RU006801	2000	Increasing NGO influence on society through regional networks	Environment	Moscow/Other
RU007601	2001	Building bridges for better health policies in Russia	Health	St. Petersburg/Other
RU007801	2001	Human rights and the Russian media	Information/media	Moscow/Other
RU007901	2001	HIV/AIDS prevention and health promotion in the Russian prison system	Health	Moscow/Other
RU008901	2001	PRAKTIKA training center in Nizhniy Novgorod	Information/media	Nizhniy Novgorod
RU009101	2001	Innovative methods of urban governance	Housing	Novosibirsk
RU009501	2001	Federalism and representation in Russia: New directions for the Federal Council	Publ. Administration	Moscow/Other
RU010101	2001	Lomonosov Coastal Spatial Plan	Environment	St. Petersburg
RU011302	2002	Changing Societies	Information/media	Moscow
Regional Matra Projects Programme				
QE010601	1999	Wings across Europe II	Environment	
Matra Small Embassy Projects (KAP) Programme				
70/99	1999	Setting up a legal information centre	Human rights	Kaluga
19/00	2000	Setting up an information centre aimed at involving young people in human rights	Human rights	Nizhniy Novgorod
36/01	2001	Publishing a magazine covering the issue of women's rights	Human rights/gender	Moscow
31/02	2002	Activities to promote law standards of Council of Europe	Good Governance	Moscow
07/03	2003	Trainings for Roma minority on healthy & hygienic life-style	Health	St. Petersburg

2.3 Evaluation Findings – Russian Federation

2.3.1 Score Table Russian Federation Sample

The evaluation of individual projects in the Russian Federation was carried out during six weeks (from late May until early July) by a team of three evaluators, supported by the International Team Leader, through desk review of project documentation obtained from the Embassy, visits to project sites and interviews with local stakeholders.

The table on the next page shows the scores for the projects in the Russia sample. An overview and explanations of score values for each indicator as well as general methodological observations regarding the validity of the score system have been provided in Chapter 1 “Introduction”, Section 1.5 “Research Method”.

Table 2.6: Detailed Scores for Projects in the Sample for the Russian Federation

Project	Type	Completed / On-going	Effectiveness							Relevance				Efficiency				Total average score	Remarks
			Docs complete	Quality of docs	Goals/ Results	Impact/ Effects	Sustainability	Replicable	Average score	Matra/country	Local actors	Relation NL-local	Average score	Budget/ outputs	More/ less	Nl input vs local	Average score		
RU001601	MPP	C	4	4	3	3	4	5	3.8	5	4	5	4.8	5	5	5	5.0	4.4	
RU000501	MPP	C	5	5	5	4	4	5	4.6	5	5	3	4.0	4	3	4	3.7	4.2	
RU000901	MPP	C	3	3	3	4	4	3	3.4	4	5	3	3.8	5	3	3	3.7	3.6	
RU001101	MPP	C	5	5	4	3	3	5	4.0	5	5	3	4.0	5	5	3	4.3	4.1	
RU003501	MPP	C	4	3	3	1	1	1	1.9	3	3	1	2.0	3	3	3	3.0	2.2	
RU003601	MPP	C	5	4	4	3	3	5	3.9	5	5	5	5.0	4	3	3	3.3	4.0	
RU003902	MPP	C	3	2	2	1	1	1	1.5	4	4	-	4.0	2	1	-	1.5	2.1	lack info
RU006401	MPP	C	5	5	4	3	3	5	4.0	5	5	3	4.0	5	5	4	4.7	4.2	
RU006801	MPP	C	4	4	4	5	4	4	4.2	5	5	3	4.0	5	5	5	5.0	4.4	
RU007601	MPP	C	5	5	4	3	4	5	4.2	5	4	1	2.8	5	3	4	4.0	3.8	
RU007801	MPP	C	5	4	5	4	4	3	4.1	4	4	3	3.5	2	3	4	3.0	3.7	
RU007901	MPP	C	5	5	4	4	4	5	4.4	5	5	5	5.0	5	5	4	4.7	4.6	
RU008901	MPP	C	5	5	5	5	5	3	4.6	4	5	3	3.8	3	5	3	3.7	4.2	
RU009101	MPP	C	5	4	4	5	5	4	4.4	5	5	3	4.0	3	5	4	4.3	4.3	
RU009501	MPP	C	5	4	4	4	3	3	3.7	5	4	5	4.5	4	3	4	3.7	3.9	
RU010101	MPP	C	4	3	2	2	1	1	1.9	4	3	3	3.3	4	3	3	3.3	2.6	
RU011302	MPP	O	3	4	4	4	5	5	4.3	4	3	5	4.3	-	-	4	4.0	4.2	lack info
QE010601	REG	C	4	4	5	4	4	4	4.2	4	5	5	4.8	4	5	5	4.7	4.5	
Averages			4.4	4.1	3.8	3.4	3.4	3.7	3.7	4.5	4.4	3.5	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.9	3.8	
70/99	KAP	C	3	3	4	2	1	1	2.2	4	4	-	4.0	2	3	-	2.5	2.7	
19/00	KAP	C	3	3	4	4	4	3	3.6	4	4	-	4.0	3	5	-	4.0	3.8	
36/01	KAP	C	5	3	4	4	5	3	4.0	5	5	-	5.0	3	5	-	4.0	4.3	
31/02	KAP	C	5	3	4	4	5	3	4.0	5	5	-	5.0	4	5	-	4.5	4.4	
07/03	KAP	C	5	5	3	3	1	1	2.6	4	4	-	4.0	3	3	-	3.0	3.1	
Averages			4.2	3.4	3.8	3.4	3.2	2.2	3.3	4.4	4.4	-	4.4	3.0	4.2	-	3.6	3.7	

Notes: Docs complete and Quality of docs have a weight of 0.5 each in the average score for “effectiveness”, against weights of 1.0 for the other indicators. For “Relevance”, Matra/country and Local actors have weights of 0.5, while Relation NL-local has 1.0 (except for KAP projects). For “efficiency”, weights for all three indicators are the same (except for KAP projects, where only two indicators are relevant). In the Total Average Score, the average score for “effectiveness has a weight of 50% and those of the other two criteria 25%.

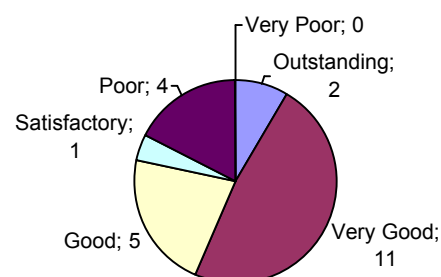
Table 2.7: Summary Scores for Projects in the Sample for the Russian Federation

Average Score	Overall		Effectiveness		Relevance		Efficiency	
	# of projects		# of projects		# of projects		# of projects	
0.0 – 1.9: Very Poor	0	4	3	5	0	2	1	2
2.0 – 2.9: Poor	4		2		2			
3.0 – 3.4: Satisfactory	1	6	1	5	1	4	5	9
3.5 – 3.9: Good	5		4		3			
4.0 – 4.4: Very Good	11	13	11	13	10	17	6	12
4.5 – 5.0: Outstanding	2		2		7			

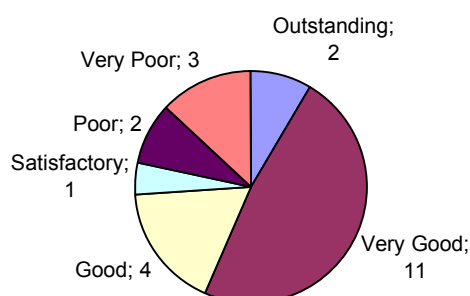
2.3.2 Overall Project Assessments

From the score table on the previous page it can be seen that the evaluation team judged the average MPP and KAP project in the sample for the Russian Federation to be “good” (3.8 and 3.7 respectively). In fact, more than half of the projects (MPP and KAP combined) were considered “very good” or “outstanding”, more than a quarter were considered “satisfactory” or “good”, while four projects were qualified as “poor”. No projects were judged “very poor”. This means an overall success rate (defined as at least having a “satisfactory” score) of more than 80%, which is a very good result. At the same time, the almost 22% of projects that were less than “good” show a number of weaknesses that will be further discussed below.

Graph 2.1 Overall Project Performance RF



Graph 2.2 Project Effectiveness RF

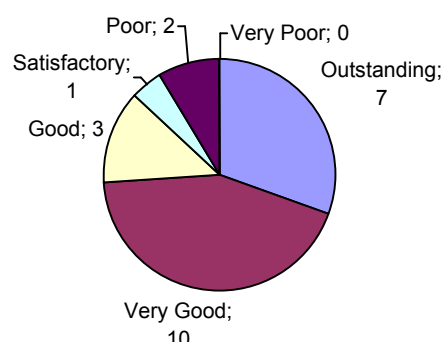


As the overall average score has been compiled from 12 different indicators reflecting effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the projects, there are of course differences between the average scores per indicator from which a number of patterns can be discerned. Thus, looking at the six indicators of effectiveness it can be seen that on average completeness and quality of project documentation are considered to be “very good” for MPP Projects, achievement of goals and results and replicability of the projects as “good” and impact and sustainability as “satisfactory”. For KAP projects, the completeness of project documentation was considered “very good”, the achievement of goals and results “good”, the quality of project documentation as well as the impact and sustainability “satisfactory”, whereas the replicability of projects was judged to be “poor”.

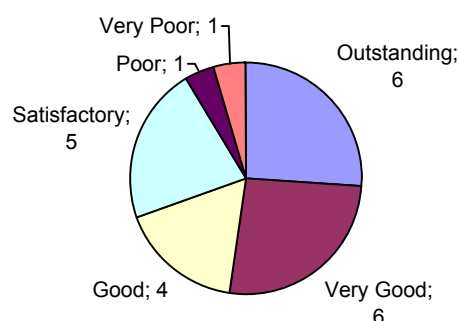
Care has to be given in interpreting the ratings for KAP projects and extrapolating results to the entire programme, as the sample of five projects is very small. Nevertheless many KAP projects, as a result of their relatively small size and localized grass-roots orientation, tend to be “single issue” projects, i.e. addressing a very specific problem in a very limited geographic area, without pretending or aiming at influencing broader policy issues or indeed replicating project results to other places, something which is much more typical of MPP projects.

As concerns project relevance, MPP projects scored “outstanding” on relevance of project in relation to Matra and Country goals and strategies, “very good” on relevance in the eyes of local stakeholders and “good” in terms of the continuation of the relation of the Dutch and the local partner after completion of the project. KAP projects scored “very good” on the two first indicators, whereas the third is not applicable. Two MPP projects scored “poor” on overall relevance.

Graph 2.3 Project Relevance RF



Graph 2.4 Project Efficiency RF



Regarding project efficiency, MPP projects on average scored “very good” on appropriateness of inputs/budget in relation to outputs/results and “good” on project performance in relation to inputs/budget and the share of the budget allocated to or spent on inputs in/from The Netherlands or the recipient country. KAP projects scored “very good” in terms of project performance in relation to inputs/budget and “satisfactory” in terms of appropriateness of inputs/budget in relation to outputs/results. The third indicator, i.e. the share of the budget between The Netherlands and the recipient country is of course not relevant for KAP projects.

Thus, it can be seen that in terms of relevance MPP projects score on average “very good”, while “good” for efficiency and effectiveness. KAP projects score “very good” on relevance, “good” on efficiency and “satisfactory” on effectiveness. At the same time, three MPP and two KAP projects scored “poor” or “very poor” on effectiveness, two MPP projects scored “poor” on relevance and one MPP and one KAP project scored “poor” or “very poor” on efficiency.

The following are the main conclusions from the Evaluation Team in the Russian Federation, qualifying the above mentioned scores, in particular for the five projects in the sample that scored less than “good”. Once again, the authors would like to caution against interpreting the scores too rigidly as expressing absolute values about indicators and overall project performance, as explained in section 1.5 of chapter 1. While the vast majority of projects

seem to have gone well, or even very well, there are nonetheless a number of projects that had problems and issues worth highlighting in order to help further improving the performance of projects.

2.3.3 Effectiveness

2.3.3.1 Completeness and Quality of Project Documentation

The vast majority of documents required for the evaluation (i.e. project proposal, progress reports, final reports) was available at the Embassy in Moscow and the Consulate-General in St. Petersburg and made at the disposal of the Evaluation Team. In most cases, eventual gaps in information could be provided by the interviewed local implementing organizations. Only in two cases was information insufficient to be able to evaluate all indicators (see score tables), such as budgetary/expenditure breakdowns for the “Changing Societies” project RU011302.

In general, project proposals were complete and of good quality (the overall score is actually “very good” on both counts). A few proposals include logical frameworks in accordance with the Matra guidelines, but the presentation of objectives, goals, results and activities is usually clear and logical. Nevertheless, there is sometimes confusion about definitions, in particular between overall objective and project goals on the one hand and results and activities on the other. Also, as the logical framework format is seldom fully used, indicators and assumptions tend to be underdeveloped, making it difficult to measure progress and results during implementation. While this may seem a matter of form, a well-developed logical framework is an excellent tool to enhance the clarity and focus of a project, while forcing the designer to think rigorously through the entire chain of objectives, goals, results, activities and inputs, based on sound assumptions and measurable by clear indicators and means of verification. As the Evaluation did not concern the period after 2003 and has therefore studied very few proposals prepared after 2002, it may well be that proposals now contain logical frameworks as a standard, in accordance with the MPP Subsidy Guidelines issued in July 2002.

Also, while the target group is normally indicated, it is not always quantified or well-defined, including sometimes “the population”. For this it may be useful to make a distinction between direct beneficiaries (or recipients, i.e. those that directly receive training, funding or other forms of assistance from the project) and indirect beneficiaries (i.e. those that stand to benefit or are likely to become users of the results of the project). Thus, while the target group of Project RU000501 “Support of Development of Drug Treatment Options in the Russian Federation” includes narcologists, psychologists, social workers and drug users, the direct beneficiaries include the narcologists, psychologists and social workers receiving training under the project, as well as the local implementing organization and even the Dutch implementing organization (as a recipient of a substantial part of the funding). Indirect beneficiaries would include those narcologists, psychologists and social workers in treatment facilities not specifically covered by the project and drug users undergoing treatment. The project RU009501 “Federalism and Representation in Russia” is one of the few project in the sample where the target group was well-defined, though still not quantified.

This project is also one of the few with a clearly detailed description of management arrangements, including roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, the lack of which in other proposals made it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of project management.

Risk assessments too often get treated like a chore, without giving it the full attention they deserve. In most cases, the identified risks focus on the likelihood of key officials changing posts, rather than underlying institutional weaknesses that may prevent the project from affecting policy and achieving sustainability. Also, even when risks are mentioned, ways of overcoming these are often not.

Similarly, while the problem analysis is often very detailed, the sections on project feasibility and sustainability are often much less developed. This is a consequence of, or goes hand in hand with, the weak risk analyses in most proposals. Feasibility and sustainability are often based on assumptions that may not have been verified (or for which no evidence has been provided that they have).

Perhaps even more important, there is very little evidence from project proposals of real and tangible commitment from local partners and stakeholders to the projects beyond “letters of support”. While such letters are important to show general support for the proposed project, they rarely provide any specifications, let alone quantification, of concrete contributions (or for that matter provide a real guarantee for sustainability). Such contributions are also seldom mentioned in the text of the proposals beyond much generalized statements that the local implementing partner will provide human resources and/or make available office facilities to the project.

While it must be recognized that making cash-contributions to the project surpasses the possibilities of most local implementing partners, it should not be difficult to specify and quantify in-kind contributions, such as human resources, use of office equipment, etcetera. This would show a much more substantiated partnership between the Dutch and the local implementing organizations, whereby risks are shared to a larger extent and ownership of the local partners of results can be increased. In fact, the KAP programme works on this basis, whereby the Dutch Embassy provides a seed grant to match, or at least complement, resources already mobilized by the local applicant.

This is not to say that authorities and partner organizations do not make very important contributions to the projects in practice. In fact, in most of the projects that are part of the survey this is the case. However, such contributions should be clearly specified and quantified in the proposal as an important pre-condition for Matra to provide funding. As it is now, the overwhelming majority of the MPP projects do not include a counterpart contribution as part of the overall project budget and are therefore seemingly 100% funded by Matra.

The project budgets, in any case for the part covered by Matra-funding, are mostly very well prepared and detailed in accordance with the MPP Guidelines. Also, detailed implementation plans are generally provided.

Also, progress and final reports were found to be usually detailed and informative, but in many cases, during the course of implementation of the projects, the focus seems to shift more and more to the completion of activities and achievement of results, rather than the achievement of project’s goals and contribution to the overall objectives (i.e. impact).

2.3.3.2 Achievement of Project Goals and Results

In 17 out of the 23 projects, project goals and results seem to have been more or less fully achieved, whereas the achievements in four of these projects were even higher than expected. In only two projects were goals and results clearly not achieved. However, this assessment may be somewhat subjective, as indicators were normally available for tangible results (i.e. number of people trained, equipment provided, etc.), which could easily be verified, whereas much less direct evidence could be obtained for intangible results (such as increased capacity of trained people, awareness raised among citizens, etc.). Whereas some implementing organizations do make use of questionnaires to measure intangible results or carry out an evaluation as part of the project, this does not seem to be standard practice.

2.3.3.3 Impact, Effects and Sustainability of Projects

Thirteen projects seem to have made clear impact on the sector or the target group, whereas four projects showed little or no impact at all. In fourteen projects, sustainability of the results seems good, whereas five had no sustainable impact.

The success and sustainability of projects seems to be closely linked to the extent in which there has been extensive collaboration between NGOs and Civil Society Organizations involved in the implementation of the projects on the one hand, and local and regional authorities on the other. For example, RU009101 “Innovative Methods of Urban Governance” in Novosibirsk, completed in mid-2004, has been very successful in involving all stakeholders in an active participatory role and ensuring that a solid institutional framework is provided by the authorities, resulting in the necessary budgetary allocations for urban planning and management initiatives.

One of the respondents from the project, under which, among other things, a “Green Telephone” was introduced to enhance and streamline communication between citizens, NGOs, authorities and businesses on environmental issues, remarked that after an initial period of crisis, the project highly contributed to promoting trust and confidence between different groups of stakeholders, having brought participatory urban management to an entirely new qualitative level. In contrast, Project RU010101 “Lomonosov Coastal Spatial Plan” in St. Petersburg, which also addressed urban planning issues, has been able to mobilize local stakeholders effectively, but failed to involve regional authorities. As a result, the Plan has not been implemented because of lack of funding, resulting in citizens and local NGOs being disappointed with the outcome of the project.

In relation to this, it also helps if the project supports and is part of a long-term strategy, rather than a one-off single effort. In other words, if the issues the project tries to address are part of Government policy or at least link to clear priorities of citizens and authorities on which there is already a track-record of previous activities and efforts to address these, the effectiveness of the project and chances of success are greatly enhanced.

Similarly, support from authorities through budgetary resources after completion of the project is too often simply assumed instead of agreed upon. The example of the Lomonosov Coastal Spatial Plan, mentioned before, shows what happens if too little attention is given to sustainability aspects. Also, project RU006401 “Juvenile Law in Russia”, under which juvenile courts and boards for the protection of children’s rights have been set up in a number

of disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Moscow, has not been able to substantially expand its successful models to other areas after the completion of the project through lack of budgetary resources and a clear policy framework. In particular the plan developed under the Lomonosov project could have benefited from at least some initial support, for example in the form of seed-grants, to make a start with implementation of the plan and produce some tangible results around which further support could be rallied.

While strengthening civil society is and should be a main goal of Matra, it is ultimately the empowerment of citizens and civil society organizations to effectively interact with authorities and participate in planning and decision-making processes that may result in durable social transformation processes. This is particularly relevant in countries such as Russia with its long and deep-rooted tradition of centralized and top-down governance. While there may be issues and subjects where Government involvement and support cannot yet be expected and where initially strengthening the advocacy role of civil society organizations would be the most appropriate approach, support through KAP would seem to be the most appropriate instrument, eventually followed by larger-scale support through MPP once there are opportunities for institutionalization and progress on policy in relation to the sector.

In fact, such “graduation” of local NGOs and CSOs from KAP to MPP projects has taken place in several instances, but even then, albeit with very notable exceptions, projects have often been too ambitious in its assumptions of the extent in which they would be able to change policy and institutionalize results. As a consequence, even in the cases where Government departments have been directly involved in implementation, such institutions continue to battle for funding to continue and maintain the structures and activities introduced under the project after its completion. In this respect, the usual time frame of MPP projects, i.e. two to three years, is often too short to expect a decisive transformation towards institutionalization of results to take place.

Matra has responded to this by funding one or even two follow-up projects in at least ten cases in Russia, thereby ensuring a more long-term and structural involvement. But even this is no panacea for success on the policy and institutional front, as the experience of the “Lomonosov Coastal Spatial Plan” and the “Juvenile Law in Russia” projects show. Both projects were building on earlier Matra-funded initiatives, yet were not able to sufficiently strengthen the policy and institutional framework to such an extent that further plans could be implemented and experiences disseminated without further support.

A possible approach to overcome such problems could be to accept from the onset that certain projects, in particular those with strong policy components, necessarily will take several phases in order to achieve sustainable results and invite the Dutch implementing organization to prepare a realistic strategy and time-frame for the proposed interventions, which can then be funded by Matra in clearly benchmarked phases, whereby the funding of each subsequent phase is contingent on the successful completion of the previous one. This would also avoid the occurrence of sometimes extensive time-gaps between the completion of one project and the start of the next phase. This is not to say that such considerations are not already part of Matra’s decision-making process, but it could perhaps become more part of the routine planning of projects and programmes where appropriate.

2.3.3.4 Replicability of Projects

While eleven projects were considered to have good potential for replication elsewhere, it was also noted that dissemination and expansion of successful project results to other parts of Russia was not really taking place. At least the evaluators could not find evidence of this. While such dissemination and expansion is obviously an enormous challenge in a country as huge and populated as the Russian Federation, the lack of doing so very much touches upon the overall relevance of Matra-support in Russia. To what extent is the Matra programme in Russia just a “drop in the ocean” or is it really able to trigger social transformation processes that ultimately have an impact on Russian society at large? In strictly financial terms, Matra’s support surely pales in significance to the amount of resources at the disposal of the state. It should therefore be measured in terms of supporting the overall process of social transformation continuously taking place in the country.

While this transformation sometimes takes unexpected or even undesirable turns from a Western point of view, the fact is that Russia has changed dramatically over the past 15 years even though, and this should not come as a surprise, a certain degree of continuation can be discerned in its style of governance and in its outlook on the rest of the world and its position therein. For Matra support to be successful in Russia, the issue of dissemination and expansion of successful projects is therefore of crucial importance. In this respect, it has been noted that many projects address the same themes, but are not aware about each other’s existence even though they could obviously benefit from each other’s experiences and practices. The creation of networks, not just between Dutch and Russian organizations, but also among Russian organizations and projects with similar goals and objectives located in different parts of the country, is essential for ensuring wider dissemination and expansion of successful project results and creating a platform for change that promotes a critical mass for effective responses at the policy and institutional level, thereby increasing the impact of Matra-support on society at large.

2.3.4 Relevance

Taking into account what was said in the preceding paragraph, practically all projects were found to be quite relevant in terms of Matra’s overall objectives of promoting social transformation and the country itself. Similarly, local stakeholders generally considered the projects to be relevant as well in terms of addressing the needs and priorities, even in cases where the results were perhaps disappointing.

In terms of continuation of the partnership between Dutch and local organizations, six out of seventeen reported continuing intensive relations, including through participation in follow-up projects, whereas nine said there were sporadic contacts through telephone, e-mail, newsletters or the occasional seminars. Only in two cases were there no contacts at all (in one case, because the local implementing organization no longer exists).

Given the fact that coupling Dutch and local partners is an important element of Matra’s overall strategy, this result is quite good, taking into account that two organizations from different countries are unlikely to maintain intensive relations for long unless it is within the framework of a joint project. At least the nine organizations that reported sporadic contact are potentially still part of a network through the Dutch organization.

2.3.5 Efficiency

In terms of the appropriateness of budget/inputs in relation to results/outputs, the evaluators did not notice any obvious excessive expenditure (either as per the budget or de facto) on certain budget lines. Having said this, a truly detailed analysis of budget versus expenditures has not been carried out, as this would be more appropriate for an audit. Rather, it has been analyzed to what extent the projects have been able to deliver the budget in combination with the achievement of results. Nine out of seventeen MPP projects (for one, no information was available) have delivery rates of well over 90% of budget, which is very good, while only two projects had delivery rates below 80%, which is poor, as it means that original budgets estimations were either too high or that delivery of results was weaker than expected.

Whether more or better results could have been achieved with the same level of inputs or whether the same results could have been achieved with fewer inputs is to a certain extent related to how the project has performed overall. As said before, no obvious excessive expenditures were noticed, so if the project achieved its goals and results and delivery of the budget was more than 90%, it can be assumed that the level of inputs was basically OK in relation to the results achieved. Conversely, if results were not achieved or only partly, one could argue that more could have been achieved with the resources available.

Against this measure, in about 11 of 22 projects, the balance was considered about right, whereas in 10 further projects it was considered that either somewhat more could have been achieved with the same level of inputs (in most cases) or that the results could have been achieved with somewhat fewer inputs. In only one case (project RU003902 “Criminal Investigation and Prosecution: The European Perspective”, it was felt that much more could have been achieved. Not only did the project have a delivery rate of only 73%, but the local implementing partner did not want to discuss the project at all, meaning that it cannot have had much of an impact.

Regarding the share of budget/expenditures that went to pay for inputs from or in The Netherlands versus those from or in the recipient country, it can be seen that in 11 out of 17 MPP projects (this measure is not relevant for KAP projects), expenditures on inputs from or in the recipient country were at least 35%, whereas in 6 cases it was lower, although never below 20%. These figures have to be interpreted with care as from the budgets and final financial reports it is not always clear in which category certain expenditure belongs. Therefore, the real share of inputs from or in the recipient country can de facto be higher. Also, as mentioned earlier, the habit of not clearly specifying and quantifying local contributions to the project and reflecting these in the overall budget further underestimates the local share in the project’s inputs.

Be as it may, the purpose of this measure is to provide an indication of the extent to which the project has been driven by Dutch or local inputs. As most projects have a large capacity building component whereby particular and/or specialized skills and experiences from The Netherlands are transferred to the recipient country, which is one of Matra’s goals, it is obvious that inputs in terms of human resources from The Netherlands are necessarily high. As the cost of human resources in The Netherlands is much higher than in Russia, it is to be expected that the cost of human resources from The Netherlands in relation to the overall budget will often be very high. Nevertheless, it can be argued that projects that have achieved their goals and objectives, but where at the same time the share of Dutch experts and inputs in

relation to local inputs (for example for locally conducted trainings, awareness campaigns, engagement of local consultants) is lower, are generally more cost-effective than vice versa.

