

**A Human Rights-Based Approach to Regional Development –
(BIM Tool 4)**

- DRAFT -



Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights

Renate Frech
Vienna, December 2005

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|-------|---|
| BiH | Bosnia and Hercegovina |
| BIM | Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights |
| FYROM | Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| HRBA | Human Rights-Based Approach |
| LED | Local Economic Development |
| MDGs | Millenium Development Goals |
| OHCHR | Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights |
| OM | Ombudsman |
| PRS | Poverty Reduction Strategies |
| RDA | Regional Economic Development Agency |
| RED | Regional Economic Development |
| RMAP | Rights-based Municipal and Planning Project |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |

I. Introduction

This report contributes to integrating the human rights-based approach (HRBA) to the Regional Economic Development (RED) Plan in the Republic of Macedonia and has been prepared for UNDP in the overall context of the development of a regional development plan. Its aim is to provide practical tools and recommendations facilitating the integration of the HRBA into the process of developing and implementing a regional development plan.

Many of the tools referred to have already been applied in other regions and countries, which will be indicated in the references. Besides the overall guiding principles of the 'Draft Guidelines on a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies'¹ and the 'Conceptual Framework on Human Rights and Poverty Reduction'², specific attention has been given to the 'Rights-based Municipal Assessment and Planning Project (RMAP)',³ developed and currently implemented by UNDP BiH, the UNDP Local Development Methodology⁴ and the Albanian experience when localizing the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)⁵. Furthermore, BIM is currently working on a set of tools, which are developed with specific attention given to the Macedonian context. Those include a tool to identify the poor and vulnerable and assess their situation and level of participation in the local development process, and, in cooperation with a national legal expert consultant, a tool to assess the international and national human rights framework relevant for Macedonia as reference guide for local, regional and national development planning.

The report is based on and needs to be considered in close context with the 'Methodology for Development of a Regional Economic Development Plans in FYROM', which has been developed by James *Budds*.⁶ To allow an easier and effective integration of a HRBA into the presented methodology, this document follows exactly the same structure. Its purpose is not to introduce new or additional approaches concerning the methodology for development of RED plans, but to complement the one presented from a human rights perspective.

Human rights-based approaches to development⁷ essentially integrate the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of development and include following key elements:

- Express linkage to rights,
- Accountability,

¹ Paul Hunt, Manfred Nowak, Siddiq Osmani, Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, OHCHR, UN 2004

² Human Rights and Poverty Reduction, A Conceptual Framework, OHCHR, UN New York and Geneva, 2004.

³ OHCHR, UNDP, Methodology and Tools for a Human Rights-based Assessment and Analysis 2004, Rights-based Municipal Assessment and Planning Project (RMAP); <http://rmap.undp.ba>

⁴ UNDP Europe and the CIS, UNDP Policy Paper, How to make Local Development Work, Selected Practices from Europe and the CIS, UNDP Bratislava, September 2002.

⁵ UNDP Albania, Localizing the Millenium Development Goals: The Albania Experience.

⁶ James G. Budds, A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, November 2005

⁷ Human Rights and Poverty Reduction; also: www.unhcr.ch/development/poverty.html

- Empowerment and ownership,
- Meaningful and active participation,
- Non-discrimination and equality.

The 'Draft Guidelines: A HRBA to Poverty Reduction Strategies'⁸ define the same principles as the very basis for policies, programs, projects and activities focusing on poverty reduction. Those are:

- Identification and empowerment of the poor,
- Linkage to national and international human rights norms and standards,
- Accountability of duty bearers at the national and international levels,
- Participation of all stakeholders, particularly the poorest,
- Equality and non-discrimination, implying special attention to vulnerable groups.

Furthermore, the Millenium Development Goals⁹ which provide a framework to address poverty, social exclusion and discrimination and aim at achieving eight clearly defined goals by 2015, are primarily based on international human rights standards and contain as key elements empowerment, participation, non-discrimination and increased accountability of duty-bearers.

In this context, a Regional Economic Development plan which aims at integrating a HRBA, has not only to comply with national and international human rights norms and standards but has to pro-actively set specific objectives and priorities aiming at a progressive realization of human rights. The long-term goal is the full realization of human rights and the improvement of quality of life for all citizens, including the vulnerable, poor and marginalized groups.

To ensure this, it is of crucial importance, that (1) all vulnerable groups are identified during the data collection and situation and problem analysis; (2) initiatives are established to ensure social mobilization and participation, with focused actions targeting those groups which are usually excluded and not actively participating in policy development processes; (3) establish a specific set of targets and indicators concerning the realization of human rights throughout the process, with short-term, mid-term and long-term objectives; (4) create effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure that duty-bearers can be hold accountable, especially in case of misuse of allocation of resources.

II. Background

The Ohrid Agreement (August 2001) and the following establishment of a roadmap to Europe, resulted in a far-reaching decentralization, a drastically reduced number of municipalities (Law on Territorial Organization, 2004) and a significant increase of competencies at the local government level. Those developments primarily shaped

⁸ Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies

⁹ See: www.unmilleniumproject.org

the political and governmental landscape in Macedonia over the last years.