In addition to cost-effectiveness, there are of course also other arguments in favour of trying to maximize the use of inputs from and/or in the recipient country. For example, engaging local consultants to work together with Dutch consultants on capacity building projects could facilitate the adaptation of Dutch practices to the local context, produce a mutually beneficial cross-fertilization of knowledge between experts from both countries, and ultimately contribute to promoting local “ownership” of the project. Similarly, procuring equipment locally rather than in The Netherlands is in almost all cases preferable.

A project that seemed to stand out in terms of the three indicators of efficiency included RU006801 “Increasing NGO Influence on Society through Regional Networks”, including the fact that almost 60% of project resources were spent in or on local inputs.

From the interviews with local stakeholders, some additional interesting issues in relation to project efficiency emerged, which would further argue for aiming at maximizing local involvement and the use of local inputs in projects:

Local implementing partners often see themselves as junior partners in the project in relation to the Dutch partner. They are rarely aware of budget details other than the part that is being disbursed locally. Also, many reported not having copies of the approved proposals, progress reports and final reports. Although most reported very good collaboration with the Dutch organization and gratitude for the support provided, some believe that more transparency in matters of finance, reporting and decision-making could have enhanced the levels of trust and partnership between the two organizations.

Also, some of them felt that the Dutch partner had underestimated the already existing capacity on the ground or were insufficiently aware of or sensitive to the specific Russian context and requirements, citing that more involvement of the local partner in the development of and decision-making in the project could have led to better results. Trainings provided were sometimes too generalist and the Dutch organization would keep too much control over activities, making the local partner feel more like a traditional recipient than a contributing partner who ultimately would take ownership of the results. Some were also disappointed with the overall level and expertise of the Dutch organization, putting into question the value-added of having the Dutch organization involved. However, in the vast majority of cases, local stakeholders were generally very satisfied with the collaboration.

In the current set-up of the MPP component of Matra, it is the Dutch organization that is the direct recipient of funding and therefore automatically assumes the overall managerial lead in a project. However, sometimes it appears that local organizations first and foremost need specialized technical expertise to add innovative methodologies and technologies to their existing capacity. It is exactly this aspect that is most valued by all local organizations involved with the projects in the sample. In the case of Matra, where the overall management of the programme is largely centralized at the Ministry in The Hague and where Embassies do not have sufficient staff and technical capacity in place for a more decentralized execution, working through experienced and committed Dutch organizations is probably the most effective and practical modality, considering the very high success rate of projects.

Obviously, this approach works best when the Dutch organization possesses the in-house specialized technical expertise and dedication to the subject matter and has a good network and long-standing relationship with local organizations in the field. Luckily, there are many good examples of that. On the other hand, care should be given to avoid “outsourcing” the Matra programme to Dutch organizations that provide excellent financial and project management, but do not have the specialized technical capacity in-house or in their immediate networks to undertake the project. In that case, the value-added becomes doubtful and, given the high cost of Dutch human resources, it might ultimately be more cost-effective to strengthen project management capacity at the Embassies.

While the Evaluation Team in Russia would definitely support the continuing involvement of specialized Dutch organizations in executing projects, it also recognizes the fact that the amount of organizations possessing the necessary expertise, dedication and familiarity with Russia is limited. At the same time, the programme is “demand-driven” in that the projects are initiated by Dutch applicants, which limits the extent to which Matra can ensure an equitable balance of support to cover all themes.

In relation to this, not surprisingly, the Evaluation Team has the impression that projects in which on the one hand the Dutch organizations did not only possess high-level and relevant technical expertise, but also the vocation and drive to make positive changes, and where on the other hand the local organizations and people involved in the implementation of the project were themselves stakeholders with a clear interest and incentive to address the problem at hand, were among the most successful.

3. Country Evaluation Report - Romania

3.1 Country Background - Romania⁶

3.1.1 The Development Situation in Romania

In more than a decade of transition Romania has made significant progress towards creating an economic system that combines efficiency and sustained growth with equity and a system of governance based on pluralist democracy. Nevertheless, the Romanian experience confirms once more that making a transition from a centrally planned governance and economic system to a democratic, market oriented model, is an arduous process. This experience also shows that establishing market and legal and institutional mechanisms where they are absent, and ensuring that poor people have free and fair access, are indeed difficult tasks. The persistence of development challenges, such as poverty, the quality of governance and the public administration reform, is a clear expression of this hardship. To only take the 2002 poverty level, this indicator, although slightly reduced from previous years, still stands very high at 29%.



In 2003 Romania finds itself at a decisive moment, both in terms of opportunities and new challenges, as the target date for the accession of Romania to the EU, the year 2007, is only three years away. The main challenge for Romania today is accelerating its preparation for accession, while promoting synergies between economic growth, good governance and policies to improve people's lives. This approach would not only have an intrinsic value for people, but would also address the objectives of all international Conventions and Charters.

The governance basis to fight poverty implies that public action and institutions must provide the enabling environment for the expansion of development opportunities. That is, for the poorest and most vulnerable members of society, poverty and insecurity are linked in a vicious circle. Breaking that cycle requires measures to translate economic growth into development, through access to reliable employment, education and social services. But it also requires measures to further promote personal security by offering protection from crime and violence, respect for human rights and equitable access to justice.

⁶ The information was compiled mainly from the 2nd United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Romania (2005-2009), prepared by the United Nations Country Team in Romania, December 2003.

3.1.2 Poverty

Poverty in Romania still affects approximately one third of the population and is more acute in the north-eastern region. The hardest hit are the unemployed, farmers and large families. Long-term unemployment rates decreased in the last two years. Following the adoption of a National Anti-Poverty Strategy, poverty alleviation efforts in Romania have progressed, although slowly. Moreover, the private sector has not fully benefited yet from economic growth and there are still structural barriers preventing the evolution of SMEs, including low foreign direct investment and the absence of support networks.

3.1.3 Population/Demography

Romania has lost nearly one million inhabitants since the 1992 census (due to high mortality, low fertility and external migration). In 2002 the Total Fertility Rate was 1.2 per woman, well below replacement levels, creating potential negative consequences and an imbalance in the population structure, including concerns and costs related to the aging of the population. The Government has begun to address these challenges, but a coherent demographic policy is yet lacking.

3.1.4 Good Governance, Rule of Law and Justice

Romania has achieved a level of stability in institutions guaranteeing democracy that meets the political criteria for EU accession. In spite of this achievement, the governance experience of Romania reflects a common trend of many transition countries; namely the challenge of building democratic institutions, while at the same time managing the high social costs associated with programmes at reforming the economy. The integrity of functioning institutions, which are able to effectively oversee the enforcement of the law and the practical adherence to protection principles for individual citizens' rights, is critical for guaranteeing the rule of law, human rights and personal security. The main goal is to strengthen institutions of governance, to raise efficiency in public action, implement the anti-corruption legislative package and measures, further improve legal and administrative procedures and promote transparent and participatory decision-making processes.

3.1.5 Public Administration

There is a continued need to strengthen the administrative capacity to design, implement, monitor and evaluate policies. Bureaucratic procedures continue to affect citizens and the business community, while the emergence of a more effective public administration is hampered by the persistence of outdated recruitment and career management practices, and the slow development of a performance and results oriented culture. Recent legislative and institutional measures were adopted for the reform of the public administration. The implementation of this reform package is crucial for the effective capacity of the administration to respond to the needs of citizens and the requirements of EU membership.

3.1.6 Health

The complex process of implementing health reform has generated uncertainty among the public and medical community. In addition, there is an alarming resurgence of infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, which had been very much under control. Similarly, Romania still has some of the highest rates in the region in maternal and child mortality and HIV/AIDS in children. In many cases, crucial steps are being planned and put in practice to protect, prevent and make the population aware, as well as to get the necessary support for these activities from all key players, including religious and political leaders. The overall dynamic of the transition process, including the economic contraction, has put great pressure on the health sector. Thus, the critical issue is to continue to implement reforms, while at the same time ensuring efficiency and sustainability, institutional capacity to implement reform, and its capacity to monitor key demographic indicators, incidence of infectious diseases and the related rising threat of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse.

3.1.7 Education

The overall analysis of education in Romania shows that significant gains have been made, as the Government develops new legislation and addresses the issues of equal opportunity and educational curricula for minority groups, especially Roma. However, there is a decrease in the family resources available for early and pre-school education. This is a consequence of the socio-economic decline recorded during the transition. Certain social sectors, such as poor and isolated rural communities, families with a large number of children and Roma families are still disadvantaged with limited access to quality education. Given the dimensions of the transition process, people are beginning to re-evaluate their educational needs to face a rapidly changing world that demands new skills. Furthermore, the educational system needs to realign itself to meet the needs of a market economy. There is a real need for the rehabilitation of schools (buildings, equipment and learning materials). Even more importantly are measures to improve the quality of education, the development of institutions and capacities to manage and operate the educational system.

3.1.8 Child Protection

The process of child protection reform initiated in 1997 has accelerated since the year 2000. Key accomplishments include a 50% reduction in the number of children living in residential institutions, the development of broader range of services to children and families and interventions that are based more on the best interest of the child. The main goal is to decrease the threat of violence and reduce vulnerability for all children groups at risk. The critical issue is not only to continue implementing child protection reform, but also the broad anti-poverty strategy that tackles the underlying causes for child abuse and abandonment.

3.1.9 Environment Sustainability

Several decades of industrial development have left Romania with a legacy of environmental problems. Taking into account the aspirations of joining the EU in 2007, Environmental management is now a priority for the Romanian Government. The Government faces a number of development challenges in the environment sector, for example: ensuring a reliable

and clean water supply for both domestic and commercial uses throughout the country; controlling air pollution, including greenhouse gas emissions; managing the sustainability the country's natural resources and conserving biodiversity; and providing a reliable supply of energy for both domestic and commercial uses, while promoting energy conservation.

3.1.10 Socio-economic data

Human Development Index (rank)	0.786 / rank 69 out of 177 countries
Total Population	21,794,793 (2002 Census)
Annual Population Growth	-2.5 (per 1000 inhabitants, in 2003)
Life Expectancy at Birth	71 years - 67 for men and 75 for women
% of Population under 15 years	3,779,298, i.e. 17.34% (on 01/07/2002)
% of Population 65 years and older	3,061,021, i.e. 14.04% (on 01/07/2002)
School enrolment	4,472,493, i.e. 20.52% (enrolled in any type of education)
Adult Literacy Rate	97.6% (in 2002)
Inflation Rate	10% (in 2004)
Health Expenditure per capita	3,542 million ROL (in 2003)
Number of Physicians	19.6 per 10.000 people
HIV prevalence	2,467 cases (in 2003)
Tuberculosis prevalence	25,245 cases (in 2003)
Under 5 Mortality Rate	4,397 (on 01/07/2002)
Public expenditure on education	3.9% of GDP (in 2003)
Public expenditure on health	3.9% of GDP (in 2003)
Net FDI Inflows as % of GDP	3.83% (in 2003; est. end 2004 around 4 bn Euro, i.e. 8%)
Unemployment rate	5.5% (May 2005); 7.6% (2004) Nat. Agency Employment
Poverty rate	Relative: 25.1%, Severe: 8.8% (end 2003; WB/CASPIS)
Total expenditure for military	1.53% of GDP (2003)
Number of women in Parliament	45 (out of 484 seats in both chambers)
Total internal public debt	6.04% of GDP (2003; source: National Bank of Romania)
Total external public debt	21.15% of GDP (2003; source: Ministry of Public Finance)
Number of users of internet services	4,105,481 (18.84%, May 2005; source: NetBridge)
Number of telephone lines	4,330,000 (rough figure, 2003)
Number of cellular subscribers	7,065,000 (rough figure, 2003)

3.2 Selection of Projects for Evaluation - Romania

3.2.1 Matra Projects Programme (MPP)

Since 1995, when the Matra Projects Programme started in Romania, a total of 62 projects have been initiated with a total budget of € 19,963,020. The average budget per project is € 321,984, which is 46% of the maximum awardable amount of € 700,000. Budgets range from € 17,448 for the smallest to € 932,271 for the largest. There were two projects that exceeded the maximum of € 700,000, but as these were initiated in 1996 and 1997, they will not be part of the sample.

If we compare amounts committed for new projects in each year, as is done in the following table, it can be seen that the average budget per project has remained relatively constant over the years, but that there is a substantial increase in average size starting from 2002. Although the number of projects for 2003 and 2004 is too low to draw firm conclusions on this, the trend is consistent with what we see in the other countries.

In terms of new projects approved in each year, the average is between 6 and 7 per year, but this figure hides rather large variations. In 1996, 1997 and 2000 there were 10, 13 and 9 new projects respectively, while only 4 new projects were approved in 1998, 3 in 2003 and 2 in 2004.

While 1995-1996 and 1997 saw the highest total amounts of commitments for new projects, due to the relatively large number of projects, if we would combine the amounts committed for the 12 projects from 2002-2004, the amount would exceed 5 million euros, reflecting the larger average size of the projects in comparison with the earlier years.

Table 3.1: Number of MPP projects, total and average budgets per year for Romania

Period	No.	Total Budget (€)	%	Average Budget (€)
1995-1996	11	3,244,977	16.3	294,998
1997	13	4,055,567	20.3	311,967
1998	4	1,119,296	5.6	279,824
1999	6	2,092,583	10.5	348,764
2000	9	2,624,027	13.1	291,559
2001	7	1,781,512	8.9	254,502
2002	7	2,844,436	14.2	406,348
2003	3	1,762,990	8.8	587,663
2004	2	437,632	2.2	218,816
1994-2005	62	19,963,020	99.9	321,984

If we look at the distribution of projects per Matra theme over the years (see the next table), we see that in Romania almost one third are categorized as addressing health and welfare issues. Another one third deals with Environment, Human Rights/Minorities and Public Administration and the remainder addresses Information/Media, Labour/Social Policy, Law/Justice, Education and Culture.

However, one must be careful in drawing conclusions from this as many projects in practice combine several themes. For example, some Welfare projects deal with street children, which is an area with obvious human rights implications.

Table 3.2: MPP projects in Romania per Matra theme

Theme \ Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total	%
Welfare		2	1	1	2	2		1	1		10	16.1
Health		2	1			1	4	1			9	14.5
Environment			4			2	1	1			8	12.9
Human Rights/Minorities	1	4		1		1					7	11.3
Public Administration		1	1			1	1		1	2	7	11.3
Information/Media			2	1	1	1	1				6	9.7
Labour/Social Policy		1	1	1				2			5	8.1
Law/Justice			1		2	1			1		5	8.1
Education			1		1			2			4	6.5
Culture			1								1	1.6
Total	1	10	13	4	6	9	7	7	3	2	62	

It is difficult to detect significant trends in changing emphasis on certain themes over the years, although projects categorized as Human Rights/Minorities seem to have been more prominent in the earlier years, while projects addressing Public Administration show the reverse trend.

The present evaluation covers the period 1999 – 2003 and focuses mainly on completed projects (meaning in practice that none of the projects approved in 2003 are included in the sample, but projects approved in 1998 were). Thirty-three projects (53.2%) fall into this category, representing a total budget of € 10,461,854 (52.4% of the total) and an average budget of € 317,026 per project. Their distribution per theme is as follows:

Table 3.3: Completed MPP projects in 1999-2003 in Romania per Matra theme

Theme	No. of Projects
Health	6
Welfare	6
Environment	4
Information/Media	4
Law/Justice	3
Labour/Social Policy	3
Education	3
Human Rights/Minorities	2
Public Administration	2
Total:	33

As can be seen, the distribution per theme is not radically different from the one presented in the previous table for the whole period from 1994 to 2004. Health, Welfare and Environment

are still the most prevalent themes, though Human Rights/Minorities and Public Administration seem slightly underrepresented.

As previously agreed between Matra and UNDP, from these 33 projects, 17 have been selected to be included in the evaluation in accordance with the above thematic and geographical distribution (see the table at the end of this section). Also, to the extent possible, an equitable distribution over the individual years of the period under evaluation has been taken into account. The sample comprises half of all completed projects initiated during the period 1999-2003 and 27.4% of all MPP projects since 1995. Therefore, the sample can be considered representative of MPP projects over the period 1999-2003 as well as over the entire lifespan of the MPP programme in Romania.

3.2.2 Regional MPP Projects and Small Embassy Projects (KAP)

While the present evaluation mainly concerns the Matra Projects Programme, it was felt that the inclusion of some projects from the other Matra sub-programmes that are carried out in the countries themselves with a key role for local partners, i.e. the Regional Matra Projects Programme and the Small Embassy Projects Programme, would add value to the overall evaluation. It was therefore decided to include one Regional MPP project with activities in Romania and five KAP projects to the sample.

Given the fact that since 1994, a total of 22 Regional MPP projects have had part of their activities in Romania and that between 1999 and 2003 there were 103 KAP projects carried out by the Embassy in Bucharest, it is of course not possible from the limited sample to draw any general conclusions about the Regional MPP and the KAP programmes. On the other hand, the regional MPP project in the sample can be considered as part of the overall Matra Projects Programme. KAP projects, however, are very different in size, scope and implementation arrangements from MPP projects, but it is hoped that nevertheless some useful comparisons can be drawn between the two types of projects. In fact, the KAP programme would merit a separate evaluation, which, however, due to time constraints, was not feasible within the present scope of the Matra Projects Programme evaluation.

From the Regional MPP projects, it was decided to add the Environment project “Supporting the Cooperative Organization of Rational Energy Use in Bulgaria and Romania” as Environment was somewhat underrepresented in the sample.

Concerning the KAP projects, the table on the next page provides an overview per year and per theme of the 103 projects carried out by the Embassy in Bucharest.

Here, it can be seen that projects directly addressing Public Administration (Good Governance) and Human Rights & Minorities issues stand out. Public Administration projects alone already represent 25% of all KAP projects and Human Rights / Minorities projects another one fifth. Projects in Health/Welfare and Environment are also prominent and together these four themes represent almost three quarters of all KAP projects in Romania. However, over the years, the portfolio got increasingly more diversified. In 1999, there were only five themes represented in the KAP programme, but by 2003 this had doubled to ten. Regarding the thematic distribution, the same caution must be applied in interpreting these data as with the MPP projects, namely that many projects combine more than one theme. For example, many projects have human rights components. Others may strengthen NGOs, while

those categorized as NGO Strengthening projects may address other themes. Also, a number of projects are strongly gender-related. However, as gender is typically a cross-cutting theme, these projects have for the purpose of this evaluation not been treated as a separate category.

Table 3.4: KAP Projects in Romania per Matra theme

Theme / Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total	%
Public Administration	4	7	4	6	5	26	25.2
Human Rights/Minorities	2	4	1	4	8	19	18.4
Health/Welfare	3	2	7	3	1	16	15.5
Environment	2	2	3	2	5	14	13.6
NGO Strengthening	2		2	1	2	7	6.8
Education		1	1	3	2	7	6.8
Information/Media			2	2	1	5	4.9
Law/Justice			3	1		4	3.9
Labour/Social Policy					2	2	1.9
Culture				1	1	2	1.9
Housing					1	1	1.0
Total	13	16	23	23	28	103	
Total %	12.6	15.5	22.3	22.3	27.2		
Total Budget	US\$ 65,442	US\$ 77,604	No data	US\$ 86,209	€ 197,702		
Average budget per project	US\$ 5,034	US\$ 4,850	No data	US\$ 3,748	€ 7,071		

The distribution of projects over the years shows that the number of KAP projects in Romania has been steadily increasing, from only 13 in 1999 to 28 in 2003. In terms of budgets, the data for Romania are difficult to compare: project budgets for 1999-2002 were stated in US dollars in the information provided by the Embassy, while those for 2003 were stated in euros. Also, for 2001 the data were incomplete on budgets. Given the strongly fluctuating exchange rates between US dollars and euros over the years, it is not possible to recalculate the dollar amounts to euros (which would allow comparisons with the other countries) without knowing the exchange rates at the time of approval of each project. This would be a very time-consuming task and not necessary given the scope of this evaluation.

Still, it can be seen from the table that while the average number of new projects has been steadily increasing over the years, the average budgets per project has actually been falling between 1999 and 2002. As a result, although the total amount of resources committed to KAP projects has been increasing between 1999 and 2002, the increase is much less pronounced than in the number of projects. However, in 2003, for which data are available in euros, the average budget per project doubled in comparison with the previous year, resulting, in combination with a larger number of approved projects, in a total commitment of resources that was more than twice that of 2002.

In terms of Geographical location, data are unfortunately also incomplete, making it impossible to analyze how many projects are primarily based in Bucharest and how many in other cities and towns.

As only 5 projects could be selected for the purpose of this particular evaluation, it is not possible to ensure that these provide a proper representation of the KAP programme as a whole. Nevertheless, in selecting the projects, the evaluation team has tried to take thematic

and geographical distribution somewhat into account. Thus, from each year one project has been selected, representing the main themes of Public Administration, Human Rights/Minorities, Health/Welfare and Environment. In terms of geographical distribution, 26% of the projects are located in Bucharest, 30% in Bucharest and several other towns of Romania, 26% in other towns of Romania and 17% country-wide.

3.2.3 List of Selected MPP and KAP Projects

Based on the above, the final list of the selected MPP and KAP projects included in the evaluation sample is as follows:

Table 3.5: Selected MPP and KAP Projects – Romania

Project Code	Start Year	Project Title	Theme	Location
Matra Projects Programme				
RO010801	1999	Improving transparency of public communication in Romania	Information/Media	Bucharest, Timisoara
RO010501	1999	Strengthening training capacity of national institute of magistrates	Law/Justice	Bucharest
RO006902	1999	Street Children of Romania	Welfare	Bucharest
RO008701	1999	Integration of Handicapped “Living Centre Dina”	Welfare	Timisoara
RO013301	2000	Supporting participative democracy	Publ. Administration	Country-wide
RO010902	2000	Introducing probation in Bucharest	Law/Justice	Bucharest
RO012501	2000	Equal Opportunities for Roma Children	HR/Minorities	Country-wide
RO012701	2000	Rural development in Romania	Environment	Tirgu Mures, Oradea, Cluj-Napoca, Alba Iulia
RO013102	2001	Local public management enhancement	Publ. Administration	Bucharest, Vatra Dornei, Alba Iulia, Tulcea
RO014001	2001	Support programme Romanian Health Insurance Houses	Health	Bucharest
RO015201	2001	Improving quality in family medicine	Health	Country-wide
RO010303	2001	Palliative Care in Romania	Health	Bucharest, Craiova, Baia Mare, Piatra Neamt
RO017701	2002	History and Citizens’ Education	Education	Country-wide
RO015702	2002	Corporate social responsibility / marginalized groups	Welfare	Bucharest, Timisoara, Iasi
RO017901	2002	Sustainable Mine Closure	Labour/Social policy	Baia-Borsa
RO016301	2002	Competence building of health professionals in addiction	Health	Bucharest
RO5875	2003	Good Start – training on early intervention on children at risk	Welfare	Timisoara
Regional Matra Projects Programme				
QE016901	2000	Supporting Cooperative Organization of Rational Energy Use, Bulgaria/Romania	Environment	Bucharest
Matra Small Embassy Projects (KAP) Programme				
99/02	1999	Eco Dialogue	Environment	Bistrita
00/14	2000	Young People and Electoral Process	Publ. Administration	Constanta
01/17	2001	Estuary	Environment	Cluj, Botosani, Prahova, Constanta, Bucharest
02/20	2002	Strengthening Local Councils of Children	Welfare	Bucharest a.o.
03/25	2003	Raising Public Awareness on Ethnic Minority Issues	Human Rights/Minorities	Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca

3.3 Evaluation Findings - Romania

3.3.1 Score Table Romania Sample

The evaluation of individual projects in Romania was carried out during six weeks (from late May until early July) by a team of three evaluators, supported by an International Evaluation Expert, through desk review of project documentation obtained from the Embassy, visits to project sites and interviews with local stakeholders.

The table on the next page shows the scores for the projects in the Romania sample. An overview and explanations of score values for each indicator as well as general methodological observations regarding the validity of the score system have been provided in Chapter 1 “Introduction”, Section 1.5 “Research Method”.

Table 3.6: Detailed Scores for Projects in the Sample for Romania

Project	Type	Comple ted / On -going	Effectiveness							Relevance				Efficiency				Total average score	Remarks
			Docs complete	Quality of docs	Goals/ Results	Impact/ Effects	Sustain- ability	Replica- ble	Average score	Matra/ country	Local actors	Relation NL-local	Average score	Budget/ outputs	More/ less	Nl input vs local	Average score		
RO010801	MPP	C	3	2	1	2	1	1	1.5	4	4	1	2.5	2	1	2	1.7	1.8	
RO010501	MPP	C	5	5	4	4	5	5	4.6	4	5	5	4.8	5	5	1	3.7	4.4	
RO006902	MPP	C	3	4	3	3	1	1	2.3	5	4	1	2.8	3	3	4	3.3	2.7	
RO008701	MPP	C	5	5	4	4	3	3	3.8	5	4	3	3.8	4	4	2	3.3	3.7	
RO013301	MPP	C	3	3	3	4	3	3	3.2	4	4	5	4.5	3	5	2	3.3	3.6	
RO010902	MPP	C	5	4	2	4	3	3	3.3	4	4	3	3.5	3	3	4	3.3	3.4	
RO012501	MPP	C	5	5	5	5	5	4	4.8	5	5	3	4.0	5	4	4	4.3	4.5	
RO012701	MPP	C	5	4	4	4	4	5	4.3	5	5	5	5.0	4	3	5	4.0	4.4	
RO013102	MPP	C	5	5	4	4	4	5	4.4	5	5	4	4.5	5	4	5	4.7	4.5	
RO014001	MPP	C	5	5	4	5	4	5	4.6	5	5	5	5.0	5	5	5	5.0	4.8	
RO015201	MPP	C	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.8	5	5	5	5.0	5	5	5	5.0	4.9	
RO010303	MPP	C	5	4	3	3	3	3	3.3	5	5	1	3.0	4	3	4	3.7	3.3	
RO017701	MPP	O	5	5	4	-	5	4	4.5	5	5	-	5.0	4	-	2	3.0	4.3	ongoing
RO015702	MPP	C	5	4	4	4	3	3	3.7	5	4	3	3.8	4	4	5	4.3	3.9	
RO017901	MPP	C	5	4	4	4	4	4	4.1	5	5	4	4.5	4	4	5	4.3	4.3	
RO016301	MPP	C	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.8	5	5	5	5.0	5	4	4	4.3	4.7	
RO5875	MPP	O	5	5	4	-	3	3	3.8	5	4	-	4.5	4	-	2	3.0	3.8	ongoing
QE016901	REG	O	5	5	4	4	3	5	4.2	5	5	3	4.0	5	5	3	4.3	4.3	
Averages			4.7	4.4	3.7	4.0	3.2	3.7	3.9	4.8	4.6	3.5	4.2	4.1	3.9	3.5	3.8	4.0	
1999/02	KAP	C	5	4	3	3	2	3	3.1	5	4	-	4.5	3	3	-	3.0	3.4	
2000/14	KAP	C	5	4	5	4	3	3	3.9	5	4	-	4.5	5	4	-	4.5	4.2	
2001/17	KAP	C	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.0	5	5	-	5.0	5	5	-	5.0	5.0	
2002/20	KAP	C	5	4	4	4	1	5	3.7	3	3	-	3.0	3	3	-	3.0	3.4	
2003/25	KAP	C	5	5	5	4	3	3	4.2	5	4	-	4.5	5	5	-	5.0	4.5	
Averages			5.0	4.4	4.4	4.0	2.8	3.8	3.9	4.6	4.0	-	4.3	4.2	4.0	-	4.1	4.1	

Notes: Docs complete and Quality of docs have a weight of 0.5 each in the average score for “effectiveness”, against weights of 1.0 for the other indicators. For “Relevance”, Matra/country and Local actors have weights of 0.5, while Relation NL-local has 1.0 (except for KAP projects). For “efficiency”, weights for all three indicators are the same (except for KAP projects, where only two indicators are relevant). In the Total Average Score, the average score for “effectiveness has a weight of 50% and those of the other two criteria 25%.

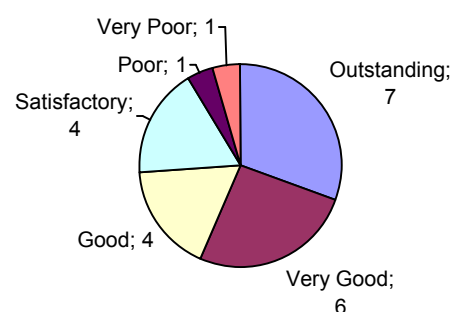
Table 3.7: Summary Scores for Projects in the Sample for Romania

Average Score	Overall		Effectiveness		Relevance		Efficiency	
	# of projects		# of projects		# of projects		# of projects	
0.0 – 1.9: Very Poor	1	2	1	2	0	2	1	1
2.0 – 2.9: Poor	1		1		2			
3.0 – 3.4: Satisfactory	4	8	4	9	2	5	8	10
3.5 – 3.9: Good	4		5		3		2	
4.0 – 4.4: Very Good	6	13	5	12	2	16	6	12
4.5 – 5.0: Outstanding	7		7		14		6	

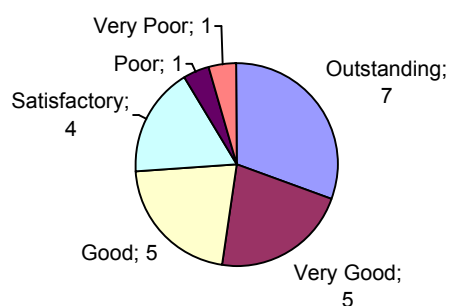
3.3.2 Overall Project Assessments

The score table on the previous page and diagram 1 to the right show that the average MPP and KAP project in Romania was rated “very good”. Actually, more than half of the projects (MPP and KAP combined) were considered “very good” or “outstanding”, a bit over one third “satisfactory” or “good”, while only two projects were qualified as “poor” or “very poor”. This implies an overall success rate (defined as at least having a “satisfactory” score) of 91%, which is very high. At the same time, the over a quarter of projects that were less than “good” show a number of weaknesses that will be further discussed below.

Graph 3.1 Overall Project Performance Romania



Graph 3.2 Project Effectiveness Romania

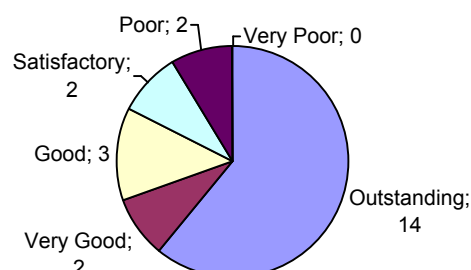


The overall average score has been compiled from twelve different indicators reflecting effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the projects. There are of course differences between the average scores per indicator from which a number of patterns can be discerned. Thus, looking at the six indicators of effectiveness it can be seen that MPP projects score on average “outstanding” on completeness of project documentation, “very good” on quality of project documentation and impact/effects, “good” in terms of achieving goals and result, as well as replicability, and “satisfactory” on sustainability. For KAP projects, the completeness of project documentation was also rated “outstanding”, quality of documentation, achievement of goals and results, as well as impact/effects were all considered “very good”, replicability was “good”, but sustainability was rated “poor”.

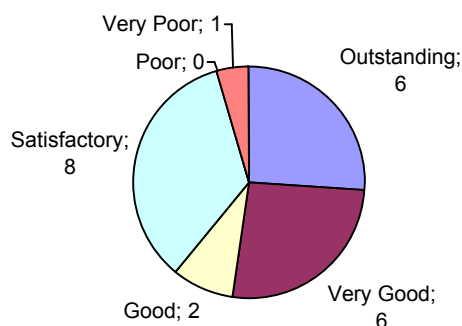
As concerns project relevance, MPP projects scored “outstanding” on relevance of project in relation to Matra and Country goals and strategies and relevance in the eyes of local stakeholders and “good” in terms of the continuation of the relation of the Dutch and the local partner after completion of the project. KAP projects scored “outstanding” on Matra and country relevance and “very good” on relevance in the eyes of local stakeholders. The third indicator is not applicable in the case of KAP projects.

Regarding project efficiency, MPP projects on average scored “very good” on appropriateness of inputs/budget in relation to outputs/results and “good” on project performance in relation

Graph 3.3 Project Relevance Romania



Graph 3.4 Project Efficiency Romania



to inputs/budget and on the share of the budget allocated to or spent on inputs in/from The Netherlands or the recipient country. KAP projects scored “very good” on the first two indicators, whereas the third is not applicable.

Thus, it can be seen that MPP projects score “very good” in terms of overall relevance and “good” on overall effectiveness and efficiency, while KAP projects score “very good” on relevance and efficiency and “good” on effectiveness. At the same time, two MPP

projects scored “poor” or “very poor” on efficiency and “poor” on relevance, while one scored “very poor” on efficiency.

The following are the main conclusions from the Romania evaluation, qualifying the above mentioned scores, in particular for the six projects in the sample that scored less than “good”. Once again, the authors would like to caution against interpreting the scores too rigidly as expressing absolute values about indicators and overall project performance, as explained in section 1.5 of chapter 1. While the vast majority of projects seem to have gone well, or even very well, there are nonetheless a number of projects that had problems and issues worth highlighting in order to help further improving the performance of projects.

3.3.3 Effectiveness

3.3.3.1 Completeness and Quality of Project Documentation

Eighteen approved MPP project documents were reviewed by the evaluation team in Romania. The quality of the proposals is generally high and in some cases of very high quality. Several were improved as applicants were requested to re-formulate their proposals following observations from the Matra approval committee in The Hague. A considerable number of MPP proposals were innovative in their design – testing/validating new approaches and methodologies and promoting inter-disciplinary collaboration (i.e. RO/016301 “Competence Building in Addiction”, RO/RO/017901 “Sustainable Mine Closure”, RO/015702 “Corporate Social Responsibility”, RO/012501 “Equal Opportunity Training for Roma Children”, and RO/005875 “Good Start – Training on Early Intervention for Children at Risk”, among others).

The quality of the proposal largely reflected the competence of the Dutch applicant (and national partner when they participated): Proposals such as RO/006902 “Street Children of Romania” and RO/010801 Improving Transparency of Public Communication were found to be excessively ambitious *vis-a-vis* resources and timelines, unrealistic in their objectives, or questionable in their technical approach – for example, proposing the transfer of models or methodologies without adequate baseline knowledge. A common flaw in the design of most MPP projects was the lack of attention given to feasibility/risk analysis and sustainability issues; in several cases the project could have avoided subsequent implementation problems had these aspects been better addressed at the design stage. Logical frameworks were lacking in approximately half of the MPP sample, as were the related success criteria and indicators that are important to assess impact and changes to baseline conditions.

More than 70% of the Romanian MPP sample was co-designed with national partners that were usually NGOs (i.e. RO/013301 “Supporting Participatory Democracy”, RO/016301 “Competence Building in Addiction”, RO/017701 “History and Citizen Education”). This may be linked to the fact that a higher proportion of Dutch organizations – again, approximately 70% - were already based in Romania and had prior project experience with national organizations. MPP projects involving public sector institutions were often initiated through support requests to the Dutch embassy, which led to contacts with prospective Dutch partners and Matra (RO/010902 “Introducing Probation in Bucharest”; RO/010501 “Support to the National Institute of Magistrates”). Other government institutions were able to adjust project drafts that had been designed by the Dutch partner before they were approved in The Hague (RO/017901 “Sustainable Mine Closure”). There were no cases within the project sample in which MPP project design was initially designed by a national NGO and assumed by a Dutch organization.

Project approvals for MPPs usually took six months on average, which was considered a reasonable timeframe by the national partners. An exception that stands out was the approval of RO/013301 “Supporting Participatory Democracy”, which involved more than three years of negotiations between the Dutch organization and the Ministry. In other cases, approval delays were attributed to changes in Matra guidelines that were introduced between 1999-2000. One MPP counterpart from Romania’s Mining Ministry noted that the Matra approval committee was flexible in accommodating changes to project design after the proposal had

been submitted for approval - “much more than other bilateral donors.” According to Dutch embassy staff, there were difficulties in appraising national pro-forma costs when MPP proposal budgets were reviewed in The Hague; in such cases the respective embassy sometimes had to consult other in-country donors regarding the honoraria paid to national experts and consultants, costs for equipment and workshops, and other items.

Projects that were jointly formulated by Dutch and national partners were generally superior in terms of design quality, understanding of the issues being addressed and relevance to national/local contexts. Conversely, the exclusion of national partners from project design and budgeting was found to increase the risk of poor project performance and lack of sustainability. When national participation was lacking, the technical competence and country experience of the Dutch organization became a key determinant of design quality; several MPPs were successful largely for this reason. Although the input of national stakeholders was often limited during project design, in several cases they were able to subsequently modify work plans (RO/017901 “Sustainable Mining Closure”, RO/013102 “Local Public Management Enhancement”).

Most MPP budgets were determined by the Dutch organization without consulting national partners – even when they participated in other aspects of project design. This exclusion may partially explain the tendency of most MPP projects to allocate significant portions of the budget - averaging 60% upwards - to the Dutch organization and contracted Dutch experts. While such allocations were often necessary to finance the transfer of technical expertise or pay visiting Dutch experts, in some projects the skewed budget distribution constrained the implementation or consolidation of activities on the ground (i.e. RO/017901 “Sustainable Mine Closure” and RO/017701 “History and Citizen Education”). In a few cases there were disagreements with Dutch organizations concerning the payment of fees for national experts or the share of the budget earmarked to the national partner (i.e. “Good Start – Training on Early Intervention of Children at Risk”).

KAP projects are fundamentally different from MPPs and their design must be assessed in a different light. Design formats were simpler and more straightforward, reflecting the smaller scale of resources and timeframes involved. They were clearly more driven by national stakeholders as it was up to the national organization to design the project without the intermediation of Dutch organizations. In Romania, the evaluation team found examples of very well-designed KAP projects (i.e. KAP 3/25 “Raising Public Awareness on Ethnic Minority Issues”). This being said, the design of most KAP proposals fall in a ‘middle ground’ and were adequate considering the scope of the projects, which were straightforward and often limited to single outputs such as publications or workshops.

The relatively high design quality of the KAP sample in Romania is attributable to the adoption of project design and appraisal guidelines in 2003 by the KAP focal point based at the Dutch Embassy: The KAP programme has been disseminated to a wide range of institutions through newsletters and NGO network associations. A document explaining KAP objectives and providing design instructions was circulated to all applicants, a Website was created and deadlines were introduced for submitting proposals, which are reviewed and approved in bi-yearly rounds. Workshops have been held to assist short-listed applicants in reviewing their proposals to improve design and clarity. There are also clear appraisal guidelines: KAP proposals are accepted for 12 themes and should be innovative, i.e. testing new methodologies or promoting networking; most of the approved projects focus on environmental education, human rights and local governance. A three-person team comprised

by the KAP and Matra focal points and the embassy's Second Secretary reviews applications; and approvals are only granted when there is a consensus. To help assess the capacity and transparency of the applicant organization, they are required to submit a financial statement with the prior year's accounting balance; likewise, proposals that include co-financing by other donors receive additional priority. According to the KAP focal point, these innovations have significantly raised the quality and quantity of applications received – 190 proposals were submitted during the first call for applications after new guidelines were introduced in 2003, compared to the 70 received during the previous 11 months.

There is considerable potential for synergy between KAP and MPP projects that has not been fully exploited. In spite of their different modalities, KAP projects offer a preparatory stage or 'incubator' for testing and validating pilot initiatives before they are developed into full projects. In Romania, only one example was found of a KAP project leading to an MPP and it was felt that the links between KAP and MPP projects could be strengthened. This would additionally help towards integrating monitoring and evaluation activities for the two programmes, and deepen collaboration between the embassy focal point and Matra staff in The Hague.

3.3.3.2 Project Performance: Achievement of Results, Goals and Impact

Evaluation findings on project performance and impact are positive: In Romania, the evaluation team found that nine out of seventeen MPP projects (53%) had fully achieved or exceeded their objectives, six had (35%) achieved partial success and two projects (12%) could be considered failures. Most of the five Romanian KAP projects were also successful.

It is important to distinguish the influence of the different project modalities on performance: KAPs tended to have a higher success rate than MPPs, yet were considerably smaller in scale, less ambitious and often based on a single activity or product. As one consultant noted, "it was difficult to fail" under such circumstances. KAPs were unsuccessful when they attempted to generate and sustain processes that were unrealistic in relation to the time and resources available, and/or were implemented as "stand alone" projects that were not part of a wider initiative.

A major contributing factor to MPP project impact was the successful transfer and dissemination of innovative methodologies and approaches by Dutch organizations to receptive and capable national partners. Several MPPs have influenced national policy and legislation, and various stand out as "best practices": RO/016301 "Competence Building in Addiction" received a national award as the most innovative project in Romania, by introducing training for addiction treatment through an inter-disciplinary approach linking medical, psychiatric and social work practitioners. RO/014001 "Support for Romania Health Insurance Houses" has developed a new organizational culture and ITC system that are considered national models. Although RO/010902 "Introducing Probation in Bucharest" failed to generate some of its planned outputs, the project indirectly contributed to the adoption of probation legislation. Primary and secondary school history teachers have incorporated sensitive topics of ethnicity, gender and human rights issues with the support of RO/017701 "History and Citizen Education"; didactic material and training booklets were produced and are being used as teaching aids and for teacher training.

Likewise, the capacity of national institutions (and of key individuals) to adjust project

initiatives to changing policy and institutional environments during the transition period was important for ensuring relevance and continued momentum. Many of the more successful initiatives were able to consolidate lasting partnerships between civic groups, NGOs and government institutions. The Waste Management Information Centre sub-project assisted by RO/013102 “Local Public Management Enhancement” has enabled a committed teacher to expand her environmental education initiative and develop a unique partnership linking schools, students and local government.

The less successful projects were constrained by unrealistic design, differing perceptions and expectations between Dutch and national partners in the case of MPPs, low technical/organizational capacity and difficulties in adjusting to changing contexts. Over-ambitious and/or unclear design undermined the implementation of projects such as RO/006902 “Street Children in Romania” and RO/010801 “Improving Transparency of Public Communications” among others. In these cases, poor design and performance were linked to the weak capacity of Dutch and national partners.

3.3.3.3 Institutional Capacity

“I am quite happy with the methodological support that [the Dutch partner] provided to the local experts...I myself learned from this methodology. Methods were very participatory, the Social Impact Monitoring method and Stakeholder Analysis Matrix were better than the instruments we had used before...On a level of 1 to 5, I would give the Dutch partner a rating of ‘5’.”

- The Ministry counterpart coordinator for RO/017901 “Sustainable Mine Closure”

In the case of Romania, institutional capacity was recognized as a primary determinant of project performance and impact. Capacity and experience levels were very closely linked to the quality and feasibility of project design, the technical competence of its implementers, the ability to nurture partnerships, and the capacity to adjust to changes in the policy and institutional environments. This has direct implications for the Matra and KAP project appraisal process, as the lack of institutional assessment heightens the risk of awarding grants to organizations that are unprepared to assume projects – approximating a “hit or miss” situation.

Fortunately, most Dutch organizations involved demonstrated competence and experience. In such cases they were established institutions with prior experience in the project theme and country – i.e. the Dutch organizations involved in RO/013102 “Local Public Management Enhancement”, RO/016301 “Competence Building for Addiction”, RO/014001 “Support to Romanian Health Insurance Houses”, RO/101501 “National Institute of Magistrates”, and RO/017901 “Sustainable Mine Closure.” However, the capacity of Dutch partners was not always consistent and the approval of MPP grants to less capable organizations (i.e. RO/006902 “Street Children of Romania”) weakened project performance and limited chances for success. The same can be said for some of the national partners that were involved in these projects.

Even when the Dutch organization was capable and had good rapport with the national partner, the quality of invited Dutch experts (professors, researchers and other specialists who came as trainers or resource persons on short missions) was inconsistent: Several were poorly prepared, were unfamiliar with the national context, had little to offer technically or were paternalistic in their approach, despite the high fees they received from the budget. This

issue was noted by the Romanian partners of three MPP projects who were otherwise appreciative of the Dutch contribution

Matra applicants tend to come from a relatively closed circle of Dutch NGOs that have established relations with the Foreign Affairs Ministry. This has helped to reduce risks by involving reliable institutions, which is understandable considering that Matra recipients become legal partners to the Ministry by virtue of managing public development funds. However, the practice limits Matra's diversity and to an extent its demand-driven nature; as one staff member acknowledged, "you keep seeing the same faces." Moreover, evaluation findings indicate that not all awarded organizations had adequate capabilities to manage their projects. Better screening of applicants – with an in-country verification of their activities by embassy staff – could offer a more effective option for quality control, while enabling a more open convocation of partners.

There is a strong consensus among national stakeholders that the main "value added" of MPPs was the transfer of new methodologies and skills from the Dutch partners, and access to a pool of international expertise through workshops, study tours and exchanges. One of the most significant impacts of Matra has been the strengthening of institutional and personal capacities, even when this was not explicitly stated as a project objective.

Examples include the national award provided to the national NGO of RO/016301 "Competence Building for Addiction" for implementing Romania's most innovative project; this organization has now expanded activities and was recently provided with a physical facility at a State Hospital to provide outpatient services for recovering alcoholics. Local authorities and national training institutes in RO/013102 "Local Public Management Enhancement" were exposed to EU 'best practices' in local public administration and waste management; the municipal government of Tulcea has developed a "twin city" relationship with a Dutch municipality and has received thousands of donated Euro-Containers for classifying waste. The Tulcea Waste Management Information Centre enables schoolchildren and teenagers to apply learning in environmental education to practice – monitoring the quality of municipal waste collection, ensuring that local residents separate waste materials, and reporting findings to the municipal government. The Centre continues to receive assistance from the Dutch partner. Through RO/014001, the National Institute of Magistrates was exposed to new EU programmes in judicial ethics and has improved its managerial capacity, modified training programmes and developed an ITC system. Likewise, Romania's Health Insurance House has developed a new organizational culture and ITC system that is considered a national model, and maintains contacts with the Dutch partner.

3.3.3.4 Sustainability

Conducting an ex-post evaluation offers unique opportunities to assess post-project sustainability; however, in order to do so there needs to be a common understanding of the concept. For the purpose of this evaluation the team agreed on the following sustainability criteria:

- The activities and process initiated through the project are being continued and/or expanded by national stakeholders after the project's termination.
- The project contributed directly to new policies and/or legislation that were adopted and are being applied beyond the project horizon.
- The national partner organization and stakeholders have advanced in their mandates

after the project terminated, as a result of strengthened capacities and the experience obtained from the project.

- Cooperation between the Dutch and national partner organizations has continued beyond the project's termination (for MPPs only).

In Romania, approximately 90% of the full MPP project sample met one or more of the sustainability criteria, while two projects had failed to generate sustainability in any form. Sustainability trends for KAP projects were lower – with 60% or three out of five of the sample meeting one or more of criteria - although the team felt that sustainability was not as relevant an issue for the smaller, 'gap-filling' projects that were based on single activities or products. However, the outputs generated by some KAP projects have proven to have high sustainability, i.e. KAP 2001/17 "Estuary".

Several projects have demonstrated a dynamic sustainability - expanding and 'mainstreaming' pilot processes on a regional or national scale, involving a wider range of stakeholders, influencing the policy environment and generating new support commitments. Such projects include RO/014001 "Support to Romanian Health Insurance Houses" and the Tulcea Waste Management Information Centre sub-project supported under RO/013102 "Local Public Management Enhancement", which has continued to work with the Dutch partner beyond the Matra project's termination. Although the RO/016301 "Competence Building for Addiction" is still being implemented, the integrated approach it has developed for addiction treatment could well grow into a national model over time; a similar scenario is possible for the participatory planning process pioneered under RO/017901 "Sustainable Mine Closure" and the new curricula developed through RO/017701 "History and Citizenship Education".

In Romania, projects addressing health, human welfare and environmental themes were generally sustainable, although a number of random factors are likely to have influenced this trend: The capacity of participating institutions, the localized (and hence more manageable) context of several initiatives, coordination with government/sector counterparts and strategic timing in terms of opportunity (in comparison with the recognized difficulties of sustaining change within larger government institutions that were affected by public sector reform, staff turnover and other transition-related changes); or the challenges of affecting deep-seated attitudes and biases towards Roma communities.

In cases of lack of sustainability, this was attributed to low institutional capacity and inadequate experience among both Dutch and national partners; the absence of linkages with government counterparts (undermining political commitment and chances for financial/in-kind support beyond the project's termination); excessively ambitious project design; and inability to adjust to changing contexts. Some of these problems might have been anticipated through (i) better screening of Dutch and national partner organizations during the project approval process, i.e. RO/006902 "Street Children of Romania and RO/010801 "Improving Transparency of Public Communication"); (ii) ensuring closer links to government counterparts and ongoing development initiatives during implementation; and (iii) facilitating partnering and guidance between successful and less-successful projects addressing common themes.

3.3.4 Relevance

Practically all projects in the sample, with the possible exception of one of the KAP projects (i.e. KAP 2002/20) were considered to be relevant or very relevant in terms of Matra’s overall objectives of promoting social transformation and in terms of the country itself. The same is the case in terms of relevance in the eyes of local actors.

“The training is valuable because it connects the didactics of history with an emerging frontline theme, which is educating citizenship for democracy...the teachers are the resource or ‘magnet’ persons who will spread the new curricula nation-wide. They tried an approach that was never tried before.”

- A participant from RO/017701 “History and Citizen Education”

This seems to indicate that Matra has clearly contributed to social transformation processes in Romania. Evaluation findings indicate that more than half of the MPP projects fully met or exceeded their goals, and that several of these generated policy and institutional impacts on a national scale. There is a strong consensus regarding the “value added” of Matra in general and MPP projects in particular: The transfer of innovative methodologies and new skills; the opportunity to test, validate and disseminate pilot approaches; and the access provided to a pool of qualified international expertise and institutions were recognized as Matra’s key contributions by national stakeholders.

“The most important effect of the project was mobilization and partnership building in communities.... people began to assume their own development instead of depending on others to solve their problems. The strategy would have happened without MATRA support, but the quality of the strategy and level of participation would not have been possible without MATRA....”

- A Ministry official commenting on RO/017901 “Sustainable Mine Closure”

A very important effect of Matra has been its advocacy and support for partnerships between government and non-governmental institutions. This was decisive to ensure impact and sustainability beyond the project horizon, and was a consistent feature in the more successful MPP and KAP projects. The brokering of public-private partnerships carried particular importance in the context of transition economies. It also promoted the EU’s principle of subsidiarity and in this sense has contributed indirectly to the accession process. In this sense, “stand alone” projects that did not generate such linkages often failed to meet their objectives and were not sustainable.

The most appreciated feature of KAP projects was the provision of direct and rapid support for strategic ‘gap filling’ – often serving as a catalyst towards developing larger initiatives. There is excellent potential to link both modalities by utilizing KAPs as a preparatory phase or “incubator” to test and validate pilot approaches before they are expanded into full Matra projects. While the evaluation team did find examples of synergy between KAP and Matra projects (and respective national organizations) they were *ad hoc* exceptions to the rule. The linkage between both modalities should be strengthened in the future, as this would enable Matra to (i) improve the quality of its projects through an incremental process of testing and consolidation, (ii) screen prospective MPP national partners through smaller KAP initiatives, and (iii) streamline monitoring and evaluation activities between both modalities.

3.3.5 Efficiency

In accordance with the score table, efficiency was “very high” or even “outstanding” in more than half of projects in the sample, while “satisfactory” or “good” in another 43%. In fact, only one project was considered inefficient on all three indicators.

It is difficult to evaluate project efficiency through rapid project visits that offered limited insight into the actual implementation process. Likewise, the estimation of social benefit deriving from impacts on policy and legislation are outside the scope of this evaluation, and would require a separate study.

Nevertheless, beneficiary and partner perceptions indicate that most MPP and KAP projects have been cost-effective in terms of the results generated with available resources. In this regard, the primary value added perceived from Matra was the transfer of methodologies; the implementation and dissemination of pilot experiences; access to an international pool of expertise through the Dutch partner; and strategic ‘gap-filling’ support in the case of the KAPs. Examples of financial contributions from national partners were not found in the sample (only in-kind contributions were acknowledged although seldom documented), and it would appear that financial costs were assumed entirely by the Dutch government.

In spite of the generally positive assessment, examples of cost-ineffectiveness in MPP projects were brought to the attention of the evaluators on several occasions: When an inordinately high portion of the budget was assigned to the Dutch implementing partner, i.e. above 60%, this often generated an opportunity cost by diminishing resources for field activities that were critical for implementation. In such cases, opportunities for generating impact and sustainability were weakened. Several projects noted that visiting Dutch experts (who came as trainers or resource persons on short missions) were often poorly prepared, unfamiliar with the national context and had little offer technically, yet received high fees that absorbed a large share of the budget. In such cases it was felt that the money would have been better used for other activities (i.e. RO/008701 “Integration of Handicapped”, RO/017701 “History and Citizen Education”, RO/005875 “Good Start – Training on Early Intervention for Children at Risk”). Respondents agreed that these situations could have been avoided with better advance screening of experts and consultants, and the review of their CVs by national partners.

Efficiency and cost-effectiveness are linked to participation, transparency and ownership. The transparent management of budgets can improve cost-effectiveness, as demonstrated by the few projects where national partners co-managed resources with the Dutch organization. RO/016301 “Competence Building in Addiction” was able to save funds that were subsequently re-programmed to expand activities, produce new publications and extend the implementation period.

Although Matra supports the partnering of Dutch and national organizations, the evaluators found that national/local participation was generally weak in MPP project design, strategic project management, selection of international experts and consultants, and budgetary planning/administration. In this respect, “partnership” did not exist in a real sense and when there was one, it was usually at the initiative of the Dutch partner that chose to raise participation opportunities rather than the result of programme policy.

Stakeholder participation was highest when both Dutch and national organizations had prior experience working together, and/or the Dutch partner simply approached the project with an open attitude. This generated a relation of transparency and trust that enabled the national partner to adjust work plans, revise budget lines and adapt methodologies when necessary. Positive examples included RO/017901 “Sustainable Mine Closure”, RO/017701 “History and Citizen Education” and RO/012701, “Rural Development with Roma”, and the demonstration sub-projects supported by RO/0013102 “Local Public Management Enhancement”. However, these were a minority within the MPP sample.

“Our work here is really great. It gives us personal satisfaction to educate people and get people interested in the problems of nature.”

“We find amusement as we discover our own potential.”

- School volunteer participants from the Tulcea Waste Management Information Centre (RO/0013102)

In most cases, national partner organizations had little if any influence on budgeting or the management of project resources – and often had never seen the budget. Progress, monitoring and final reports were based on the views of the implementing Dutch organization and usually failed to integrate the perspective of national stakeholders. Although the comments of the national partner were often annexed separately to progress reports, this arrangement did not suggest true partnership.

On the other hand, there was high delegation of responsibility to national partners for implementation. National partners actively participated in managing the implementation of the various project activities, even when they had not participated in their design. Stakeholder input was generally very positive in this respect. Most MPP projects created Steering or Coordination Committees with national stakeholders. Although these committees created opportunities for substantive participation, they were not always effective – some were relatively inactive. When the committee created for RO/010902 “Introducing Probation in Bucharest” was unable to resolve a conflict between the Ministry of Justice and the participating NGO, the Dutch ambassador was prompted to intervene. Several projects created newsletters and disseminated project activities to a wide range of national stakeholders.

4. Country Evaluation Report – Slovak Republic



4.1 Country Background - Slovak Republic⁷

4.1.1 Political structure

Until 1989, Czechoslovakia was a country with limited political pluralism and with a poor record of human rights. After the “velvet revolution” of 1989 the situation changed. The country's first multiparty elections were held in June 1990. Subsequently, in 1992, the two constituent republics – the Czech Republic and Slovakia - decided to divide the federation into two independent entities. A new constitution of the Slovak Republic, adopted on September 1, 1992, went into effect with independence following in January 1993. On February 1, 1995, the European Agreement between the Slovak Republic and the EU was put into effect and Slovakia was granted the status of an associated country to the EU. The Application of the Slovak Republic for Membership in the EU was officially presented at the EU summit in Cannes, on 27 June 1995. In December 2000 Slovakia acceded to the OECD and began accession negotiations with the EU resulting in full EU membership on 1 May 2004.

Slovakia's form of government has long been centralized. However, a process of decentralization of public administration is currently going on. The Slovak public administration is a three-tier system made up of central level, regional level (so called Higher Territorial Units) and local level structures. The Regional and local level of public

⁷ This text was compiled from different sources: IMF Monitoring Report, CIA Country statistics, ICEG European Center Quarterly Report, REGIONET (research project under the 6th EC framework) Country Report.

administration system is based on two components: (i) regional and municipal self-government and (ii) regional and district state administration.

4.1.2 Socio-economic trends

Slovakia's economic development during the state-socialism period (1948-1989) was an example of import-substitution industrialization – the prevailing development pattern in Eastern Europe. Because of the Czecho-Slovak tradition of caution about macroeconomic balance, or because of communist ideology opposing any close involvement with international financial systems, Slovak development programmes were undertaken without reliance on western loans. Industrialization was geared mostly towards providing inputs (steel, paper, petrochemicals) for the production of finished goods in the Czech lands, as well as armament manufacturing. Emphasis was placed on heavy industry, thus creating a high dependency on raw materials and energy imports.

The collapse of traditional markets in the beginning of the 1990s, increased competition through trade liberalization, and a temporary ban on arms sales initially brought severe disruptions. The economic reform, which followed, can be called a neo-liberal strategy that was based on short-term neoclassical economic stabilization measures – tight fiscal and monetary measures and exchange-rate policies, implying devaluation, with medium- and long-term structural reforms aimed at decreasing the role of the state and increasing the role of the market in the economy. The structural changes have included, most importantly, trade liberalization, deregulation and privatization.

Both agriculture and heavy industry have shrunk as a share of GDP since the beginning of reforms. Crises caused a fall in real wages and in domestic demand for domestic products, as trade liberalization allowed for foreign competition. In the agricultural sector, farm input prices were liberalized. However, most output prices remained under government control. On the macro level, following a deep recession, when GDP contracted by 23% between 1990 and 1993, real GDP growth turned positive in 1994 (5.2%) as exports grew. After domestic demand recovered strongly in 2001; GDP boosted to 3.3% in 2001, 4.4% in 2002 and 5% in 2004.

In the beginning of the 1990s, Slovakia's foreign investment regime was characterized by a mix of liberalization and targeted regulation. Only after 1998, Slovakia implemented a general framework to attract greater inflows of foreign direct investment. The process of structural reforms in Slovakia has had a significant spatial impact. Regional disparities, particularly between Bratislava and the remainder of the country, became very large. The poorer regions continue to get poorer and regional discrepancies are getting worse. Regional differences in unemployment have been growing. The highest rate of unemployment was in the East of the country, Kosice region (27%) and the Presov region (26%); however, some districts reported an unemployment rate of 35%.

Economic growth in Slovakia accelerated to the fastest pace in Central Europe in 2004. Projections for the coming years contain similarly favourable rates foreseeing a rate of around 5 percent. Behind the high growth rate, domestic demand and investments are the most important factors, mainly because of the launching of production and exports of large FDI-related projects. Private consumption was especially vigorous in 2004, partly because of growth in real wages, and partly because of lower income taxes. The fiscal deficit for 2004

was shaped by the highly praised (by experts and international organisations) and criticised (by other EU governments) introduction of a flat corporate, personal income and value-added tax rate of 19%, supplemented by other cuts in the welfare system. The extent of the reduction of revenues was estimated to reach 1% of the GDP. Higher-than-planned revenues (mainly because of higher-than-expected growth) and lower expenditures due to the welfare cuts and lower interest bill together with the postponement of co-financing for EU funded projects resulted in a lower-than-planned fiscal deficit. In 2005, new factors as EU co-financing, the introduction of a pension reform, higher spending on health care funding due to new rules and a more than 600 million Euros payment obligation to a Czech private bank are expected to increase fiscal deficit. Public debt is comfortably below the Maastricht criterion of 60% and is set to increase slightly compared to GDP in 2005, due to the increase in the fiscal deficit.

In spite of the favourable growth record, employment grew only moderately and unemployment remained at a high level. The unemployment rate is among the highest in the EU and is twice as high as the EU-15 average, which is especially unfavourable for the economy given the low activity rate. Unemployment was at 18% at the end of 2004, and the overwhelming majority of unemployed are without job for long periods, despite the 2004 reforms of the welfare system, which were aimed at improving incentives to work (Registered unemployment showed different rates – 13% at the end of the year – and trends in 2004). Other unfavourable factors are the persistent labour cuts in the public sector, and strong regional differences in unemployment rates.

4.1.3 Selected country data:

Geography:	
Location:	Central Europe
Neighbouring Countries	Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine
Total Area – Land	48,845 sq. km
Total Area - Water	45 sq. km
People:	
Population	5,431,363 (2005 est.)
Density	108 inhabitants per sq. km
Distribution	Urban: 56.9% - Rural: 43.7%
Ethnic profile	Slovak (85.8%), Hungarian (9.7%), Roma (1.7% according to census-based self-identification; according to other sources up to 10%), Czech (0.8%), Ruthenian (0.4%), Ukrainian (0.2%), German (0.1%), Polish (0.04%).
Languages	Official: Slovak; Other: Hungarian
Religion	Roman Catholic (68.9%), Protestant (9.1%), Greek-Catholic (4.1%), Jewish (0.04%), Atheist (13%), unknown (3%)
Life expectancy	68.4 years (male), 76.3 years (female) (1995)
Political:	
Type of Government	Parliamentary democracy
Capital	Bratislava
Administrative divisions	8 regions (Higher Territorial Units – VUC – corresponding to NUTS II): Banskobystricky, Bratislavsky, Kosicky, Nitriansky, Presovsky, Trenciansky, Trnavsky, Zilinsky
Independence	1 January 1994 (split of Czechoslovakia)
Constitution	Ratified 1 September 1992; Fully effective 1 January 1993; Changed in September 1998 to allow direct election of the president; Amended February 2001 to allow Slovakia to apply for NATO and EU membership
Legal system	Civil law system based on Austro-Hungarian codes; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction; legal code modified to comply with the obligations of Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
Economy:	
GDP Real Growth Rate	5.3% (2004)
GDP Per Capita (PPP)	US\$ 14,500 (2004)
GDP Composition by Sector	Agriculture 3.5%, Industry 30.1%, Services 66.4%
Gini index (income distribution)	26.3 (1996)
Inflation Rate (consumer prices)	7.5% (2004)
Labour force (by sector)	Agriculture 5.8%, Industry 29.3%, Construction 9%, Services 55.9%
Unemployment rate	13.1% registered, 18% according to methodology ILO in 2004
Agricultural products	Grains, potatoes, sugar beets, hops, fruits, pork, beef, poultry, forest products
Industries	Metal and metal products, foods and beverages, electricity, gas, cokes, oil, nuclear fuel, chemicals and manmade fibres, machinery, paper and printing, earthenware and ceramics, transport vehicles, textiles, electrical and optical equipment, rubber products.

4.2 Selection of Projects for Evaluation - Slovak Republic

4.2.1 Matra Projects Programme (MPP)

Since 1994, when the Matra Projects Programme started in the Slovak Republic, a total of 32 projects have been initiated with a total budget of € 10,984,393. The average budget per project is € 343,262, which is 49% of the maximum awardable amount of € 700,000. Budgets range from € 52,639 for the smallest to € 690,000 for the largest.

If we compare amounts committed for new projects in each year, as is done in the following table, it can be seen that the average budget per project has increased over the years, in particular if we compare 2002 and 2003 with previous years.

In terms of new projects approved in each year, the average is three per year, but this figure hides rather large variations. In 1998 and 2001, six new projects were approved, but in 1999, not a single project was. Also, in three years, 1994, 1995 and 2004, only one project was approved. This creates some obvious distortion in the picture, but if we take out the years with few projects approved, i.e. 1994-1996, 1999-2000 and 2004, trends are clearly visible.

Because of the significant increases in average project size in 2002 and 2003, we can see that the total amount of resources committed in those years is actually much higher than in 1998 and 2001, even though during the latter two years six new projects were approved against just four in the former.

Table 4.1: Number of MPP projects, total and average budgets per year for Slovakia

Period	No.	Total Budget (€)	%	Average Budget (€)
1994-1996	4	577,208	5.3	144,302
1997	5	1,552,382	14.1	310,476
1998	6	1,572,802	14.3	262,134
1999	-	-	-	-
2000	2	580,000	5.3	290,000
2001	6	1,839,000	16.7	306,500
2002	4	2,232,000	20.3	558,000
2003	4	2,387,000	21.7	596,750
2004	1	244,000	2.2	244,000
1994-2005	32	10,984,393	99.9	343,262

If we look at the distribution of projects per Matra theme over the years (see the next table), we see that in the Slovak Republic more than half of all projects (56%) are concentrated in four themes: Human Rights/Minorities, Public Administration, Health/Welfare and Labour/Social Policy, whereas the remaining 44% comprises the other six themes, i.e. Law & Justice, Environment, Housing, Information/Media, Education and Culture.

However, one must be careful in drawing conclusions from this as many projects in practice combine several themes. For example, some projects categorized as Human Rights/Minorities are actually dealing with housing or health/welfare for Roma.

Table 4.2: MPP projects in Slovakia per Matra theme

Theme \ Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total	%
Human Rights/Minorities			1	1	2			1				5	15.6
Public Administration		1			1			1	1	1		5	15.6
Health/Welfare								1	1	2		4	12.5
Labour/Social Policy			1	1				1		1		4	12.5
Law/Justice				1	1		1					3	9.4
Environment					1			1	1			3	9.4
Housing	1			1					1			3	9.4
Information/Media					1		1					2	6.3
Education				1				1				2	6.3
Culture											1	1	3.1
Total	1	1	2	5	6	0	2	6	4	4	1	32	

It is difficult to detect significant trends in changing emphasis on certain themes over the years, other than there seems to have been a shift away from human rights/minorities-related projects in the earlier years towards more emphasis on health/welfare in the later years. However, with the limited number of projects in each year, such observations cannot be considered significant.

The present evaluation covers the period 1999 – 2003 and focuses mainly on completed projects (meaning in practice that none of the projects approved in 2003 are included in the sample, but projects approved in 1998 were). Eighteen projects (56.3%) fall into this category, representing a total budget of € 6,223,802 (56.7% of the total) and an average budget of € 345,767 per project. Their distribution per theme is as follows:

Table 4.3: Completed MPP projects in 1999-2003 in Slovakia per Matra theme

Theme	No. of Projects
Human Rights/Minorities	3
Public Administration	3
Environment	3
Health/Welfare	2
Law/Justice	2
Information/Media	2
Labour/Social Policy	1
Education	1
Housing	1
Total:	18

As can be seen, the distribution per theme is not radically different from the one presented in the previous table for the whole period from 1994 to 2004.

In terms of geographical distribution, half of the 18 projects are based in Bratislava, although some of these also have activities in other parts of the Slovak Republic. The remaining nine are based primarily in other towns.

As previously agreed between Matra and UNDP, from these 18 projects, 12 have been selected to be included in the evaluation in accordance with the above thematic and geographical distribution (see the table at the end of this section). Also, to the extent possible, an equitable distribution over the individual years of the period under evaluation has been taken into account. The sample comprises two thirds of all completed projects initiated during the period 1999-2003 and 37.5% of all MPP projects since 1994. Therefore, the sample can be considered representative of MPP projects over the period 1999-2003 as well as over the entire lifespan of the MPP programme in Slovakia.

4.2.2 Small Embassy Projects (KAP)

While the present evaluation mainly concerns the Matra Projects Programme, it was felt that the inclusion of some projects from the other Matra sub-programmes that are carried out in the countries themselves with a key role for local partners, the Small Embassy Projects Programme, would add value to the overall evaluation. It was therefore decided to include seven KAP projects to the sample. A higher number of KAP projects was included in the Slovak sample in comparison with the other countries to compensate for the lower number of MPP projects.

Given the fact that between 1999 and 2003 there have been 125 KAP projects carried out by the Embassy in Bratislava, it is of course not possible from the limited sample to draw any general conclusions about the KAP programmes. KAP projects are very different in size, scope and implementation arrangements from MPP projects, but it is hoped that nevertheless some useful comparisons can be drawn between the two types of projects. In fact, the KAP programme would merit a separate evaluation, which, however, due to time constraints, was not feasible within the present scope of the Matra Projects Programme evaluation.

Concerning the KAP projects, the table on the next page provides an overview per year and per theme of the 125 projects carried out by the Embassy in Bratislava:

Here, it can be seen that projects directly addressing human rights & minority issues, environment and information & media stand out, comprising almost half of the total. Another one third consists of projects addressing labour & social policy, public administration, health & welfare and NGO strengthening. The remaining one sixth covers culture, education, law & justice, economic analysis and community cooperation.

Regarding the thematic distribution, the same caution must be applied in interpreting these data as with the MPP projects, namely that many projects combine more than one theme. For example, many projects have human rights components. Others may strengthen NGOs, while those categorized as NGO Strengthening projects may address other themes. Also, a number of projects are strongly gender-related. However, as gender is typically a cross-cutting theme, these projects have for the purpose of this evaluation not been treated as a separate category.

Table 5.4: KAP Projects in Slovakia per Matra theme

Theme / Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total	%
Human Rights/Minorities	6	5	6	3	3	23	18.4
Environment	5	8	2	1	2	18	14.4
Information/Media	3	3	4	6	1	17	13.6
Labour/Social Policy	3	3	2	3	2	13	10.4
Public Administration		4		5	2	11	8.8
Health/Welfare	4	2		2	3	11	8.8
NGO Strengthening	1	1	3	1	4	10	8.0
Culture	3	3		1	1	8	6.4
Education	1	2	1		2	6	4.8
Law/Justice	2	1		1	1	5	4.0
Economic Analysis	1		1			2	1.6
Community Cooperation	1					1	0.8
Total	30	32	19	23	21	125	
Total %	24.0	25.6	15.2	18.4	16.8		
Total Budget (€)	174,945	186,357	156,083	168,030	171,622	856,937	
Average budget per project	5,832	5,821	8,215	7,306	8,172	6,855	

The distribution of projects over the years shows that after 2000 the number of projects was less on average than before. However, at the same time, the average budget per project has been higher since 2000 than before, while the total amounts committed each year has remained more or less the same. Thus, while the number of projects may have decreased, their average size has increased, making the overall available budget per year the main constraint for approving more projects.

In terms of Geographical location, just over half of all projects (55.2%) are primarily based in Bratislava, while 44.8% is located elsewhere. While the share of Bratislava-based projects can be considered rather large for such a grassroots instrument, it is possibly the small size of the country that makes Bratislava a logical base for NGOs in the west (and the second city, Kosice, in the east) from which most of the country can be visited on day trips. Moreover, Bratislava is by far the largest and most important urban centre in the country.

As only 7 projects could be selected from for the purpose of this particular evaluation, it is impossible to ensure that these provide a proper representation of the KAP programme as a whole. Nevertheless, in selecting the projects, the evaluation team has tried to take thematic and geographical distribution somewhat into account. Thus, two projects each were selected from the years 2000 and 2002, and one from 1999, 2001 and 2003, representing the main themes, namely: Human Rights & Minorities, Environment, Information & Media, Labour/Social Policy, Public Administration, Health & Welfare and NGO Strengthening. Also, three of the selected projects are based in Bratislava and four in other parts of the country.

4.2.3 List of Selected MPP and KAP Projects:

Based on the above, the final list of the selected MPP and KAP projects included in the evaluation sample is as follows:

Table 4.5: Selected MPP and KAP Projects – Slovak Republic

Project Code	Start Year	Project Title	Theme	Location
Matra Projects Programme				
SK000601	1998	Development Training Institute	Publ. Administration	Bratislava
SK000501	1998	Rudnary Community Care Centre	Human Rights	Rudnary
SK000801	1998	Supporting Professional Journalism	Information/Media	Bratislava
SK001201	2000	Harmonization of Slovak Law	Law/Justice	Bratislava
SK001402	2001	Civil Link	Environment	Kosice
SK002501	2001	Empowering Women	Human Rights	Bratislava
SK002601	2001	Building civil society through children and youth	Labour/Social policy	Bratislava
SK003001	2001	European Law Certificate (CELE)	Education	Bratislava
SK002302	2002	Improving Environmental Education	Environment	Trencin
SK004001	2002	Improve Relations between Police & Public	Publ. Administration	Bratislava
SK004101	2002	Non-Profit Housing	Housing	Martin
SK004201	2002	Integrated Psychiatric (Health) Care	Health/Welfare	Michalovce
Matra Small Embassy Projects (KAP) Programme				
25/1999	1999	Influencing attitudes of public in relation to substitute family care	Health/Welfare	Bratislava
1/2000	2000	Involving the public in planning process of Banska Stiavnica	Publ. Administration	Banska Stiavnica
6/2000	2000	Involvement of children and young people in air protection	Environment	Liptovsky Hradok
9/2001	2001	We Live Together With Roma, It Depends On How	Human Rights/ Minorities	Bratislava
3/2002	2002	Unemployed Clubs	Social Policy	Kosice
4/2002	2002	Global Report on State of Society	Information/Media	Bratislava
15/2003	2003	Encouragement of NGOs and philanthropy in Kosice Region	NGO Strengthening	Kosice

4.3 Evaluation Findings – Slovak Republic

4.3.1 Score Table Slovakia Sample

The evaluation of individual projects in Slovakia was carried out during six weeks (from late May until early July) by a team of three evaluators, supported by an International Evaluation Expert, through desk review of project documentation obtained from the Embassy, visits to project sites and interviews with local stakeholders.

The table on the next page shows the scores for the projects in the Slovak sample. An overview and explanations of score values for each indicator as well as general methodological observations regarding the validity of the score system have been provided in Chapter 1 “Introduction”, Section 1.5 “Research Method”.

Table 4.6 Detailed Scores for Projects in the Sample for Slovak Republic

Project	Type	Comple ted / On -going	Effectiveness							Relevance				Efficiency				Total average score
			Docs complete	Quality of docs	Goals/ Results	Impact/ Effects	Sustain- ability	Replica- ble	Average score	Matra/ country	Local actors	Relation NL-local	Average score	Budget/ outputs	More/ less	Nl input vs local	Average score	
SK000601	MPP	C	4	3	4	5	5	5	4.5	5	5	5	5.0	5	5	1	3.7	4.4
SK000501	MPP	C	3	3	2	1	1	1	1.6	2	2	1	1.5	2	1	2	1.7	1.6
SK000801	MPP	C	5	4	3	3	3	5	3.7	5	5	1	3.0	4	3	2	3.0	3.4
SK001201	MPP	C	5	5	4	4	1	3	3.4	5	2	1	2.3	4	5	5	4.7	3.5
SK001402	MPP	C	5	3	3	3	4	2	3.2	5	4	3	3.8	4	4	4	4.0	3.6
SK002501	MPP	C	5	5	4	4	5	4	4.4	5	5	3	4.0	5	5	5	5.0	4.5
SK002601	MPP	C	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.0	5	5	5	5.0	5	5	5	5.0	5.0
SK003001	MPP	C	3	5	2	3	3	3	3.0	5	3	3	3.5	3	3	3	3.0	3.1
SK002302	MPP	C	5	4	5	5	5	3	4.5	5	5	3	4.0	5	5	5	5.0	4.5
SK004001	MPP	C	5	5	3	3	3	3	3.4	3	3	5	4.0	4	3	3	3.3	3.5
SK004101	MPP	C	5	4	3	2	3	1	2.7	4	4	5	4.5	3	3	3	3.0	3.2
SK004201	MPP	C	5	4	5	5	5	3	4.5	5	5	4	4.5	5	5	5	5.0	4.6
Averages			4.2	4.2	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.2	3.7	4.5	4.0	3.3	3.8	4.1	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.7
25/1999	KAP	C	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.0	5	5	-	5.0	5	5	-	5.0	5.0
1/2000	KAP	C	5	4	2	2	2	2	2.5	3	3	-	3.0	3	3	-	3.0	2.8
6/2000	KAP	C	5	5	5	5	4	4	4.6	5	5	-	5.0	5	5	-	5.0	4.8
9/2001	KAP	C	4	5	4	4	4	4	4.1	4	3	-	3.5	4	5	-	4.5	4.1
3/2002	KAP	C	5	4	3	2	4	2	3.1	5	5	-	5.0	5	5	-	5.0	4.1
4/2002	KAP	C	4	4	4	4	3	3	3.6	4	3	-	3.5	4	5	-	4.5	3.8
15/2003	KAP	C	5	3	3	3	2	2	2.8	5	5	-	5.0	4	4	-	4.0	3.7
Averages			4.7	4.3	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.1	3.7	4.4	4.1	-	4.3	4.3	4.6	-	4.4	4.0

Notes: Docs complete and Quality of docs have a weight of 0.5 each in the average score for “effectiveness”, against weights of 1.0 for the other indicators. For “Relevance”, Matra/country and Local actors have weights of 0.5, while Relation NL-local has 1.0 (except for KAP projects). For “efficiency”, weights for all three indicators are the same (except for KAP projects, where only two indicators are relevant). In the Total Average Score, the average score for “effectiveness has a weight of 50% and those of the other two criteria 25%.

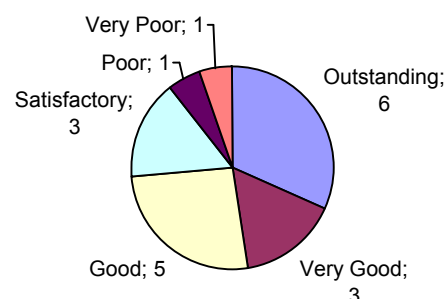
Table 4.7 Summary Scores for the Projects in the Sample for the Slovak Republic

Average Score	Overall		Effectiveness		Relevance		Efficiency	
	# of projects		# of projects		# of projects		# of projects	
0.0 – 1.9: Very Poor	1	2	1	4	1	2	1	1
2.0 – 2.9: Poor	1		3		1			
3.0 – 3.4: Satisfactory	3	8	5	7	2	6	5	6
3.5 – 3.9: Good	5		2		4			
4.0 – 4.4: Very Good	3	9	2	8	3	11	2	12
4.5 – 5.0: Outstanding	6		6		8			

4.3.2 Overall Project Assessments

The score table on the previous page and diagram 1 show that the average MPP project in the Slovak Republic was rated “good” and the average KAP project “very good”. Actually, almost half of the projects (MPP and KAP combined) were considered “very good” or “outstanding”, a bit over 40% “satisfactory” (defined as at least having a “satisfactory” score) or “good”, while only two projects were qualified as “poor” and “very poor”. This implies an overall success rate of almost 90%, which is very high. At the same time, the over a quarter of projects that were less than “good” show a number of weaknesses that will be further discussed below.

Graph 4.1 Overall Project Performance Slovakia



The overall average score has been compiled from twelve different indicators reflecting effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the projects. There are of course differences between the average scores per indicator from which a number of patterns can be discerned. Thus, looking at the six indicators of effectiveness it can be seen that MPP projects score on average “very good” on both completeness and quality of project documentation, “good” on impact/effects and sustainability, and “satisfactory” in terms of achieving goals and result, as well as replicability. For KAP projects, the completeness of project documentation was rated “outstanding”, quality of documentation “very good”, achievement of goals and results, as well as impact/effects were considered “good”, while sustainability and replicability were rated as “satisfactory”.

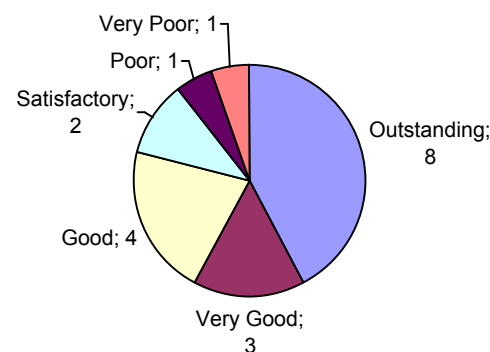
Graph 4.2 Project Effectiveness Slovakia



As concerns project relevance (see graph on next page), MPP projects scored “outstanding” on relevance of project in relation to Matra and

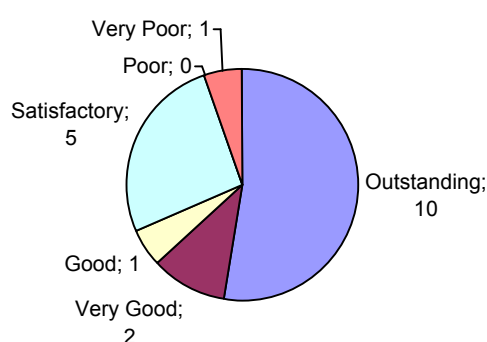
Country goals and strategies, “very good” on relevance in the eyes of local stakeholders and “satisfactory” in terms of the continuation of the relation of the Dutch and the local partner after completion of the project. KAP projects scored “very good” on both Matra and country relevance and relevance in the eyes of local stakeholders. The third indicator is not applicable in the case of KAP projects.

Graph 4.3 Project Relevance Slovakia



Regarding project efficiency, MPP projects on average scored “very good” on appropriateness of inputs/budget in relation to outputs/results and “good” on project performance in relation to inputs/budget and on the share of the budget allocated to or spent on inputs in/from The Netherlands or the recipient country. KAP projects scored “good” on the first indicator, “very good” on the second, whereas the third is not applicable.

Graph 4.4 Project Efficiency Slovakia



Thus, it can be seen that MPP projects score “good” in terms of overall effectiveness, relevance and efficiency, while KAP projects score “good” on effectiveness and “very good” on relevance and efficiency. At the same time, two MPP and two KAP projects scored “poor” or “very poor” on efficiency, two MPP projects scored “poor” or “very poor” on relevance, and one MPP project scored “very poor” on efficiency.

The following are the main conclusions from the Slovakia evaluation, qualifying the above mentioned scores, in particular for the five projects in the sample that scored less than

“good”. Once again, the authors would like to caution against interpreting the scores too rigidly as expressing absolute values about indicators and overall project performance, as explained in section 1.5 of chapter 1. While the vast majority of projects seem to have gone well, or even very well, there are nonetheless a number of projects with problems and issues worth highlighting in order to help further improving the performance of projects.

4.3.3 Effectiveness

4.3.3.1 Completeness and Quality of Project Documentation

Thirteen approved MPP project documents were reviewed by the evaluation team in the Slovak Republic. The quality of the proposals is generally high and in some cases of very high quality (i.e. SK/002601 “Building Civil Society through Children”). Several were

improved as applicants were requested to re-formulate their proposals following observations from the Matra approval committee in The Hague. A considerable number of MPP proposals were innovative in their design – testing/validating new approaches and methodologies and promoting inter-disciplinary collaboration (i.e. SK/004201 “Integrated Psychiatric Mental Health Care” and SK/002601 “Building Civil Society through Children” among others).

The quality of the proposal largely reflected the competence of the Dutch applicant (and national partner when they participated): Proposals such as SK/001402 “Civil Link”, SK/000501 “Roma Community Centre”, SK/003001 “European Law Certificate” and SK/000801 “Supporting Professional Journalism” were found to be excessively ambitious *vis a vis* resources and timelines, unrealistic in their objectives, or questionable in their technical approach – for example, proposing the transfer of models or methodologies without adequate baseline knowledge.

A common flaw in the design of most MPP projects was the lack of attention given to feasibility/risk analysis and sustainability issues; in several cases the project could have avoided subsequent implementation problems had these aspects been better addressed at the design stage. Logical frameworks were lacking in approximately half of the MPP sample, as were the related success criteria and indicators that are important to assess impact and changes to baseline conditions.

In terms of design participation, in Slovakia, the design of almost two-thirds of the MPP sample was driven by the Dutch organization with limited national stakeholder input (i.e. SK/004101 “Non Profit Housing” and SK/000501 “Roma Community Centre” among others). The lack of substantive involvement by national partners in the design process - often limited to a letter of endorsement attached to the proposal - did not encourage ownership or a true sense of partnership, and in such projects the written commitment of national partners was often lacking in actual practice. Approximately one-third of the Slovak MPP sample was designed with the participation of national partners (i.e. SK/001402 “Civil Link”, SK/002501 “Empowering Women”, SK/004201 “Integrated Psychiatric Mental Health Care”), often reflecting prior work relations and rapport between both organizations. There were no cases within the project sample in which MPP project design was initially designed by a national NGO and assumed by a Dutch organization.

Project approvals for MPPs usually took six months on average, which was considered a reasonable timeframe by the national partners. In some cases, approval delays were attributed to changes in Matra guidelines that were introduced between 1999 and 2000. According to Dutch embassy staff, there were difficulties in appraising national pro-forma costs when MPP proposal budgets were reviewed in The Hague; in such cases the respective embassy sometimes had to consult other in-country donors regarding the honoraria paid to national experts and consultants, costs for equipment and workshops, and other items.

Projects that were jointly formulated by Dutch and national partners were generally superior in terms of design quality, understanding of the issues being addressed and relevance to national/local contexts. Conversely, the exclusion of national partners from project design and budgeting was found to increase the risk of poor project performance and lack of sustainability. When national participation was lacking, the technical competence and country experience of the Dutch organization became a key determinant of design quality; several MPPs were successful largely for this reason. Although the input of national stakeholders was often limited during project design, in several cases they were able to subsequently modify

work plans (i.e. SK/002302 “Improving Environmental Education”, SK/002601 “Building Civil Society through Children”).

Most MPP budgets were determined by the Dutch organization without consulting national partners – even when they participated in other aspects of project design. This exclusion may partially explain the tendency of most MPP projects to allocate significant portions of the budget - averaging 60% upwards - to the Dutch organization and contracted Dutch experts. While such allocations were often necessary to finance the transfer of technical expertise or pay visiting Dutch experts, in some projects the skewed budget distribution constrained the implementation or consolidation of activities on the ground (i.e. SK/000501 “Roma Community Centre”), or lowered the motivation of national partners (SK000801 “Supporting Professional Journalism”).

KAP projects are fundamentally different from MPPs and their design must be assessed in a different light. Design formats were simpler and more straightforward, reflecting the smaller scale of resources and timeframes involved. They were clearly more driven by national stakeholders as it was up to the national organization to design the project without the intermediation of Dutch organizations.

The quality of proposals was again determined by the capacity and competence of the applicant: The evaluation team found examples of very well-designed KAP projects (i.e. KAP 25/1999 “Influencing Public Attitudes in Substitute Family Care”) as well as unrealistic or poorly-formulated initiatives (i.e. KAP 1/2000 “Improving Public Planning at Banska Stiavnica” and KAP 3/2002 “Unemployed Clubs”). This being said, the design of most KAP proposals fall in a ‘middle ground’ and were adequate considering the scope of the projects, which were straightforward and often limited to single outputs such as publications or workshops (KAP 9/2001 “We live with Roma, it depends on how”, KAP 4/2002 “Global Report on State of Society”).

There is considerable potential for synergy between KAP and MPP projects that is not fully exploited. In spite of their different modalities, KAP projects offer a preparatory stage or “incubator” for testing and validating pilot initiatives before they are developed into full projects. In Slovakia, several examples were found of a KAP project leading to an MPP and it was felt that the links between KAP and MPP projects could be further strengthened. This would additionally help towards integrating monitoring and evaluation activities for the two programmes, and deepen collaboration between the embassy focal point and Matra staff in The Hague.

4.3.3.2 Project Performance: Achievement of Results, Goals and Impact

Evaluation findings on project performance and impact in Slovakia were positive: Findings for the 19 projects evaluated showed that ten (53% of the combined project sample) had met or exceeded their objectives, seven (37%) had experienced partial success and two - one KAP, one MPP - were unsuccessful (10%).

It is important to distinguish the influence of the different

“The KAP project was an initial and most essential project for successful launching of INDEX book club...[The catalogue] was the first presentation of its kind in the history of Slovak literature.... Publication of the catalogue has enhanced cultural diversity, freedom of opinion and public debate.”

- Final Report KAP 23/1999

project modalities on performance: KAPs tended to have a higher success rate than MPPs, yet were considerably smaller in scale, less ambitious and often based on a single activity or product. As one consultant noted, “it was difficult to fail” under such circumstances. KAPs were unsuccessful when they attempted to generate and sustain processes that were unrealistic in relation to the time and resources available, and/or were implemented as “stand alone” projects that were not part of a wider initiative.

The final report gives very strong proof of the successful implementation of the project...a wide range of target groups and stakeholders were involved. Project results were disseminated to various groups among potential beneficiaries...Project implementation by itself is an example of good practice.”

- Comments of a Netherlands Embassy staff member to the Final Report of SK/002601 “Building Civil Society through Children and Youth”

A major contributing factor to MPP project impact was the successful transfer and dissemination of innovative methodologies and approaches by Dutch organizations to receptive and capable national partners. Several MPPs have influenced national policy and legislation, and various stand out as “best practices”: SK/002601 “Building Civil Society through Children and Youth” was a very successful project that demonstrated ‘best practices’ by creating a network of trainers, youth organizations, CSOs and schools; producing innovative training manuals and curricular material; and developing youth leadership skills. Elements of an innovative mental health care model developed with the support of SK/004201 “Integrated Psychiatric Mental Health

Care” have been incorporated to national policy. The SK/002501 “Empowering Women” project led to the creation of a gender commission in Parliament that is still functioning. The Ministry of Interior has adopted the approach developed by SK/004001 “Improved Relations between Police and Public” to train policemen on cultural sensitivity issues with Roma communities. Environmental contests, school clubs and curricula developed under SK/002302 “Improve Environmental Education” have been expanded across regional school networks. The KAP 6/2000 “Involving Children & Young People in Air Protection” in Liptovský Hradok (Slovakia) has led to measurable improvements in air local quality by regulating the burning of agricultural residue. The Global Report on the State of Society series, an annual publication that was produced in 2002 with KAP funds, has more than 270,000 entries in Google. The report is published by the Institute of Public Affairs/IVO, a renowned think-tank that has had influenced policy debate and public sector reform during the last decade through the Report and its other activities.

Likewise, the capacity of national institutions (and of key individuals) to adjust project initiatives to changing policy and institutional environments during the transition period was important for ensuring relevance and continued momentum. Many of the more successful initiatives were able to consolidate lasting partnerships between civic groups, NGOs and government institutions. The participatory regional planning process promoted by the SK/001402 “Civil Link” project had initially targeted pilot districts in Kosice, yet was able to adjust and continue activities when the districts were re-structured into Self-Governing Regions.

“The mini-projects turned out to be a great innovation in this project. They served the purpose to help the participants internalize the newly acquired skills and knowledge, give them confidence, and created a feeling of ownership and responsibility for their ideas and deeds...This resulted not only in better skills to work with children, but also improved capacity to create and innovate.”

- Final Report, SK/002601 “Building Civil Society through Children and Youth”

The SK/004201 “Integrated Psychiatric Mental Health Care” supported an innovative methodological approach to mental health care that had been pioneered by a Slovak-based practitioner at a mental institute in Michalovce, and has since been transferred to national policy levels.

The less successful projects were constrained by unrealistic design, differing perceptions and expectations between Dutch and national partners in the case of MPPs, low technical/organizational capacity and difficulties in adjusting to changing contexts. Over-ambitious and/or unclear design undermined the implementation of projects such as KAP 1/2000 “Involving the Public in the Planning Process in Banska Stiavnica, KAP 3/3200 “Unemployed Clubs” and SK/000501 “Roma Community Centre”. In these cases, poor design and performance were linked to the weak capacity of Dutch and national partners.

There was one exception in which the national institution’s capacity and commitment were able to offset an excessively ambitious project design and generate good performance: KAP 25/1999 “Influencing Public Attitudes in Relation to Family Care” was successfully implemented and received a UNICEF award. Projects that functioned as ‘stand alone’ initiatives and failed to establish linkages with counterpart government institutions had limited impact and no sustainability, i.e. SK/000501 “Roma Community Centre” and KAP 1/2000 “Involving the Public in the Planning Process in Banska Stiavnica” - as opposed to similar yet successful initiatives such as SK/001402 “Civil Link” which generated strong local government commitments.

4.3.3.3 Institutional Capacity

In the case of Slovakia, institutional capacity was recognized as a primary determinant of project performance and impact. Capacity and experience levels were very closely linked to the quality and feasibility of project design, the technical competence of its implementers, the ability to nurture partnerships, and the capacity to adjust to changes in the policy and institutional environments. This has direct implications for the Matra and KAP project appraisal process, as the lack of institutional assessment heightens the risk of awarding grants to organizations that are unprepared to assume projects – approximating a “hit or miss” situation.

Fortunately, most Dutch organizations involved demonstrated competence and experience. In such cases they were established institutions with prior experience in the project theme and country – p.e. the Dutch organizations involved in SK/0020601 “Building Civil Society through Children and Youth” and the Dutch partners involved in SK/0000601 “Development of Public Administration Training Institute”. However, the capacity of Dutch partners was not always consistent and the approval of MPP grants to less capable organizations (i.e. SK/000501 “Roma Community Centre”) weakened project performance and limited chances for success. The same can be said for some of the national partners that were involved in these projects.

Matra applicants tend to come from a relatively closed circle of Dutch NGOs that have established relations with the Foreign Affairs Ministry. This has helped to reduce risks by involving reliable institutions, which is understandable considering that Matra recipients become legal partners to the Ministry by virtue of managing public development funds. However, the practice limits Matra’s diversity and to an extent its demand-driven nature; as

one staff member acknowledged, “you keep seeing the same faces”. Moreover, evaluation findings indicate that not all awarded organizations had adequate capabilities to manage their projects. Better screening of applicants – with an in-country verification of their activities by embassy staff – could offer a more effective option for quality control, while enabling a more open convocation of partners.

There is a strong consensus among national stakeholders that the main “value added” of MPPs was the transfer of new methodologies and skills from the Dutch partners, and access to a pool of international expertise through workshops, study tours and exchanges. One of the most significant impacts of Matra has been the strengthening of institutional and personal capacities, even when this was not explicitly stated as a project objective.

“Let us share our belief that this project, any project for that matter, could be successful only if the local and the Netherlands partner enjoy a strong working relationship, an ability to understand each other’s needs, flexibility to meet them and desire to learn from each other.”

- Final Report for SK/002601 “Building Civil Society through Children and Youth”

Examples include the Slovak partner involved in SK/000601 “Development of Public Training Institute”, which was able to expose its staff to EU public policy and has become a leading provider of public administration training since the country’s EU accession. Although the SK/000801 “Supporting Professional Journalism” has not been sustainable as a project, several of the participating journalists have moved on to key positions in the media and continue to influence public opinion.

Institutional strengthening is possible even when funds are limited and a Dutch partner is lacking: Slovakia’s established Milan Simecka Foundation used its KAP grant to publish one of the first inter-disciplinary workshops on Roma issues. This has served as an “entry point” for many of its current activities (job training, social research) in Roma communities; the Foundation is now a recognized player in this field.

4.3.3.4 Sustainability:

Conducting an ex-post evaluation offers unique opportunities to assess post-project sustainability; however, in order to do so there needs to be a common understanding of the concept. For the purpose of this evaluation the team agreed on the following sustainability criteria:

- The activities and process initiated through the project are being continued and/or expanded by national stakeholders after the project’s termination.
- The project contributed directly to new policies and/or legislation that were adopted and are being applied beyond the project horizon.
- The national partner organization and stakeholders have advanced in their mandates after the project terminated, as a result of strengthened capacities and the experience obtained from the project.
- Cooperation between the Dutch and national partner organizations has continued beyond the project’s termination (for MPPs only).

In Slovakia, approximately 58% of the full MPP project sample met one or more of the sustainability criteria, while two projects had failed to generate sustainability in any form. Sustainability trends for the KAP projects were similar – with 57% or four out of seven of the

sample meeting one or more of criteria – although the team felt that sustainability was not as relevant an issue for the smaller, “gap-filling” projects that were based on single activities or products. However, the outputs generated by some KAP projects have proven to be sustainable, i.e. agricultural burning regulations through KAP 6/2000 “Involvement of Children and Young People in Air Protection” and practices influenced by KAP 25/1999 “Influencing Attitudes of Public in Substitute Family Care”.

Several projects have demonstrated a dynamic sustainability - expanding and ‘mainstreaming’ pilot processes on a regional or national scale, involving a wider range of stakeholders, influencing the policy environment and generating new support commitments. Such projects include SK/002302 “Improving Environmental Education”, SK/004201 “Integrated Psychiatric Mental Health Care”, SK/002601 “Building Civil Society through Children”, and SK/004001 “Improved Relations between Police and Public”.

In Slovakia, projects addressing health, human welfare and environmental themes were generally sustainable, although a number of random factors are likely to have influenced this trend: The capacity of participating institutions, the localized (and hence more manageable) context of several initiatives, coordination with government/sector counterparts and strategic timing in terms of opportunity - in comparison with the recognized difficulties of sustaining change within larger government institutions that were affected by public sector reform, staff turnover and other transition-related changes; or the challenges of affecting deep-seated attitudes and biases towards Roma communities.

The lack of sustainability was attributed to low institutional capacity and inadequate experience among both Dutch and national partners; the absence of linkages with government counterparts (undermining political commitment and chances for financial/in-kind support beyond the project’s termination); excessively ambitious project design; and inability to adjust to changing contexts. Some of these problems might have been anticipated through (i) better screening of Dutch and national partner organizations during the project approval process (i.e. SK/000501 “Roma Community Centre”); (ii) ensuring closer links to government counterparts and ongoing development initiatives during implementation (i.e. SK/000501 “Roma Community Centre”, KAP 1/2000 “Public Planning Process in Banska Stiavnica”); and (iii) facilitating partnering and guidance between successful and less-successful projects addressing common themes.

4.3.4 Relevance

The vast majority of projects in the sample were considered to be relevant or very relevant in terms of Matra’s overall objectives of promoting social transformation and in terms of the country itself. The same is the case in terms of relevance in the eyes of local actors.

This seems to indicate that Matra has clearly contributed to social transformation processes in Slovakia. Evaluation findings indicate that almost half of the MPP projects fully met or exceeded their goals, and that several of these generated policy and institutional impacts on a national scale. There is a strong consensus regarding the “value added” of Matra in general and MPP projects in particular: The transfer of innovative methodologies and new skills; the opportunity to test, validate and disseminate pilot approaches; and the access provided to pool of qualified international expertise and institutions were recognized as Matra’s key contributions by national stakeholders.

A very important effect of Matra has been its advocacy and support for partnerships between government and non-governmental institutions. This was decisive to ensure impact and sustainability beyond the project horizon, and was a consistent feature in the more successful MPP and KAP projects. The brokering of public-private partnerships carried particular importance in the context of transition economies. It also promoted the EU's principle of subsidiarity and in this sense has contributed indirectly to the accession process. In this sense, "stand alone" projects that did not generate such linkages often failed to meet their objectives and were not sustainable.

The most appreciated feature of KAP projects was the provision of direct and rapid support for strategic 'gap filling' – often serving as a catalyst towards developing larger initiatives. There is excellent potential to link both modalities by utilizing KAPs as a preparatory phase or "incubator" to test and validate pilot approaches before they are expanded into full Matra projects. While the evaluation team did find examples of synergy between KAP and Matra projects (and respective national organizations) they were *ad hoc* exceptions to the rule. The linkage between both modalities should be strengthened in the future, as this would enable Matra to (i) improve the quality of its projects through an incremental process of testing and consolidation, (ii) screen prospective MPP national partners through smaller KAP initiatives, and (iii) streamline monitoring and evaluation activities between both modalities.

4.3.5 Efficiency

In accordance with the score table, efficiency was "very high" or even "outstanding" in two thirds of projects in the sample, while "satisfactory" or "good" in another one third. In fact, only one project was considered inefficient on all three indicators.

It is difficult to evaluate project efficiency through rapid project visits that offered limited insight into the actual implementation process. Likewise, the estimation of social benefit deriving from impacts on policy and legislation are outside the scope of this evaluation, and would require a separate study.

Nevertheless, beneficiary and partner perceptions indicate that most MPP and KAP projects have been cost-effective in terms of the results generated with available resources. In this regard, the primary value added perceived from Matra was the transfer of methodologies; the implementation and dissemination of pilot experiences; access to an international pool of expertise through the Dutch partner; and strategic 'gap-filling' support in the case of the KAPs. Examples of financial contributions from national partners were not found in the sample (only in-kind contributions were acknowledged although seldom documented), and it would appear that financial costs were assumed entirely by the Dutch government.

In spite of the generally positive assessment, examples of cost-ineffectiveness in MPP projects were brought to the attention of the evaluators on several occasions:

When an inordinately high portion of the budget was assigned to the Dutch implementing partner, i.e. above 60%, this often generated an opportunity cost by diminishing resources for field activities that were critical for implementation. In such cases, opportunities for generating impact and sustainability were weakened in projects such as SK/000501 "Roma Community Centre" and SK/000801 "Supporting Professional Journalism". Some

expenditures – such as the construction of a pre-fabricated ‘model’ Roma demonstration home for display and a community centre that were both distant from local Roma settlements (the centre was closed and is now rented to a school) were questionable in cultural and cost-benefit perspective. This created opportunities for financial mismanagement by national partners (Nevipe Foundation Slovakia and Zdruzenie obcanov Romov/ZOR), which were subsequently removed from the project and replaced by Dignified Life, a non-Roma NGO (SK/000501 “Roma Community Centre”).

Several projects noted that visiting Dutch experts (who came as trainers or resource persons on short missions) were often poorly prepared, unfamiliar with the national context and had little to offer technically, yet received high fees that absorbed a large share of the budget. In such cases it was felt that the money would have been better used for other activities (i.e. SK/000801 “Supporting Professional Journalism, SK/002501 “Empowering Women” and SK/001402 “Civil Link”). Respondents agreed that these situations could have been avoided with better advance screening of experts and consultants, and the review of their CVs by national partners.

Efficiency and cost-effectiveness are linked to participation, transparency and ownership. The transparent management of budgets can improve cost-effectiveness, as demonstrated by the few projects where national partners co-managed resources with the Dutch organization. SK/002601 “Building Civil Society through Children and Youth” was able to save funds that were subsequently re-programmed to expand activities, produce new publications and extend the implementation period.

Although Matra supports the partnering of Dutch and national organizations, the evaluators found that national/local participation was generally weak in MPP project design, strategic project management, selection of international experts and consultants, and budgetary planning/administration. In this respect, “partnership” did not exist in a real sense and when there was one, it was usually at the initiative of the Dutch partner that chose to raise participation opportunities rather than the result of programme policy.

Stakeholder participation was highest when both Dutch and national organizations had prior experience working together, and/or the Dutch partner simply approached the project with an open attitude. This generated a relation of transparency and trust that enabled the national partner to adjust work plans, revise budget lines and adapt methodologies when necessary. Positive examples included SK/002601 “Building Civil Society through Children” and SK/004201 “Integrated Psychiatric Mental Health Care”, However, these were a minority within the MPP sample.

“We never saw the budget. That part was handled by the Dutch.”

- The Director of Dignified Life, the national partner NGO for SK/000501 “Roma Community Centre”

In most cases, national partner organizations had little if any influence on budgeting or the management of project resources – and often had never seen the budget. Progress, monitoring and final reports were based on the views of the implementing Dutch organization and usually failed to integrate the perspective of national stakeholders. Although the comments of the national partner were often annexed separately to progress reports, this arrangement did not suggest true partnership.

On the other hand, there was high delegation of responsibility to national partners for implementation. National partners actively participated in managing the implementation of the various project activities, even when they had not participated in their

design. Stakeholder input was generally very positive in this respect, although the participation of Roma communities in SK/000501 “Roma Community Centre” was limited – as is often the case in such projects. Most MPP projects created Steering or Coordination Committees with national stakeholders; although these committees created opportunities for substantive participation, they were not always effective – some were relatively inactive. Several projects created newsletters and disseminated project activities to a wide range of national stakeholders.

“In general it can be said that it took much more time than expected to get things organized and to operate in a proper way. It became clear that the management team didn’t know how to organize and discuss or initiate/monitor the various activities. Many things were just left to the Roma people in the building, who also did not know what to do or what their tasks were.”

- SK 000501 Final Report

5. Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations

This final chapter will present a number of general conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations from the three country reports. In doing so, it will focus on trends and findings that seem to be relevant for all three countries and hence, probably, for other countries in which Matra is active as well. However, it will not attempt to make a comparative analysis between the three countries. There are two main reasons for this:

Firstly, the countries that were the focus of this project-level evaluation have been selected precisely because each of them is quite different from the others, i.e. in terms of size, with Russia being by far the biggest and Slovakia the smallest, and in terms of position vis-à-vis the European Union and progress towards reform and social transformation, with Slovakia already a member of the EU, Romania soon to be one and Russia not likely to ever become a member but trying to find its own position in the new world order. In combination, these three countries more or less represent the gamut of variety among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Secondly, the country evaluations have been carried out by different teams in Romania, Russia and Slovakia, composed of national experts. While the Evaluation Plan (Annex 2) provided for a common guideline and framework, it is nevertheless to some extent inevitable that the different teams have adopted somewhat different approaches and interpretations in practice. Even in the quantitative part of the analysis, i.e. the score table, interpretation of qualitative indicators into quantities can never be done in an entirely objective way. In this respect, the score tables must first and foremost be seen as indicative of features and trends among the projects in a country and certainly not as providing hard statistical evidence. It is very possible that one team in one country has systematically applied somewhat higher or lower ratings than a team in another country would have done, making comparisons between the score tables of the various countries hazardous.

A higher degree of standardization of approaches and interpretations could possibly have been achieved if all country evaluations had been carried out by the same team of people and if these people had gone through a more rigid preparatory training. However, this would have required substantially more time to carry out the evaluation (perhaps up to four times as long), which would not have been particularly efficient.

Furthermore, it was not the purpose of this evaluation to establish whether one country is “better” or “worse” in terms of success of its particular Matra programme. Rather, the aim is to draw overall conclusions about the effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of the Matra programme at the level of implementing projects, extract best practices and lessons learned, and provide a number of recommendations towards further improvement of the Programme as a whole.

Having said that, there is one overall trend, or rather principle, that can be mentioned here and that to a certain extent draws comparisons between the countries: While projects carried out in the framework of Matra (or indeed any projects for that matter) can provide valuable contributions to processes of social transformation and overall transition in a given country, by themselves these projects are unlikely to cause or even determine these processes, if only

because the amount of projects and funding involved is really quite modest if set against Government budgets and GDP figures. In other words, they must be seen as stimulating interventions that help to facilitate these processes and their success is therefore to a certain degree contingent to the extent in which these processes are already underway in the country. More concretely, in countries where the rule of law, press freedom, respect for human rights, private initiative and private property, etc., are well-established, and where Governments are keen on reform, there is more likely to be an enabling environment in which Matra projects can be successfully implemented and achieve high impact and sustainability than in countries that are less advanced in this respect.

Thus, it can be expected that overall Matra projects would be more effective in countries like Slovakia and Romania than in Russia. At the same time,

it is exactly in countries where the social transformation processes are weakest where Matra's interventions are arguably most relevant,

if perhaps not most effective, if the aim is to ultimately have pluralist, democratic and constitutional states governed by the rule of law in which citizens and authorities jointly assume the responsibility for shaping society established in all of the countries in the region.

If we look at the project samples in the three countries, it can be concluded that in all of them, in overall terms, effectiveness, relevance and efficiency has been good,

with perhaps only 8 out of 65 projects, or roughly one project in every eight, having been unsuccessful and another 9, or one in seven, having been merely “satisfactory”. On the other hand, more than half of all projects were evaluated as “very good” or “outstanding”. Moreover, high or low marks on effectiveness, relevance and efficiency generally coincided on all or most of the twelve indicators.

This is in a way stating the obvious, as a well-designed project, run by a professional and experienced Dutch organization in close partnership with a capable local partner and implemented in a cost-effective manner, is more likely to achieve its results and goals, be sustainable and replicable elsewhere, and have impact and effects that is highly relevant for Matra, the country and local stakeholders, than a project that does not combine these elements. The results of the evaluation therefore seem to indicate that in most cases, the combination is right to deliver successful projects.

However, it should be emphasized again, as explained in detail in the introduction chapter, that care should be given not to interpret the scores that were assigned to the projects too rigidly as expressing absolute values about indicators and overall project performance. For this, the developed indicators are not statistically rigid and quantifiable enough and are thus very much open for interpretation and debate. Also, the lack of time available did only allow for a relatively superficial evaluation of each project, while detailed data on budget breakdowns were often incomplete, making it very hard to assess project efficiency in many cases. Moreover, efficiency of Matra projects can only be really measured if compared with similar projects from other donors or if set against a standard of efficiency for Matra projects.

In the absence of such tools, any interpretations and conclusions about efficiency are necessarily subjective.

Also, comparing scores between projects for individual indicators as well as overall performance is tricky, in particular between projects of different countries. The scores have been allotted by the individual experts involved in the evaluation for the projects that were assigned to each of them. It is therefore possible, indeed likely, that scores are systematically higher or lower awarded depending on the personal interpretation of each expert. Moreover, the projects in the sample are very different from each other. Therefore, the score-tables and their interpretation should be seen as indicative and showing trends rather than hard facts. As such, it provides a tool for systematically extracting general conclusions and recommendations out of the qualitative information collected for each individual project.

In this sense, the one in every four projects that has failed or that has merely been satisfactory often suffered from important flaws in design and implementation that may get overshadowed by the good or very good results of most other projects. Moreover, many of the successful projects still suffered from weaknesses that may not have had significant negative effects on results, but that should still be noted and analysed in order to further increase the overall quality of the Programme in the future.

In terms of project design, the following are the main conclusions and recommendations:

In all three countries it was observed that the quality of project documentation was generally good, but that there is scope for improvement on some important aspects.

The vast majority of project proposals were clear in defining and analyzing the problems and in providing the strategy to address these, backed up by realistic implementation plans, time-frames and detailed budgets. Target groups were clearly specified, but seldom quantified and a distinction between direct recipients and indirect beneficiaries was rarely made. Objectives, goals, expected results and activities were generally logically presented, although sometimes overall objectives and project goals were mixed up and results were defined as activities. Justification of the project in terms of relevance to Matra objectives and country needs was almost always provided. Management arrangements were indicated, but often lacked details about decision-making processes and information flows, and organizational charts were seldom provided. **Therefore, although the quality was generally good, there is still scope for further improvement in proposal preparation.**

The proposals were often weak on feasibility and sustainability mechanisms and in particular on risk assessment and analysis.

The latter is of particular concern as in some countries, external risks that may affect the outcome of the project are considerable, but seldom fully appreciated. A number of projects there clearly failed because the complexities and risks involved were underestimated, whereas a few projects that had carried out a thorough risk assessment, including defining ways of averting or overcoming these, were able to effectively respond when these occurred.

Inclusion of detailed feasibility, sustainability and risk analyses in project proposals should receive more attention.

In most cases, logical frameworks were not provided as part of the project proposal and measurable indicators of impact were poorly developed

This is a pity, as, apart from being a requirement under the 2002 MPP Subsidy Guidelines, it is a very useful tool to really think logically and rigidly through the whole structure of objectives, goals, results and activities and make the proposal more cohesive. Also, under the logical framework, indicators of success and means of verification need to be included as well as the assumptions (risks and preconditions) for achieving goals and results. Unfortunately, clear benchmarks and measurable and verifiable indicators were seldom provided in a systematic manner, which limited the prospects for effective impact assessment, monitoring and outcome evaluation. **It is therefore strongly recommended to insist on the preparation of logical frameworks as part of project proposals, as well as to develop a standardized system of measurable indicators and information/data to be collected that would enable more systematic impact assessment and outcome evaluation in the future.**

A key weakness in the preparation of budgets is the lack of counterpart contributions.

Although most proposals include some reference to in-kind contributions to be provided by the local partner or other stakeholders, these are seldom clearly specified or quantified and almost never included as part of the overall budget. As a result, most projects are 100% Matra-funded. This raises questions about real commitment for and ownership by the local partners of the project and ultimately its sustainability. General “Letters of Support” are often the only tangible, but unconvincing, indications of commitment provided. A few projects failed because their sustainability depended on the availability of budgetary resources from local Governments that failed to materialize.

While it must be recognized that making cash-contributions to the project surpasses the possibilities of most local implementing partners, it should not be difficult to specify and quantify in-kind contributions, such as human resources, use of office equipment, etc., as well as estimating budgetary resources required for sustainability. This would show a much more substantiated partnership between the Dutch and the local implementing organizations, whereby risks are shared to a larger extent and ownership of the local partners of results can be increased. In fact, the KAP programme works on this basis, whereby the Dutch Embassy provides a seed grant to match, or at least complement, resources already mobilized by the local applicant. There is no reason why this could not be more forcefully and systematically applied to the larger MPP projects as well. **It is therefore recommended that the inclusion of specified and quantified counterpart contributions in project proposals and budgets, as is already the practice in KAP, become one of the criteria for positively appraising MPP proposals.**

Progress and final reports were generally of good quality, providing clear and detailed information, although there is sometimes a tendency to focus on reporting on activities and processes, rather than on overall impact and effects. **Again, a well-prepared logical framework could greatly facilitate and improve reporting, as well as insistence from the side of Matra that the reports focus on overall impact and effects.**

In terms of project management, the following are the main conclusions and recommendations:

The key determinant of project success – and failure – was the institutional capacity of the partners.

This appeared to shape project outcomes to a greater extent than other factors, and in several cases enabled projects to surmount obstacles and adjust to the changing policy and institutional contexts of transition processes. In the case of MPPs, the capacity and experience of Dutch organizations was often more instrumental than that of national partners in affecting project performance. This occurred because project design, strategic management and budgetary planning/administration were generally controlled by the Dutch partner with limited national input. In some cases this situation weakened the rapport and spirit of partnership between stakeholders, discouraging national ownership. Dutch organizations with proven technical competence, prior country experience and established work relations tended to be more forthcoming in accommodating the participation of national partners in project design, budgeting and management. Those organizations that didn't were often new to the country, weaker in capacity and experience, and in a few cases opportunistic.

This finding has implications for the screening of MPP applicants, as the apparent limited appraisal of institutional capacity during the approval process generated a “hit or miss” situation that raised the level of risk. Although the majority of Dutch organizations proved capable and performed satisfactorily, a minority of weaker and comparatively inexperienced organizations was clearly unprepared to assume project implementation and would not have been awarded grants had an adequate screening procedure been in place. **The introduction of such procedures – i.e. verifying the applicants background and appraising ‘on the ground’ performance through the respective embassies – would enable Matra to widen the diversity and scope of participating Dutch organizations - and not rely on the same “trusted” NGOs that recur throughout the MPP portfolio.** This would additionally contribute to diversify project initiatives and enhance Matra's “demand-driven” focus.

Projects were sometimes too ambitious in their expectations of the extent to which they could influence policy reform and institutionalization of results.

While a number of projects, particularly in Slovakia and Romania, did manage to have impressive impact at the policy level, others failed to do so. In Russia, only few projects did. In some cases, assumptions about the readiness of Governments to embrace and push forward policy reforms were clearly unrealistic, in particular as Matra projects are not in a position to back up such reforms with generous investments. However, in most cases, the time frame of the project, i.e. two to three years, was simply too short to first produce successful pilot

experiments on the ground and then have these translated and adopted into national policy backed up by budgetary resources. Sometimes, this was well known from the start and Matra provided funding already knowing that there would be one or two follow-up projects, but in several cases Matra was confronted with the choice of rounding off a half-completed project or funding a follow-up project it had not planned to. Not surprisingly, the first type of projects were almost always more successful than the second type. On the other hand, some of the most successful projects were those that limited their ambitions to “providing basic conditions or a platform” for policy reform and institutionalization.

Matra could therefore encourage projects it would not like to get involved with beyond the regular timeframe to lower their ambitions on the policy front, while encouraging others, with a strong policy component, to come up with a realistic multi-phased strategy and timeframe for the proposed interventions, which can then be funded by Matra in clearly benchmarked phases, whereby the funding of each subsequent phase is contingent on the successful completion of the previous one. This would also avoid the occurrence of sometimes extensive time-gaps between the completion of one project and the start of the next phase.

The efficiency and cost-effectiveness of MPPs are influenced by the level of participation, transparency and national ownership.

Although the participation of national partner organizations in implementing project activities was consistently high, their inputs to project design, budgeting and strategic management were often lacking. Because project formulation and budgetary planning were generally controlled by the Dutch organization with limited (if any) participation by the national partner, there was a tendency to earmark an inordinate share of the budget (60-75%) to the fees, travel and DSAs of Dutch staff at the expense of ‘on the ground’ implementation activities. This practice often carried a high opportunity cost: Although in some cases these allocations were justified on technical grounds, several projects were unable to complete their work plans or consolidate impacts. Skewed budget allocations also discouraged national ownership and weakened the spirit of partnership. Stakeholder participation was highest when both Dutch and national organizations had prior experience working together, and/or the Dutch partner simply approached the project with an open attitude. When budgets were managed transparently with the input of national partners, efficiency and cost-effectiveness improved notably and several projects were able to save funds that were subsequently re-programmed to increase training activities, produce new publications and extend implementation. Greater participation and ownership by national partners also enhanced possibilities to raise national contributions for MPP projects, an aspect that was often missing in MPP proposals and budgets.

As a matter of principle, projects that are designed to be driven by the national partner, whereby the Dutch partner provides specialized and locally not available expertise rather than overall management services, and whereby a substantial part of the funds are channelled through the national partner, should receive preference over projects that are mostly driven by the Dutch implementing partner.

Maximizing the role of national partners is therefore desirable not only in terms of cost-efficiency, but also in terms of project effectiveness and sustainability.

While in KAP projects, by their nature, there is full ownership of the national organization, the maximum amount of funding is, for good reasons, limited. Yet, when such organizations “graduate” or become involved with MPP projects, something which fortunately happens quite often, they find themselves in an entirely different arrangement whereby a Dutch partner often takes the lead. This in itself is not a problem, but there were cases in the sample where the Dutch partner was considerably weaker than the local one, where the value-added of the Dutch partner was limited. In those cases, directly funding the national organization instead of through a Dutch partner could have given better results in the end.

Therefore, **there seems to be a gap between the KAP and the MPP sub-programmes that could perhaps be filled with a facility for providing larger-size grants for national organizations that have a proven track record of professionalism and success in carrying out projects and that could take the initiative in applying and leading MPP-style projects. The requirement for partnership with a Dutch organization should remain, but then specifically in terms of providing expert services, whereby the national organization determines the type and scope of services required.** While the evaluators acknowledge that there are many practical obstacles to overcome before setting up such a facility, they think it is well worth exploring the possibilities.

Lack of systematic dissemination and expansion of successful projects limits the overall impact of Matra assistance.

As a result, projects that are similar in theme and objectives, even within the same country, often do not know about each other’s existence and are therefore unable to benefit from each other’s experience or join forces in reaching the shared objectives. Also, given that Matra’s overall funds are very modest in relation to the size and budgets of most of the countries in which it operates, there is a risk that the programme remains too fragmented and provides “drops in the ocean” rather than systematic impact of social transformation processes. **More systematic monitoring and evaluation, for example through focus group or other “cluster” arrangements could help in widening the scope of project monitoring, improving implementation quality and disseminating impact of MPP and KAP projects in a cost-effective manner.**

Monitoring and evaluation practices were based on annual country missions to individual projects that were unable to cover the project sample. At best, annual monitoring missions were able to reach 50% of the MPP project portfolio in a given year, while many KAP projects were never visited by the embassy focal point because of their number and dispersion. There are opportunities to organize project monitoring and evaluation activities by thematic clusters, bringing key stakeholders together to assess their own performance, discuss common issues and develop solutions jointly. While group workshops or encounters should not replace site visits, they could allow Matra focal points to cover a wider sample within the limited timeframe. These arrangements would also improve Matra’s didactic value by encouraging interaction and learning among participants, enabling weaker projects to receive guidance from “best practice” initiatives and more capable organizations. More details on this can be found at the end of this chapter in the section on Some General Observations on Monitoring & Evaluation.

There are also opportunities to support horizontal collaboration and partnering between MPP and KAP initiatives with common themes as well as engage national consultants to assist M&E between annual missions from The Hague.

The experience of other donors (including UNDP) in managing small grants programmes and establishing selection/steering committees with national representation could help in managing the large numbers of dispersed KAP projects in each country. Newly approved projects could further benefit from “inception” workshops organized periodically to assist partners in reviewing work plans, timelines, institutional roles and stakeholder responsibilities before beginning implementation, to anticipate problems and make timely adjustments. The additional investment required for such activities would pay off in terms of impact, sustainability and dissemination - contributing to higher rates of project success.

Some Additional Observations on Monitoring & Evaluation

External M&E practices by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch embassies were limited and insufficient to cover the number of ongoing MPP and KAP projects. There were no pre-approval site visits to evaluate the feasibility of project proposals or verify the capacity of the Dutch applicant or national partner, or assessments of institutional capacity during the review of MPP proposals at The Hague. This clearly introduced a risk element that raised the possibility of awarding Matra grants to unprepared applicants – although in practice this happened in a small minority of projects within the samples.

In general, MPP proposals were conceived and designed by the Dutch implementing organization, with varying levels of participation by the national partner. Opportunities for national participation were highest when the Dutch organization had prior country experience and relations with national institutions. National input to project design was lowest when Dutch organizations were new to the country and unfamiliar with the institutional environment; in such situations proposals were often already designed before potential national partners were approached. Although the Embassy staff of all three countries often forwarded comments on MPP proposals to the Matra committee, their role in screening applicants and verifying the capacity of Dutch and national partners on the ground could have been strengthened.

There were annual monitoring missions from The Hague to individual countries, where the Ministry’s Matra representative visited a sample of MPP projects accompanied by the corresponding embassy focal point. These missions were brief and often combined public relations and protocol purposes; direct contacts with “downstream” beneficiaries were usually limited and in-depth monitoring lacking. Moreover, the brief duration of the annual missions was insufficient to cover the full project sample – in Romania, the Matra representative was able to cover about 50% of ongoing MPP projects during a 10-day visit. Although the intention is to visit different projects every year in order to monitor all MPPs at least once during their implementation, this practice was insufficient and might have been improved had the embassies been given a more proactive role in assisting the monitoring of MPP projects, i.e. scheduling intermittent site visits in between annual Matra missions or hiring national consultants to cover a wider sample.

On the other hand, Matra staff in The Hague scrutinized progress and final reports submitted

by the Dutch partners, and financial monitoring was stringent in principle. Although audits were required for all MPP projects, several of the terminated projects that were evaluated had not been audited. However, it is not clear whether this was due to neglect on the side of the reporting party (and a lack of follow-up by Matra), incomplete files or changes in Matra guidelines after 2002. Final reports were also lacking for some of the recently-terminated MPP projects; the evaluators were told that Dutch partners were given three months to submit the report after the project's termination, and that it was up to the Ministry to ensure they were received on schedule.

The limited responsibility of Dutch embassies for MPP projects also affected the Matra programme's ability to anticipate problems that might have been resolved through timely coordination and intervention. Examples include duplications and overlaps with other donor/EU projects; not taking advantage of cooperation opportunities; and failing to address problematic projects at an early stage. However, actions generally were taken when problems reached a critical stage.

The monitoring needs of KAP projects were less demanding given the smaller scale of activities and funding, yet more difficult to cover in terms of their number and dispersion; at any given time there were a large number of ongoing KAP projects spread across the countries. In Slovakia, the KAP focal point tried to visit each project at least once during its implementation. Romania is considerably larger in geographic area, and the KAP focal point organized bi-annual project visits to specific regions; she has been able to visit about 50% of the KAP projects at least once. In Russia, with its enormously vast territory and by far the largest KAP programme, effective monitoring poses truly daunting challenges.

The depth and quality of internal monitoring varied among Dutch and national partners for MPP projects. All Dutch organizations appear to have complied with their reporting requirements, although final reports are pending for a few projects. However, the evaluators noted that most progress and final reports were purely narrative and lacking in "hard" quantitative and qualitative analysis; this limitation is linked to project design and in particular the absence of measurable indicators, log-frames and baseline analysis in many MPP proposals.

As mentioned earlier, project reports tended to convey the views of the Dutch implementing partner (which was also the recipient of funds) while the input of the national partner was generally annexed on a separate sheet or absent altogether. Wider stakeholder consultation or independent monitoring involving national consultants would have improved the transparency and objectivity of some of these reports. In a few cases, the Dutch organization arranged for an external evaluation. In the case of KAP projects, examples of internal monitoring were not encountered among the sample nor were they expected given the limited scale, duration and focus of most KAPs.

"Best practices" in monitoring and evaluation were found in several MPP projects that merit recognition and could serve as models for future projects. SK/002601 "Building Civil Society through Children" excelled in this respect by applying a system of 'permanent evaluation' that included sending evaluation forms to 500 respondents and a two-day "lessons learned" workshop with participants from different organizations and regions, as well as a series of networking encounters. Internal evaluations were undertaken by RO/013301 "Supporting Participatory Democracy" and RO/012501 "Equal Opportunity for Roma Children."

Annex 1: Terms of Reference for Matra Evaluation at Project Level

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME REGIONAL BUREAU FOR EUROPE AND THE CIS

Proposal

CARRYING OUT MATRA PROJECTS PROGRAMME EVALUATION

1. Background

1.1. Matra Projects Programme (MPP)

At present, the Matra Programme as a whole is in transition. From now on, emphasis will no longer be on opening up the closed structures typical of former Communist regimes, i.e. helping to set up democratic institutions (at both governmental and non-governmental level), but more on strengthening progress towards pluralist and democratic societies whose citizens have a say in political and governmental structures. Eight of the 18 Matra countries have now joined the European Union. The programme is gradually being phased out in these countries. A Matra policy letter sent to the House of Representatives on 21 September 2004 sets out the new policy, not only for the new EU member states, but also for candidate countries and the EU's eastern and southern neighbours. The Matra Projects Programme now forms the core of the Matra Good Governance sub-programme, intended to contribute to the Dutch aim of helping selected countries in Central, Southeast and Eastern Europe to make the transition to pluralist, democratic states governed by the rule of law. Strengthening networks of NGOs, local and regional administrative bodies, environmental agencies, political parties and various small and medium-sized communities is the sub-programme's main activity. One of the aims of this evaluation will be to determine the extent to which the Matra Projects Programme subsidy scheme as it currently stands is the most effective way of achieving these objectives.

Terms of Reference (ToR) have been designed by MATRA to provide a framework for the evaluation of the classic Matra Programme for the period 1999-2003. This ToR has been incorporated into the present proposal from UNDP to better understand that scope and nature of activities and thus outcomes that would be performed and delivered.

The Matra Good Governance and Civil Society Programme (Matra), which is funded by the Netherlands government, consists of seven sub-programmes. The Matra Pre-Accession Programme has been operational since 1999. It is currently being evaluated as part of general Dutch pre-accession policy and therefore falls beyond the scope of this evaluation. Matra falls under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Grants) Framework Act and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grants Regulations, both of which came into effect on 24 December 1998 (official journal nr 739). The Matra Good Governance and Civil Society Programme consists of the following facilities in the period 1999-2003:

- Matra Projects Programme (MPP)
- Matra Multilateral Programme (MMP)
- Matra Programme for International Nature Conservation (PIN)
- Matra Training Programme (MOP)
- Matra Political Parties Programme (MPPP)
- Matra Small Activities Programme (KPA)
- Matra Small Embassy Projects Programme (KAP)
- Matra Specific Contributions Programme (*doelbijdragen*)

The evaluation will not address all sub-programmes since they differ considerably in management structure, financial scope and identity. Moreover some, such as the PIN and MPPP programmes, have been evaluated separately in 2004. The evaluation will therefore focus only on the sub-programmes which are carried out in the countries themselves and which have a similar focus, with local partners (mostly NGOs) playing a crucial role. These are the MPP and the KAP programmes.

The *general objective* of the Matra Programme is to encourage and support transformation⁸ from totalitarian states into pluralist, democratic, constitutional states governed by the rule of law, in Central and Eastern Europe (excluding those countries on the DAC-1 list of the OECD) and Turkey.⁹ Matra's particular aim is to support "the process of change within the state, its institutions, organisations of citizens, and their interrelations with a democratic society which citizens assume the responsibility for shaping".¹⁰ The same applies to the three sub-programmes. The programmes are all designed to achieve this objective by providing financial, project-based support for activities reinforcing social transformation in these countries. They are characterised by an open, applications-based approach.

Dutch NGOs can submit project proposals for the MPP to the Ministry twice a year. Projects are selected on the basis of a comparative assessment of their scores on the selection criteria¹¹. The MMP basically applies a first come first served system, while each embassy is itself responsible for the way in which it selects KAP projects. In order to ensure that projects cover all areas of society, the Ministry has selected a number of themes. Projects must relate to one of these themes to be eligible for a grant. The qualifying themes are: legislation and law, public administration, public order and police, human rights and minorities, strengthening environmental NGOs and environmental government agencies, public housing, information and media, culture, human welfare, health care, labour and social policy

⁸ "Matra" is an acronym of "*maatschappelijke transformatie*", meaning "social transformation".

⁹ Turkey became eligible for Matra support in 2000.

¹⁰ The government announced the establishment of the Matra Programme in a policy statement sent to Parliament on 17 November 1993. The programme became operational in 1994.

¹¹ This is done by an internal selection committee which compares project proposals on their respective merits. It takes into account a strict set of assessment criteria, including an equitable regional and thematic spread of projects.

and, lastly, education. MPP and MMP projects can last up to three years, although partners can submit follow-up proposals. The maximum grant is € 700,000. KAP's maximum grant is €15,000.

The policy outline of the MPP is published in the "Matra Projects Programme Grants Manual", which provides guidelines to the applicants and serves as an assessment tool for those managing Matra. The Matra Programme has a clear management structure, which is most evident in the MPP. A separate Matra division within the Southeast and Eastern Europe and Matra Programme Department,¹² DZO/UM, is responsible for overall programme management, coordination and financing. It carries out the selection process and monitors projects in close cooperation with Dutch embassies in the respective countries as well as with representatives of Netherlands line ministries. The KAP is managed by the embassies.

When it announced the Matra programme, the government said that it would be evaluated "in due course". It was accordingly decided in 1997 that the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would evaluate the programme for the first time. This resulted in the publication of the report "*Diamonds and Coals, evaluation of the Matra Programme of Assistance to Central and Eastern Europe, 1994-1997*" in 1999. It looked at the Matra Programme in Russia and Hungary, but its methodological design meant that conclusions could also be drawn about the programme as a whole. Six years on, Dutch government regulations¹³ require a new evaluation.

1.2. Bratislava Regional Centre of the United Nations Development Programme

The last 15 years have been a time of unprecedented change for the countries of Central and Southeastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, during their transition to market economies and democratic institutions. For the Central European and Baltic states, now members of the European Union, this transition has been largely a success. Social indicators are markedly higher than they were in 1990. Well-functioning market economies have been put in place and have attracted foreign investment. Industries have been restructured and new environmental policies and practices will promote a healthy resource base.

Progress is also being made in the countries of Southeastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). New economic and social institutions have been constructed from the remains of the Soviet Union and socialist Yugoslavia, and the macroeconomic trails of the 1990s have given way to growth. In many of these countries, multiparty parliamentary systems have taken hold and civil societies are discovering their own power.

But armed conflict in the Western Balkans, the Caucasus and Transdniestr, geographic isolation, and the weaker pull of the European agenda have inhibited the kinds of breakthroughs seen in Central Europe and the Baltic states. Human development remains well below 1990 levels. Economic growth is reported almost everywhere, but efforts to alleviate poverty are less than robust. Little, if any,

¹² Directie Zuidoost- en Oost-Europa en Matra (DZO).

¹³ Regeling prestatiegegevens en evaluatie onderzoek Rijksoverheid

headway is being made in addressing Soviet-era environmental disasters, such as the drying up of the Aral Sea. Even in relatively wealthy Western CIS countries, the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS casts a long shadow over development prospects. And despite considerable potential for information and communications technologies, over-regulated telecommunications sectors and ineffective national strategies are leaving many people on the wrong side of the digital divide.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) can help countries with their development agendas. It is the UN's global development network, focused on helping countries worldwide build and share solutions to the challenges of globalization and human development. UNDP's Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC) helps countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States, Central Europe, the Baltic states and the Balkans. The Bureau consists of RBEC's headquarters in UNDP-New York, RBEC's 24 country offices; and its Regional Centre in Bratislava.

The Bratislava Regional Centre (BRC) supports the region's 24 country offices and RBEC-New York, and links them to one another. It also:

- supports country offices by providing policy advising and support services delivered by UNDP regional specialists.
- manages regional projects (conducted in at least three countries), and helps to capture and spread development successes and best practices throughout the region.
- manages national UNDP programming in countries that do not have country offices: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Saint Helena, Slovakia, and Slovenia.
- hosts the regional offices of the United Nations' Population Fund, and the United Nation's Fund for Women.

To varying degrees the countries of the region suffer deficits of governance, in the political, economic and environmental spheres. To adequately respond to these challenges, the Regional Centre works in three focus areas:

- Democratic Governance – *Fostering Democratic Societies*
- Economic Governance – *Reducing poverty and bolstering the private sector*
- Energy and the Environment - *Preserving the natural resource base*

Some issues, however, belong to all three areas of governance; they cannot be contained in one or two.

They have been designated as cross-cutting issues. They are:

- Crisis Prevention and Recovery
- Gender
- HIV/AIDS
- Information and Communications Technologies for Development

The Bratislava Centre possesses a large Operational Unit that provides services for all countries where there are no local UNDP offices, as well as for the regional programme and other units located in

Bratislava, i.e. Global Environment Fund (GEF), Office of Audit and Performance Review (OAPR), Regional Information Managers (RIMs).

Having said the above about Bratislava Regional Centre it is possible to summarize that the Centre has adequate capacity to provide its services to MATRA in carrying out evaluation as planned. UNDP has the necessary expertise as well as staff for the countries involved and will provide the results of the project evaluation in the form of country studies.

2. Objective of the evaluation and main questions

2.1. Objective

The evaluation will assess the **effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of MPP and KAP** in the framework of the *general objective* of the Matra Programme and should therefore answer the following questions:

- Are the sub-programmes effective instruments in view of the programme's objective as outlined above (*effectiveness*)?
- Could the objectives be achieved with less funding (*efficiency*)?
- Are there reasonable prospects for future institutional improvement and/or continuation of the bilateral network or twinning after Matra projects have been completed (*sustainability*)?

2.2. Questions at project and programme level

The evaluation should distinguish between project and programme level, just as in the previous evaluation of IOB. **The effectiveness and efficiency of projects as well as the sustainability and relevance of their results will be evaluated at *project level*.** The effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of the sub-programmes as well as the organisation and management of the programme will be evaluated at *programme level*. **UNDP will carry out the evaluation at project level will take the form of country and sector studies in the recipient countries.** The programme evaluation will consist of desk and file studies, interviews etc. in the Netherlands.

2.3. Project level

The questions at project level should largely be the same as those used in the IOB evaluation of 1997. However, special attention should be paid to the local impact of the projects since many projects have ended, making it easier to answer impact and sustainability questions than in 1997.

Effectiveness

1. Assessment of the quality of the project documentation (the project document itself, changes to the document before and during project implementation, and project reports)

2. To what extent have project objectives been achieved? What are the achievements of the projects in terms of outputs and effects?

3. What can be said about the scope and the sustainability of project impact as well as scope for duplicating project results in similar situations in recipient countries?

Relevance

1. How does the project relate firstly to the objectives of the Matra Programme and secondly to sectoral problems at country level?
2. Assessment of the project's relevance by the local partner, in the framework of alternative strategies (e.g. funding available from other sources) and otherwise.

Efficiency

1. How can the choice of actual and budgeted resources/means be assessed in relation to achievements?
2. Could the same results have been achieved with fewer inputs, or alternatively, could more have been achieved with the same input?
3. Assessment of overhead costs of the Dutch partners in relation to resources that directly benefit local organisations.

2.4. Programme level

Although this task would not be performed by UNDP, it is included for completeness of the picture. At programme level the most important questions relate to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the programme. There will also be a major focus on the management aspects of the programme: has it been carried out sufficiently efficiently and transparently? In addition, attention should be paid to the appropriateness of the instrument itself, particularly in comparison with the programmes of other donors with similar objectives. The answers to the above questions should be comparable with the outcomes of the previous evaluation conducted by IOB and should in particular address the recommendations of the previous evaluation and the follow-up they have been given.

Programme overview and analysis

1. What were the main features of the sub-programme during the period 1999-2003, have these changed over time and if so why?
2. Did the demand for Matra-type projects change over this period and, if so, why and in that direction?
3. Have the recommendations (e.g. improved monitoring, more country-specific policies, greater involvement of local expertise) of the previous evaluation been followed up and to what extent?

Effectiveness: Organisation and Management

1. How is the programme managed; which are the main parties involved?
2. What are the mechanisms of the demand-driven character (incl. decision making)?
3. Are the actual programme management practices in line with the procedures documented by DZO/UM?
4. Are there any bottlenecks in the procedures hampering the achievement of the programme objectives?

5. What criteria have been used to select projects? Have these changed over time and if so why?
6. How are outputs and effects measured?
7. How does the monitoring system work?
8. Are programme stakeholders (ministries, parliament, embassies, implementing agencies and local organisations) adequately informed about management aspects of the programme?

Relevance

1. Are the Matra policy objectives clearly defined? Are they reflected in operational selection criteria and in the subsequently approved projects?
2. To what extent has Matra succeeded in providing a relevant response to the changes in demand in the recipient countries?

Efficiency

1. Can MPP be considered an efficient instrument for utilising the budget resources allocated?
2. What is the relative size of programme management costs compared to the total value of projects?
3. How does this compare with similar programmes of other donors?
4. Could the same results have been achieved with fewer inputs, or could more have been achieved with the same inputs?

3. Methodology and scope of the evaluation

3.1. Period of evaluation

The evaluation will cover the period 1999-2003. This period does not follow the time frame of the previous evaluation as the mechanisms for selecting projects changed significantly during 1999 with the introduction of a new ministerial framework for subsidies. **For evaluation purposes it is most interesting to look specifically at projects that have already concluded.** The scope of the evaluation is therefore not limited to projects that started between 1999 and 2003, but extends to all projects under implementation during this period and/or have ended during this time period. The evaluative questions at management level should however only be answered as regards practice since 1999.

3.2. Country selection

The Matra programme differs somewhat in each of the 15 countries in Central and Eastern Europe in which it was active in 2003, just as these countries have characteristics which make them unique and different from one other. Nevertheless, it does not seem efficient or necessary to carry out individual evaluation studies for all Matra countries, especially given that relatively few projects were carried out in some countries. The following criteria were elaborated as a basis for country selection:

The countries should be in different stages of social transformation. In general a distinction is made between countries that have acceded to the European Union, countries which are conducting accession

negotiations with the European Union, and neighbours to the European Union. At least one country should be selected per category.

The Central and Eastern European region has several large countries, several medium-sized countries and a group of relatively small countries. A representative of each group should be selected.

For efficient evaluation of the programme in the selected countries, at least 15 projects should be under implementation during the time frame of the evaluation.

For a more long-term perception of MPP and better comparison with the previous evaluation, one of the countries covered in the IOB evaluation, i.e. Russia or Hungary, were selected.

The Russian Federation, Slovakia, Romania and Belarus were selected on the basis of these criteria. Belarus was included by MATRA for policy-related reasons. As per MATRA information, the relations between Western European and Belarussian NGOs are suffering as a result of adverse governmental and political conditions in Belarus. For this reason it will be interesting indeed to see whether Matra projects have led to measurable results in Belarus.

3.3. Sector selection

The 1997 evaluation grouped the Matra programme into seven sectors. This is not entirely in line with the thematic classification used by MPP itself. However, it is still adequate for evaluation purposes, because it has the advantage of allowing a better comparison with the 1997 evaluation of IOB. In order to reflect the uniqueness of each country and the differences between the countries, the three most important sectors per selected country will be included in the evaluation.

3.4. Project selection

An evaluation of each of the projects carried out during the timeframe of the evaluation will probably be impossible. **A country evaluation should be based on at least 20 but max 25 projects, including several, usually 5-8, KAP projects. In Slovakia 12 MPP projects would be reviewed and the remaining eight are KAP projects.** Each country study would specify the method by which individual projects are selected for evaluation. If needed, UNDP may seek consultation with MATRA on the inclusion of specific projects into evaluation. UNDP will be responsible for producing the country studies. General conclusions on project management should however be based on the relevant information for all projects in the chosen countries. This information will be made available by DZO/UM (i.e. commitments, disbursements, country and activities for each theme).

4. Organisation, research method, reports

4.1. Organisation

At the project level, staff at DZO/UM, the Dutch embassies in the Central and Eastern European countries, and Dutch and local NGOs will provide basic assistance to the evaluation

field team, such as providing management information, access to internal records and addresses of relevant parties. They can also be interviewed if necessary. At programme level DZO/UM and, if desirable, the Dutch line ministries, will provide all necessary information.

The evaluation will be carried out via two separate studies. The first will be conducted in the Netherlands by the contractor. It will be based on information at programme level and information obtained from the Dutch organisations which have acquired a subsidy from Matra.

UNDP (Bratislava office) will evaluate the projects in the respective countries, to ensure knowledge of local circumstances and proper evaluation techniques.

It is UNDP understanding that a reference group will be set up by the Ministry to monitor the evaluation process and to guarantee the quality and the independence of the evaluation. It will approve the proposal and, if necessary, comment on the individual ToR for each of the country evaluations, the draft country studies and the draft final reports.

This reference group will at least consist of:

- A representative of the department responsible for the implementation of MPP at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DZO/UM)
- A representative of the independent evaluation department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BZ/IOB)
- Two external independent experts in the field of project and/or programme evaluation
- The secretariat of the group will be run by one or two staff members of DZO/UM. A chair will be elected by the reference group itself.

4.2. Research method and reports

The monitoring of project performance, the evaluation of outcomes, and the assessment of a project's impact on the development conditions in the target area are different aspects of the challenge to scrutinise development activities more rigidly. This should allow for the comparison of cost-effectiveness among different activities, and help to identify both problems and successful practices. UNDP's corporate policy in monitoring and evaluation is based on results-based management (RBM), which provides a coherent framework for strategic planning and management.

UNDP will follow the methodology suggested by MATRA, while at the same time focus more on impact evaluation and sustainability. The effectiveness and efficiency of projects as well as the sustainability and relevance of the projects' results will be evaluated. Given that UNDP is asked to evaluate up to 20 projects in each country and to summarize the results in country reports, a mixture of project and outcome evaluation methodology will be applied. This way also ensures close cooperation with the Dutch company that will evaluate the overall programme results.

At the *project level*, the evaluation will make use of internal monitoring and evaluation mechanism if available, which makes information immediately available to staff through specific impact indicators monitored regularly. In this regard, UNDP will make use of the initial project documentation, baseline

indicators that described the problem or situation before the intervention, and project outputs and objectives to assess the effectiveness of the projects. Special emphasis will be on impact and sustainability of the projects. The evaluation will make use of the baseline indicators and country context to assess the overall change in the specific sectoral area of the relevant project during the period 1999-2005.

At the *country level*, the evaluation will identify the impact of the different projects towards the overall objectives of the Matra Programme and towards the country context. In this way, the evaluation will extract lessons on how partnerships were contributing to the overall objectives and which other factors influenced the results. The overall results of each project evaluation will be synthesized into the country reports.

4.3. Strategy for carrying out evaluation by UNDP and timetable

Preparation of evaluation is expected to start since approval of UNDP proposal by MATRA, signing of the agreement and receipt of funding from MATRA. Tentative start time is mid-April with a recruitment of the international team leader. It is expected that country evaluations would be completed by the end of June thus the reports would be available by the beginning of July 2005. The evaluation team may also consider carrying out an initial trend analysis or survey in each of the selected countries to support the vision and outcome of evaluation.

For the internal organizational purposes, UNDP considers this proposal and further activities within the present framework to be integral part of its **Impact Assessment Resource Facility (IARF)** efforts. In order to ensure an integrated evaluation report, due attention is given to communication between the evaluator at programme level and the UNDP.

In addition to usual working contacts, at least two large-scale meetings should be planned for this purpose, one in the Netherlands and one in Bratislava at the regional UNDP office.

For the purpose of cohesion, the first meeting that is planned in Bratislava at the end of April will target the issues of methodology verification and clear tasks and roles distribution. It would launch a two month cycle of country evaluations that are planned to be led by independent international experts with deep knowledge of evaluation principles, understanding of the region and previous experience with MATRA funded projects. Preferably these experts have profound UNDP experience in the region as well. A team of national experts in each of the countries would be formed to facilitate the evaluation and contribute to the review process. National experts would be selected based on their knowledge of the development area, involvement into technical assistance projects, analytical and writing skills. The team would be obliged to review in details the present proposal, as well as background documentation: The subsidy framework covering the Matra Projects Programme; "Diamonds and Coals" (evaluation of the Matra Programme 1994-1997); The policy letter sent to Parliament on 21 September 2004; Report to parliament concerning the Matra Programme 1999-2002.

The meeting in the Netherlands is tentatively scheduled for the end of June and will result in clarifying all the outstanding matters prior to the submission of the evaluation results to MATRA.

During the evaluation, UNDP will cooperate closely with the embassies of the relevant countries in the interests of efficiency and a proper introduction of UNDP to the project partners.

UNDP will also benefit from using its country offices in Romania, Russian Federation and Belarus, that have their own monitoring and evaluation focal points and will be able to provide organizational assistance for carrying out country studies and make suggestions on relevant national experts to be contracted to support the evaluation. It is planned that evaluation focal points from the three country offices would be able to join for the introduction meeting in Bratislava.

For coordination purposes of all the matters pertaining to carrying out this evaluation, the Bratislava Centre has set its coordination team consisting of representatives of the Executive office, Policy Support and Programme Development directorate and Democratic governance and Poverty practice to facilitate the evaluation in various ways.

Annex 2: Evaluation Plan

DRAFT # 2 (final draft)

EVALUATION PLAN - MATRA PROJECTS PROGRAMME (MPP) and SMALL EMBASSY PROJECTS PROGRAMME (KAP)

Introduction and Time-Frame:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands is planning to evaluate its Social Transformation Programme (Matra) over the period 1999-2003. The evaluation will take place at two levels: (1) Programme level, to be carried out by the Dutch company “Berenschot”, and (2) Project level, to be carried out by UNDP/RBEC. At programme level, the effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of the Matra sub-programmes, as well as the organization and management of the programme, will be evaluated, whereas the project level evaluation will focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of projects, as well as the sustainability and relevance of their results. Details on the background, objectives and scope of the evaluation can be found in the “UNDP/RBEC Proposal Carrying Out Matra Projects Programme Evaluation”.

The evaluation at project level will focus on four target countries, i.e. the Russian Federation, Belarus, Romania and Slovakia, and comprises two types of Matra-funded projects:

- Matra Projects Programme (MPP), including regional projects
- Small Embassy Projects Programme (KAP)

MPP projects are managed by DZO/UM, which is a special Matra division within the Southeast and Eastern Europe and Matra Programme Department of the Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague. Grants are provided up to a maximum amount of € 700,000 to a Dutch organization (or occasionally a multilateral organization such as UNDP, UNICEF, OSCE, etc.), which then implements the project through twinning with local implementing organizations. Grants are usually provided for a maximum of two or 2.5 years. There are detailed guidelines for the preparation of project proposals, as well as progress, financial and final reporting. These are provided in the attached “Grants Manual for the Matra Projects Programme”.

The management of KAP projects is decentralized to the Dutch Embassies in the respective countries. Grants were provided up to a maximum amount of € 11,000 to a local organization requesting the grant (recently, the ceiling was increased to € 15,000). Grants are usually provided for a maximum of 12 months. There are no standard guidelines for preparation of and reporting under KAP projects, but in general they should fit into the overall Matra objectives and themes. Ukraine seems to have developed a detailed guideline for applicants (attached) which can serve as a basis of what proposals should contain. Of course, KAP proposals are rather less elaborate and detailed than MPP proposals.

UNDP will present the results and outcomes of the project evaluations in country evaluation reports, which will subsequently be integrated in the programme evaluation report prepared by “Berenschot”.

The following is an outline of the methodology of the evaluation. It will consist of:

- Project selection (Part I)
- Desk study of project documentation (Part II)
- On-site project evaluation (Part III)
- Preparation of country evaluation reports (Part IV)

The methodology is basically the same for both MPP and KAP projects. It is indicated which items are not applicable to KAP projects or where there are differences.

For carrying out the evaluation, UNDP has engaged the services of an International Team Leader (ITL) and an International Expert (IE). They will be supported by two (Slovakia) to three (Romania and Russia) National Experts in each target country and by a Project Assistant based in the UNDP Bratislava Regional Center. In the case of Belarus, due to the current highly sensitive political situation affecting local Matra partners, a desk-study of project documentation will be undertaken at the Embassy in Warsaw complemented, if possible, by a limited number of project visits in Belarus and/or telephone interviews. As a result, the scope of the evaluation of the Matra projects in Belarus will be less comprehensive than in the other countries, but it is expected that general conclusions about the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the projects can still be drawn and comparisons with the other three countries can be made.

The tentative time-line of the evaluation is as follows:

11 May – 25 May:	Preparation of detailed evaluation plan by ITL Recruitment of National Experts
26 May – 27 May:	Orientation Meeting of evaluation team at BRC
30 May – 6 July:	Country evaluations
7 July – 18 July:	Preparation of country evaluation reports
19 July – 29 July:	Feedback from BRC on country evaluation reports
1 August – 7 August:	Finalization of country evaluation reports
8 August:	Presentation final report to BRC
10/11 August:	Presentation final report to Matra

For the country evaluations, the ITL will focus on the Russian Federation and Belarus, while the IE will focus on Romania and Slovakia. While the national teams will be at work in their respective countries for the entire period, it is proposed that the ITL and IE will work from 30 May to 13 June in the Russian Federation and Slovakia respectively, and from 20 June to 6 July in Warsaw/Belarus and Romania respectively. On 14 May there will be a meeting in The Netherlands in order to discuss detailed evaluation plans with Matra and “Berenschot” and the “Reference Group”, followed on 15 May by an internal UNDP meeting on progress. On 7 and 8 July, the ITL and IE will meet in Bratislava in order to discuss and determine the preparation of the country evaluation reports.

Part I: Project Selection

From the lists of MPP and KAP projects obtained from DZO/UM and the Embassies, 18 MPP and 5 KAP Projects will be selected for evaluation in Russia, Belarus and Romania, while in Slovakia 12 MPP and 8 KAP projects will be reviewed (see “UNDP/RBEC Proposal Carrying Out Matra Projects Programme Evaluation”). To the extent possible, all selected projects should have been implemented and completed within the period 1999-2003 (as it would be more difficult to assess the success and impact of an ongoing project). In making the final selection, care will be given to have a representative mix of themes and to take the logistics of visiting projects into account. While by no means the evaluation will be limited to the capital cities, clusters of projects in other areas of the country may be included rather than attempting to have an as wide as possible geographical spread. This is particularly relevant in the case of Russia. Also, one or two regional projects will be looked at in each country.

Therefore, the selection will be made following four basic criteria:

1. No. of Projects: 12 MMP and 8 KAP (Slovakia) or 18 MPP and 5 KAP (other countries) to be selected from project lists provided by Matra and Embassies, including 1 regional MPP in each country.
2. Time Frame: implemented since 1999 and already completed
3. Themes: covering all sectors proportionally (i.e. in accordance with the share of each theme in the total number of projects between 1999 – 2003)
4. Location: balance between capital and non-capital (in accordance with the share of each location in the total number of projects between 1999 – 2003)

Other issues to be taken into account include avoiding two or more projects in the sample of the same local implementing partner

Once the selections have been made for each country, project documentation will be obtained from the respective Embassies and detailed logistic plans made for undertaking the evaluations.

If it turns out that project documentation for a given project is not available or for some reason cannot be obtained, there will be no need to make an on-site visit either. In that case, a note will have to be made of the fact that the documentation could not be obtained and a new project should be selected. To the extent possible, that project should fall into the same theme as the one it replaces.

In case documentation is available but it is not possible to make an on-site visit (for example, because respondents are not available during the time-frame of the evaluation), the desk-study of documentation will still have to be undertaken, complemented by a note that respondents were not available. However, there is no need to select a replacement project.

Once the sample has been made, in principle no projects should be deleted from the sample. After all, the fact that some selected projects can perhaps not be evaluated in full or at all also provides valuable information.

Part II: Project Documentation (Desk Study)

This section is to be completed by the evaluator on the basis of documentation made available or obtained, preferably prior to interviews. Under I.1 and I.2 quantitative information is sought, whereas a qualitative assessment should be provided under I.3. Consult and follow definitions provided in the attached “Guidelines for Matra Project Proposals” for MPP Projects and “Matra KAP (Small Embassy Projects) Programme, A Guide For Applicants” when completing this section. Include only information that can be readily obtained from the approved proposal and other available documentation. Note that actual proposal formats may differ from the standard format. In that case look for corresponding sections. Do not include your own assumptions or that of stakeholders. Indicate “not available” if applicable.

The following sections should be seen as guidelines for the evaluator to collect relevant information in a systematic manner. The idea is therefore not to obtain comprehensive written answers on each of the questions. The questions serve rather as a checklist to guide the evaluation through the data analyses and interviews. Successful evaluations depends on the ability of the evaluators to be able to interpret project results and, above all, outcomes and impact (or the lack thereof) in a qualitative, yet concise and structured manner. At the same time, as this evaluation will comprise between 80 and 90 projects in four different countries, using teams of two to three evaluators per country, a common structure, methodology and understanding must be ensured in order to be able to make comparisons between the countries and draw well-founded conclusions about the project component of the Matra Programme in general.

II.1 Approved Project Proposal (available: yes/no)

II.1.1 Core Information:

(For MPP Projects: copy this information exactly from the corresponding section in the approved project proposal. For KAP Projects, extract available information from proposals)

II.1.1.1 Matra Project Code: *(insert from list if not indicated on proposal)*

II.1.1.2 Project Name:

II.1.1.3 Location:

II.1.1.4 Theme:

II.1.1.5 Target Group:

II.1.1.6 Dutch Implementing Organization(s): *(not applicable to KAP)*

II.1.1.7 Local Implementing Organization(s):

II.1.1.8 Duration:

II.1.1.9 Total Budget in € *(MPP)* or local currency *(KAP)*:

II.1.1.10 Matra-contribution in € *(MPP)* or local currency *(KAP)*:

II.1.2 Project Summary:

- II.1.2.1 Key problem(s):
- II.1.2.2 Logical Framework available: yes/incomplete/no *(not applicable to KAP)*
(if available, attach and move to 2.10. If incomplete, attach and complete missing information from project proposal. If no, please complete missing information from project proposal.)
- II.1.2.3 Overall Objective(s):
- II.1.2.4 Project Goal:
- II.1.2.5 Project Goal indicators:
- II.1.2.6 Project Results:
- II.1.2.7 Project Results indicators:
- II.1.2.8 Project Results assumptions:
- II.1.2.9 Main Activities:
- II.1.2.10 Main Activities assumptions:
- II.1.2.11 Management Structure:

II.1.3 Project Setting:

- II.1.3.1 Problem Analysis provided: yes/no
- II.1.3.2 Implementing Partners description provided: yes/no
- II.1.3.3 Relevance description provided: yes/no

II.1.4 Project Design:

- II.1.4.1 Objectives: details provided yes/no
- II.1.4.2 Project Results: details provided yes/no
- II.1.4.3 Project Activities: details provided yes/no
- II.1.4.4 Feasibility and Sustainability: details provided yes/no

II.1.5 Organization of the Project:

- II.1.5.1 Project Management: detailed description provided yes/no

- II.1.5.2 Plan of Implementation: provided yes/no
- II.1.5.3 Resources: budget/input details provided yes/no
(For MPP: attach Annex 3.4 “Budget Summary” and 3.5 “Itemized Budget”, as well as a breakdown of the total budget by funding source, type of contribution (in-kind, cash) and share of the total, if available. For KAP: attach budget in proposal)

II.2 Other Documents

- II.2.1 Work Plans available: yes/no. If yes: monthly/quarterly/yearly/other *(specify)*
- II.2.2 Progress Reports available: yes/no. If yes: quarterly/half-yearly/yearly/other *(specify)*
- II.2.3 Final Report available: yes/no/not applicable *(i.e. project is ongoing)*

II.3 Qualitative Assessment of Project Documentation

II.3.1 Approved Project Proposal *(if available)*:

- II.3.1.1 Overall, information provided is: complete/mostly complete/incomplete. *(Please specify if not obvious from section I.1 above. “Mostly complete” means that non-essential information is missing, whereas “Incomplete” means that essential information is missing)*
- II.3.1.2 Does the project name clearly and unambiguously reflect the project’s goal(s)?
Yes/partially/no *(explain)*
- II.3.1.3 Does the project primarily target a particular: geographical area / sector / group
or category of people / in combination / not clear?
- II.3.1.4 Does “Location” reflect the specific geographical area where the project aims at achieving its impact or where the project is based, or both?
- II.3.1.5 Does “Theme” correspond with the target sector of the project or not?
- II.3.1.6 Is the “Target Group” clearly defined and quantified?
- II.3.1.7 Has a clear distinction been made between “direct beneficiaries” *(i.e. direct recipients of support or funds under the project)* and “indirect beneficiaries” *(i.e. those who otherwise will be positively affected by the outcome of the project)*?
- II.3.1.8 Is the Logical Framework truly logical and cohesive? *(i.e. are the activities and results linked in a way that achievement of the project goal(s) can be expected and thereby contribute to the overall objective(s)? Are indicators clearly defined and measurable? Are assumptions clearly defined and realistic? For KAP Projects: assess logic and cohesiveness of objectives, results and activities as presented in the proposal)*

- II.3.1.9 Does the Problem Analysis clearly define the problem(s) to be addressed in relation to the target area(s), sector(s) and group(s)?
- II.3.1.10 Is the project linked to national and local policies?
- II.3.1.11 Is the project linked to other relevant previous and ongoing projects and initiatives?
- II.3.1.12 Has a proper risk analysis been conducted?
- II.3.1.13 Is the relevance of the project in relation to Matra's objectives clearly defined?
- II.3.1.14 Are commitments and active participation from beneficiaries, local authorities and other stakeholders clearly defined, realistic, convincing and quantified?
- II.3.1.15 Is there a clearly defined plan to guarantee the sustainability of the project's results?
- II.3.1.16 Has the project been set-up as a "pilot" initiative, a "single issue" project, as part of a larger programme/strategy or otherwise?
- II.3.1.17 Are the management arrangements of the project clearly defined? *(i.e. is there a clear definition and delineation of responsibilities and roles between the Dutch and Local Implementing Partners? (Not applicable to KAP). Are supervisory, financial and reporting procedures clearly defined? Is there an Organizational Chart showing the linkages within the project team and with other stakeholders? Is it clear who are ultimately responsible and answerable for the delivery of specific activities and results?)*
- II.3.1.18 Does the implementation plan give a clear and logical overview of timing of activities in accordance with the duration of the project?
- II.3.1.19 Will activities be carried out directly by the local implementing partner or through sub-contracts?
- II.3.1.20 Is the project budget sufficiently detailed in accordance with the "Guidelines"?

II.3.2 Other documents:

- II.3.2.1 Do available detailed work plans, progress reports and final report (if applicable) indicate that the project is on track or has been completed according to plan? Yes/no/partially
- II.3.2.2 Do these reports indicate that the project results and goal(s) have been achieved or that their achievement is on track? Yes/no/partially
- II.3.2.3 If not or partially, indicate the main reasons and implications as stated in the reports with regards to (if applicable): duration (including revised time-frame), budget (including revised budget), results and activities (including revised logframe), management arrangements (including revised arrangements), other factors.

II.3.2.4 If the project has been substantially revised in the course of implementation, is there evidence that this has been formalized, for example through a project amendment? Yes/no

II.3.2.5 If the project has been substantially revised, do the reports indicate that the revised results and goal(s) have been achieved or that their achievement is on track? Yes/no/partially (elaborate if necessary)

II.4 Budget Analysis

II.4.1 For MPP Projects only: In the “Budget Summary”, calculate the share of the total amount per budget category in relation to the total of the entire budget (not per year). Also, calculate (on the basis of figures in the “Itemized Budget”) per budget category the share of funds planned to be spent locally or in The Netherlands on human resources, goods & services, training, etc. Please do this for the budget attached to the approved proposal as well as the final budget as spent (probably attached to the final reports). Use the following table (NL= Netherlands, RC= Recipient Country, NS= Not Specified). Please exclude item 800 (contingencies) from the table and deduct this from the Grand Total:

Code	Category/Type of Costs	Totals (€)	% of Sub-Totals	% of Grand Total
300	NL: 311, 312 RC: 313, 332, 390 NS: 320, 331 Sub-Total		100%	n.a. n.a. n.a.
400	NL: 411 RC: 412, 420, 490 Sub-Total		100%	n.a. n.a.
500	NL: 521, 531 RC: 510, 522, 532, 590 Sub-Total		100%	n.a. n.a.
600	NL: 611 RC: 612, 690 Sub-Total		100%	n.a. n.a.
700	RC: 700 Sub-Total		100%	n.a.
Total NL			n.a.	
Total RC			n.a.	
Total NS			n.a.	
Grand Total			n.a.	100%

Notes: The table includes all cost types/budget categories available as per Annex 3 of the “Guidelines”. Of course, not all project budgets will include all types/categories. However, if a different budget code appears in a project budget, look where it is planned to be spent. The x90 budget codes (i.e. miscellaneous costs) have been included with expenditures in recipient countries. However, if this is not clear in the actual project budget, please include it in Not Specified.

Part III: On-Site Project Evaluation

Information for this section will be obtained through: (1) On-site verification of results or progress towards results, (2) interviews with local implementing organization(s), target beneficiaries, relevant local authorities, and other stakeholders, and (3) interviews with Matra-focal points at embassies and relevant stakeholders at the national level, if required.

III.1 One-site verification of results

III.1.1 *List the indicators and provide the extent to which these have been achieved: This should be done on the basis of the indicators of results and main activities as provided in the logical framework of the project.*

III.1.2 *In case of projects that produce(d) a physical output (p.e. information, training, community, service, health centers/facilities, etc.), the existence and proper functioning of such outputs should be verified. Of particular importance are the following issues:*

III.1.2.1 Verification of equipment (if any) provided by the project

III.1.2.2 Does the facility provide the services planned under the project?

III.1.2.3 Is the facility active (p.e. average number of users per month)?

III.1.2.4 Does the facility reach the intended target group?

III.1.2.5 Sustainability (i.e. management and operation/maintenance arrangements), i.e. is the facility (expected to be) able to cover its costs in the long run? Yes/No

III.1.2.6 If yes, are these costs covered by: user fees / membership contributions / government subsidies / subsidies from local NGOs / subsidies from donors and other international organizations / other

III.1.3 *In case of projects that provided trainings, capacity building, advisory services, etc., evidence should be verified through:*

III.1.3.1 Detailed lists of trainers/trainees, training plans, evaluations, etc.

III.1.3.2 Reports produced with support from the project, etc.

III.1.4 *In case the local implementing partner is the main direct beneficiary:*

III.1.4.1 Annual reports and other docs showing evidence/impact of support received

III.1.5 *In addition to marking the extent to which the indicators have been achieved, provide a short narrative in relation to the above-mentioned issues, if applicable:*

III.2 Interviews with local implementing organization(s), target beneficiaries, relevant local authorities, and other stakeholders

These interviews can take place in a joint meeting, but if an important stakeholder is not present, effort should be made to meet that stakeholder separately. In first instance, arrangements for interviews should be made through the local implementing organization. If they are unable or unwilling to make arrangements with local authorities, or these are not present at the meeting, you should make a judgment (eventually together with the Matra focal point at the Embassy) to what extent the local implementing organization would be at risk from involvement of or exposure to the local authorities. If yes, there is no need to interview local authorities. If no, a separate meeting with local authorities may be arranged, if necessary. Also, organizing focus group or sector-wide interviews are also recommended, if time permits

III.2.1 *Note down at least the position/status of persons interviewed (for privacy purposes, names are not required):*

III.2.2 *Obtain eventual missing information and clarify issues concerning the project Documentation:*

III.2.3 *Obtain stakeholders' assessment of achievements and success of the project: While the exact questions to be asked may differ from project to project, interviews should basically include the following issues:*

III.2.3.1 *Has the project been completed and has it achieved its results and main goal(s)? yes/mostly yes/partially/mostly not/not. (The answer to this question should in principle be provided by the Local Implementing Organization and indicated as such. If the answer is "yes" or "mostly yes", it assumes that the project is completed and that all or most of the results and goals (more than 50%) have been achieved. In that case, move to the corresponding (first) part of the questionnaire below. If the answer is "partially", "mostly not" or "not at all", that means that the project has been completed (or has been suspended or cancelled), but that results and goals have only partially (50% or less) been completed, mostly not or not at all. In that case, move to the corresponding (second) part of the questionnaire below)*

III.2.3.2 *Is the project on-going and have the results/main goals not yet been achieved? (If yes, this means that the project has not yet reached its official completion date, that the Local Implementing Organization is still under contract and that activities are ongoing. However, in case all activities have been completed and only some administrative issues are pending, the project should be included in the "completed" category as "operationally, but not yet officially completed", and the corresponding parts of the below questionnaire should be used. For on-going project, please use the third part of the questionnaire)*

If the response from the Local Implementing Organization obviously differs from the available evidence of project documentation or physical verification, you should confront the organization with this discrepancy in order to be able to determine the correct status of the project and follow the corresponding part of the

questionnaire. If the organization insists on a certain categorization of the project, even if it does not seem correct, follow the part of the questionnaire corresponding to the organization's assessment and include your own remarks and observations at the end.

III.2.3.1.a Completed and results/goals achieved/mostly achieved:

III.2.3.1.a.1 Example Questions for Local Implementing Organization(s):

- III.2.3.1.a.1.1 When did your organization start and complete activities?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.2 Who's initiative was the project and who designed it?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.3 Have the main goals been achieved within the set time-frame? If yes,
- III.2.3.1.a.1.4 Could the time-frame have been even shorter? If not, should the time-frame have been set longer or were the delays unforeseen? Explain.
- III.2.3.1.a.1.5 Have the main goals been achieved within the set budget? If yes, could the goals have been achieved even with less money or technical inputs? If not, could these budget overruns have been foreseen? Explain.
- III.2.3.1.a.1.6 Have the main goals contributed to the achievement of the overall objective(s) of the project and Matra as expected? Explain.
- III.2.3.1.a.1.7 Have there been any unforeseen positive and/or negative spin-off / multiplier effects?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.8 Has the project been substantially revised during implementation?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.9 Could and/or should the project be replicated elsewhere?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.10 Would this require continued/new support from Matra or the Dutch implementing organization? (*Not applicable to KAP*)
- III.2.3.1.a.1.11 What are the main "lessons learned" from the project?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.12 What were the main problems you faced during implementation, and how were these overcome?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.13 If some of the results have not been achieved, which are these, why have these not been achieved and what steps are being taken to achieve these?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.14 Is the project a "best practice" and has this been documented/acknowledged?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.15 What are the next steps / future plans?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.16 Could the project have been realized without support from Matra and/or the Dutch implementing organization (*the latter only in case of MPP*)?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.17 What has been the most important "value added" of the support provided by Matra and/or the Dutch implementing organization (*MPP only*)? Financial contribution / equipment provided / expertise provided / networking and contacts/ empowerment and

political support / other / (in case of regional projects: addedvalue of regional framework)

- III.2.3.1.a.1.18 Could this “value added” have been provided by any other organization?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.19 Has the collaboration with the Dutch implementing partner been excellent / good / satisfactory / poor / bad? (*Not applicable to KAP*) and is the collaboration continuing?
- III.2.3.1.a.1.20 What would you do differently if you had to do this project again?

III.2.3.1.a.2 Questions for beneficiaries:

- III.2.3.1.a.2.1 In what ways have you benefited from the project?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.2 What difference has the project made to you personally?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.3 What do you like most about the project?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.4 What do you like least about the project?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.5 Did the project address the top priority / an important priority / just one of many priorities / a lesser priority / not a priority at all, for you / community / country?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.6 Do you think the project is a success?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.7 Do you know who funded and implemented this project?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.8 Were you involved in the identification / planning / implementation of the project?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.9 Have you personally contributed something to the project?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.10 Over the last years, has life become easier, more difficult or did it remain the same?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.11 What do you see as the main problems facing the country today?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.12 What do you see as the main problems faced today by yourself, your family, your community?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.12 Do you think that the project has helped to address some of these issues?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.13 Would another project have been better or more needed at this stage?
- III.2.3.1.a.2.14 What other initiatives and projects are needed to improve the situation?

III.2.3.1.a.3 Example Questions for local authorities:

- III.2.3.1.a.3.1 In what ways has the community benefited from the project?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.2 What difference has the project made to the community?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.3 What do you like most about the project?

- III.2.3.1.a.3.4 What do you like least about the project?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.5 Did the project address the top priority / an important priority / just one of many priorities / a lesser priority / not a priority at all, for the Government / community / the country?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.6 How does the project fit into the plans/strategies of your department?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.7 Do you think the project is a success?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.8 Do you know who funded and implemented this project?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.9 Were you involved/consulted in the identification / planning / implementation of the project?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.10 Have you contributed something to the project?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.11 Over the last years, has life for the people become easier, more difficult or did it remain the same?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.12 What do you see as the main problems facing the country today?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.13 What do you see as the main problems faced today by the community?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.14 Do you think that the project has helped to address some of these issues?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.15 Would another project have been better or more needed at this stage?
- III.2.3.1.a.3.16 What other initiatives and projects are needed to improve the situation?

III.2.3.1.b Completed and results/goals partially/mostly not/not achieved
(in the probably very rare case of “not achieved”, there is no need to consult with beneficiaries or local authorities as the project has obviously failed to produce any significant result)

III.2.3.1.b.1 Example Questions for Local Implementing Organization(s):

- III.2.3.1.b.1.1 When did your organization start and complete activities?
- III.2.3.1.b.1.2 Who’s initiative was the project and who designed it?
- III.2.3.1.b.1.3 What has been achieved? (Actual and % of results)
- III.2.3.1.b.1.4 What has not been achieved? (Actual and % of results)
- III.2.3.1.b.1.5 How has this affected the achievement of the project goal(s)?
- III.2.3.1.b.1.6 How much of the budget has been spent (%)?
- III.2.3.1.b.1.7 What are the main reasons for not achieving part of the results/goals?
- Lack of time to complete activities?
 - Lack of budget/funds?

- Lack of technical capacity?
- Administrative/logistic problems?
- Lack of coordination between stakeholders and partners?
- Lack of support from local authorities?
- Lack of support from target beneficiaries?
- Lack of support from Dutch Implementing Organization? (*not applicable to KAP*)
- Problems in the design of the project?
- Results are not sustainable?
- Project's strategy and relevance overtaken by events?
- Other?

III.2.3.1.b.1.8 What have been/are the steps taken, if any, by you and/or the Dutch Implementing Organization (*MPP only*) and/or Matra to overcome these problems?

III.2.3.1.b.1.9 Has the project been substantially revised during implementation?

III.2.3.1.b.1.10 Is achievement of these results still realistic/expected?

III.2.3.1.b.1.11 Could the project have been realized without support from Matra and/or the Dutch implementing organization (*MPP only*)?

III.2.3.1.b.1.12 Could and/or should the project be replicated elsewhere?

III.2.3.1.b.1.13 Would this require continued/new support from Matra or the Dutch implementing organization? (*Not applicable to KAP*)

III.2.3.1.b.1.14 What has been the most important “value added” of the support provided by Matra and/or the Dutch implementing organization (*MPP only*)? Financial contribution / equipment provided / expertise provided / networking and contacts/ empowerment and political support / other / (in case of regional projects: added value of regional framework)

III.2.3.1.b.1.15 Could this “value added” have been provided by any other organization?

III.2.3.1.b.1.16 Has the collaboration with the Dutch implementing partner been excellent / good / satisfactory / poor / bad? (*Not applicable to KAP*) and is the collaboration continuing?

III.2.3.1.b.1.17 What would you do differently if you had to do this project again?

III.2.3.1.b.1.18 What are the next steps / future plans?

III.2.3.1.b.2 Example Questions for beneficiaries:

III.2.3.1.b.2.1 In what ways have you benefited from the project?

III.2.3.1.b.2.2 What difference has the project made to you personally?

III.2.3.1.b.2.3 What do you like most about the project?

III.2.3.1.b.2.4 What do you like least about the project?

III.2.3.1.b.2.5 Did the project address the top priority / an important priority / just one of many priorities / a lesser priority / not a priority at all, for you / community / country?

- III.2.3.1.b.2.6 Do you think the project is a success?
- III.2.3.1.b.2.7 Do you know who funded and implemented this project?
- III.2.3.1.b.2.8 Were you involved in the identification / planning / implementation of the project?
- III.2.3.1.b.2.9 Have you personally contributed something to the project?
- III.2.3.1.b.2.10 Over the last years, has life become easier, more difficult or did it remain the same?
- III.2.3.1.b.2.11 What do you see as the main problems facing the country today?
- III.2.3.1.b.2.12 What do you see as the main problems faced today by yourself, your family, your community?
- III.2.3.1.b.2.13 Do you think that the project has helped to address some of these issues?
- III.2.3.1.b.2.14 Would another project have been better or more needed at this stage?
- III.2.3.1.b.2.15 What other initiatives and projects are needed to improve the situation?

III.2.3.1.b.3 Example Questions for local authorities:

- III.2.3.1.b.3.1 In what ways has the community benefited from the project?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.2 What difference has the project made to the community?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.3 What do you like most about the project?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.4 What do you like least about the project?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.5 Did the project address the top priority / an important priority / just one of many priorities / a lesser priority / not a priority at all, for the Government / the community / the country?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.6 How does the project fit into the plans/strategies of your department?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.7 Do you think the project is a success?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.8 Do you know who funded and implemented this project?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.9 Were you involved/consulted in the identification / planning / implementation of the project?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.10 Have you contributed something to the project?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.11 Over the last years, has life for the people become easier, more difficult or did it remain the same?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.12 What do you see as the main problems facing the country today?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.13 What do you see as the main problems faced today by the community?

- III.2.3.1.b.3.14 Do you think that the project has helped to address some of these issues?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.15 Would another project have been better or more needed at this stage?
- III.2.3.1.b.3.16 What other initiatives and projects are needed to further improve the situation?

III.2.3.2 Ongoing projects with results/goals not yet achieved:

III.2.3.2.1 Example Questions for Local Implementing Organization(s):

- III.2.3.2.1.1 When did your organization start activities?
- III.2.3.2.1.2 Who's initiative was the project and who designed it?
- III.2.3.2.1.3 When should you complete all activities?
- III.2.3.2.1.4 What has already been achieved? (Actual and % of results)
- III.2.3.2.1.5 What has not yet been achieved? (Actual and % of results)
- III.2.3.2.1.6 Do you expect the remaining results and goals to be achieved within the set time-frame? If not, when do you expect to be able to complete?
- III.2.3.2.1.7 Do you expect the main results and goals to be achieved within the set budget? If not, how much more money do you need?
- III.2.3.2.1.8 Do you expect the main goals to contribute to the achievement of the overall objective(s) of the project and Matra as intended?
- III.2.3.2.1.9 Are there already any unforeseen positive and/or negative spin-off / multiplier effects?
- III.2.3.2.1.10 Has the project been substantially revised during implementation?
- III.2.3.2.1.11 Could and/or should the project be replicated elsewhere?
- III.2.3.2.1.12 Would this require continued/new support from Matra or the Dutch implementing organization (*Not applicable to KAP*)?
- III.2.3.2.1.13 What are the main "lessons learned" from the project so far?
- III.2.3.2.1.14 What were the main problems you faced so far during implementation, and how were these overcome?
- III.2.3.2.1.15 If some of the results have not been achieved as planned, which are these, why have these not been achieved and what steps are taken to still achieve these?
- III.2.3.2.1.16 Is the project already a "best practice" and has this been documented/ acknowledged?
- III.2.3.2.1.17 What are the next steps / future plans?

- III.2.3.2.1.18 Could the project be realized without support from Matra and/or the Dutch implementing organization (*MPP only*)?
- III.2.3.2.1.19 What do you see as the most important “value added” of the support provided by Matra and/or the Dutch implementing organization (*MPP only*)? Financial contribution / equipment provided / expertise provided / networking and contacts/ empowerment and political support / other / (in case of regional projects: added value of regional framework)
- III.2.3.2.1.20 Could this “value added” be provided by any other organization?
- III.2.3.2.1.21 Has the collaboration with the Dutch implementing partner so far been excellent/ good / satisfactory / poor / bad? (*Not applicable to KAP*) Explain
- III.2.3.2.1.22 What would you do differently if you could start this project again?

III.2.3.2.2 Example Questions for beneficiaries:

- III.2.3.2.2.1 In what ways have you benefited or do you expect to benefit from the project?
- III.2.3.2.2.2 What difference do you expect the project to make to you personally?
- III.2.3.2.2.3 What do you like most about the project?
- III.2.3.2.2.4 What do you like least about the project?
- III.2.3.2.2.5 Does the project address the top priority / an important priority / just one of many priorities / a lesser priority / not a priority at all, for you / the community / the country?
- III.2.3.2.2.6 Do you think the project will be or is already a success?
- III.2.3.2.2.7 Do you know who funds and implements this project?
- III.2.3.2.2.8 Are you involved in project identification / planning / implementation?
- III.2.3.2.2.9 Are you personally contributing something to the project?
- III.2.3.2.2.10 Over the last years, has life become easier, more difficult or did it remain the same?
- III.2.3.2.2.11 What do you see as the main problems facing the country today?
- III.2.3.2.2.12 What do you see as the main problems faced today by yourself, your family, your community?
- III.2.3.2.2.13 Do you think that the project helps to address some of these issues?
- III.2.3.2.2.14 Would perhaps another project be better or more needed at this stage?
- III.2.3.2.2.15 What other initiatives and projects are needed to improve the situation?

III.2.3.2.3 Example Questions for local authorities:

- III.2.3.2.3.1 In what ways do you think the community benefits from the project?
- III.2.3.2.3.2 What difference is the project making to the community?
- III.2.3.2.3.3 What do you like most about the project?
- III.2.3.2.3.4 What do you like least about the project?
- III.2.3.2.3.5 Does the project address the top priority / an important priority / just one of many priorities / a lesser priority / not a priority at all, for the Government / the community / the country?
- III.2.3.2.3.6 How does the project fit into the plans and strategies of your department?
- III.2.3.2.3.7 Do you think the project is going to be a success?
- III.2.3.2.3.8 Do you know who funds and implements this project?
- III.2.3.2.3.9 Are you involved/consulted in the identification / planning / implementation of the project?
- III.2.3.2.3.10 Are you contributing something to the project?
- III.2.3.2.3.11 Over the last years, has life for the people become easier, more difficult or did it remain the same?
- III.2.3.2.3.12 What do you see as the main problems facing the country today?
- III.2.3.2.3.13 What do you see as the main problems faced today by the community?
- III.2.3.2.3.14 Do you think that the project helps to address some of these issues?
- III.2.3.2.3.15 Would perhaps another project be better or more needed at this stage?
- III.2.3.2.3.16 What other initiatives and projects are needed to improve the situation?

III.2.3.4 *Interviewers remarks/observations in relation to the interview(s):*

III.3 Interviews with Matra focal-points at embassies and relevant stakeholders at the National level

These interviews will be done by/with the Team Leader and the International Expert in their respective target countries. With the Matra focal-points this should take the form of a briefing and debriefing. During the briefing the evaluation team and plan will be presented and the focal-point will brief the team on the Matra programme in the country. During the debriefing, initial conclusions will be shared as well as clarifications if needed. Relevant stakeholders at National level are mainly Government departments that function as official counterparts to Matra for MPP/KAP projects. Meetings with these should take place at the beginning of the evaluation. Care should be given not to duplicate the work of the Dutch consultancy firm that

will evaluate the overall programme. Meetings should therefore focus on the evaluation at project level only.

III.4 Expected/Required outputs from project evaluations

For each of the evaluated projects, the evaluator should provide the ITL or IE with the following:

III.4.1 A completed / filled-in summary of the desk-study of project documentation as per sections II.1, II.2, II.3 and II.4. The qualitative assessment under section II.3 can be provided in a summarized narrative form. The budget analysis under II.4 can also be presented in summarized form, if possible.

III.4.2 A summary narrative of evaluation findings based on the desk study and the on-site verification and interviews, according to the following outline reflecting the main questions the evaluation tries to answer:

- III.4.2.1 Completeness of project Documentation
- III.4.2.2 Quality of Project Documentation
- III.4.2.3 Achievement of project goal(s) and results
- III.4.2.4 Impact and effects of project
- III.4.2.5 Sustainability of project results
- III.4.2.6 Potential to replicate project elsewhere
- III.4.2.7 Relevance of project in relation to Matra objectives and host country situation
- III.4.2.8 Relevance of project in the eyes of local stakeholders
- III.4.2.9 Appropriateness of budget/inputs in relation to results/outputs
- III.4.2.10 Could results have been achieved with less inputs or could more have been achieved with the same level of inputs?
- III.4.2.11 Assessment of costs of inputs of Dutch partner in relation to expenditures directly benefiting local organizations (*Not applicable to KAP*)
- III.4.2.12 For completed MPP projects: scope of relation with Dutch partner following completion of project
- III.4.2.13 Lessons learned, best practices and recommendations
- III.4.2.14 Any other relevant issues

III.4.3 An analysis of each country evaluation team of general/overall observations, trends, conclusions and recommendations regarding the Matra projects. This should best be done at the very end of the country evaluation exercise when the individual project evaluations have been completed. It could include one day of the national team comparing and analyzing evaluation results, followed by one day whereby these results are presented to and discussed with the ITL or IE.

Part IV: Preparation of Country Evaluation Reports

Based on the above desk studies of general project information, on-site project verification, interviews, and analyses, the country evaluation reports are prepared by the International Team Leader and the International Expert in accordance with the following outline (to be further elaborated):

IV.1 Country Background: *This section will be prepared, to the extent possible, by the respective UNDP Country Offices and will include a brief overview of the main social, economical and political developments in the country, with special emphasis on the last 15 years, i.e. since the collapse of the Soviet-Union and communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and in particular the period 1999-2003. This should also include reference to country-specific issues, such as the Chernobyl disaster in Belarus, the situation of Roma in Slovakia and Romania, etc, as well as information on the status of main "social transformation" topics, such as governance, democracy, rule of law, human rights, transparency, etc. This chapter should also include data on key indicators supporting the overview of developments and be indicative for "social transformation". For the purpose of uniformity and comparison between the countries, the source of the data should preferably be the same. Therefore, whenever possible it is proposed to use the data of the Human Development Reports for this purpose. Where appropriate, data should be compared over time and with similar data for The Netherlands and the aggregated data for the region of Eastern-Europe and CIS. Data should include the following:*

- Human Development Index (rank)
- Total Population
- Annual Population Growth
- Life Expectancy at Birth
- % Population under 15 years
- % Population 65 years or older
- School enrollment
- Adult Literacy Rate
- GDP per capita (PPP US\$)
- GDP per capita annual growth rate
- Inflation
- Unemployment
- Poverty indicators
- Health Expenditures per capita
- No. Physicians per 100,000 people
- HIV and Tuberculosis prevalence
- Under 5 Mortality Rate
- Telephone mainlines
- Cellular subscribers
- Internet users
- ODA received as % of GDP
- Net FDI Inflows as % of GDP
- Public expenditure on education (% of GDP)
- Public expenditure on health (% of GDP)
- Public expenditure on military (% of GDP)
- Total debt service (% of GDP)
- Seats in Parliament held by women

This section should not be more than three to four pages.

IV.2 Selection of projects and evaluation methodology

IV.3 Detailed evaluation results

IV.4 Effectiveness

- IV.4.1 Assessment of the quality of the project documentation (the project document itself, changes to the document before and during project implementation, and project reports)
- IV.4.2 To what extent have project objectives been achieved? What are the achievements of the projects in terms of outputs and effects?
- IV.4.3 What can be said about the scope and the sustainability of project impact as well as scope for duplicating project results in similar situations in recipient countries?

IV.5 Relevance

- IV.5.1 How does the project relate firstly to the objectives of the Matra Programme and secondly to sectoral problems at country level?
- IV.5.2 Assessment of the project's relevance by the local partner, in the framework of alternative strategies (e.g. funding available from other sources) and otherwise.

IV.6 Efficiency

- IV.6.1 How can the choice of actual and budgeted resources/means be assessed in relation to achievements?
- IV.6.2 Could the same results have been achieved with fewer inputs, or alternatively, could more have been achieved with the same input?
- IV.6.3 Assessment of overhead costs of the Dutch partners in relation to resources that directly benefit local organisations.

IV.7 Conclusions