To a large extent, the EU and the general trend to develop regional structures that facilitate balanced developments of regions throughout the EU are the driving forces behind the developments concerning the inter-mediate government level. However, also the identified need on municipal level that recognized the added value of inter-municipal cooperation as a tool for more efficient and effective management and administration, created a dynamic which put increasing pressure on the Government to introduce a regional development plan and create the appropriate institutions and bodies bearing the primary responsibility for its implementation. The regional development framework with specific focus on economic development, which is currently underway, should serve exactly this purpose.¹⁰

Concerning the local government level, the Law on Local Self Government that came into force on 01 July 2005, provides the legal framework and defines its responsibilities and power. It is also essential concerning economic development issues, as it clearly delegates the responsibility for economic development to the municipalities and, furthermore, provides in three articles (art 14, 15 and 61) for inter-municipal cooperation.

However, the law fails to provide any regulatory or implementing guidelines and leaves the structure open, which allows on the one hand a great degree of flexibility to the municipalities in elaborating inter-municipal cooperation agreements, though, on the other hand could negatively impede on stable conditions and relations between municipalities. In general and despite the still vague legal basis, there is however an increasing trend of both formal and informal inter-municipal cooperation, which underlines the general trend towards regionalization.

Two documents which are currently developed - the concept for regional strategy and the proposed law on regional development - will, in the future, provide the still missing legal framework for regional development and will significantly contribute to designing the way forward with view of policy and methodology concerning regional development.

Furthermore, Macedonia's roadmap to the EU is of paramount importance and a significant parameter concerning the future approach towards regional development. For Macedonia, the integration into the EU is the key strategic interest and priority objective. In this context and with view to a HRBA, there are primarily two issues which should be considered: first, Macedonia tries to harmonize the poverty reduction and social inclusion strategies in the context of EU accession by linking the MDGs with the Laeken indicators of social inclusion and secondly, because of its commitment to poverty reduction and improvement of the quality of life for all, the MDGs should be considered in any regional development plan.

It is a clear obligation of the local authorities on all governmental levels to ensure that local and regional economic development goes hand in hand with the gradual fulfillment of the national MDG plan as well as the progressive realization of human rights.

¹⁰ A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 6.

Critical issues to be looked at from the angle of a HRBA, will be further elaborated throughout this report.

III. A Human Rights-Based Approach to Regional Economic Development

The key principles of a human rights based approach applied to Regional Economic Development (RED) are cross-cutting all steps defined by the methodology, including data collection and analysis, strategic plan development, the setting and revision of priorities and policy goals, the design of an action and implementation plan and the establishment of monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

The principles as listed above help to guarantee access to the development process, institutions and information, the incorporation of mechanisms of redress and accountability and the integration of express safeguards to protect against threats to HR and guard against reinforcing existing power imbalances. At the core of this concept is the principle of non-retrogression,¹¹ which requires that the existing level of human rights protection has to be maintained and the realization of the rights progressively improved. With view of economic development plans, the government authorities on all levels have the obligation to safeguard the existing level of protection, not to permit any trade-offs and to ensure with immediate effect a certain minimum level of enjoyment of various human rights.

1. The Planning Process

A) Independence and Inter-dependence

The methodology designed for the RED plan refers throughout the planning process to partnership and cooperation on horizontal and vertical level as one of the guiding principles. To address the issue of possibly existing wide disparities between municipalities and ensure a balanced approach, five basic principles are stressed to be included in the regional policy¹²: the principles of programming, partnership, additionality, subsidiarity and coordination.

Perhaps the most important with view of a participatory development design are the principles of partnership and subsidiarity. Whereas the first requires a broad, all inclusive cooperation between the different government levels as well as between other sectors and stakeholders, such as private and public institutions, the latter mandates that decisions are carried out at the lowest possible level.

¹¹ Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 4: Progressive Realization of Human Rights; Indicators and Benchmarks, para 73 – 74.

¹² A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 9-10.

However, specific measures will be needed to ensure that these principles also provide for active, informed and meaningful participation of the vulnerable groups, including women, minorities and the poor, which generally tend to be excluded from planning and decision making procedures. This is especially important with view of the regional level, where concerns and issues from individual communities and interest groups tend to be less considered and priority is given to the regional perspectives. The participation of all stakeholders, including the poor, has to be ensured in all stages of the process, as only in case the marginalize sectors of the society are given a voice, there is a guarantee that there is *'a clear understanding of the needs'*¹³, including those of the vulnerable and the poor.

The concept of social mobilization¹⁴ provides an effective tool, to ensure an inclusive approach and to empower people to participate meaningfully and effectively in the development process. It is further a useful tool to engage marginalized and disadvantaged groups, poor and politically passive members of the society and to create a broader basis of support for a future economic development strategy. Furthermore, specific focus groups meetings, which exclusively target for example women or certain marginalized groups, help to ensure input from those who are traditionally in a more passive role and whose voices are in general not heard and not listened to in political processes.

However, it is obvious that the regional level, being the inter-mediate level, cannot fully compensate, if this principle of participation has not been effectively implemented during the local development planning process. Therefore, a mechanism should be established to identify possible shortcomings at local and community level and allow corrective measures to be taken during the planning process focusing on the regional level.

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| Issues to be considered: |
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- Has the participation of all stakeholders, including women, the vulnerable and poor, been ensured throughout the development planning process on the municipal level?
- Has there been a proper assessment to ensure that all vulnerable groups have been identified and included in the process?
- Has there been a public information campaign to ensure that citizens are informed and can participate in appropriate forums to express their positions and needs?
- Has there been a specific outreach program tailored to reach the most marginalized groups of society?
- Have the local communities been mobilized and do they support the development plan? Has this been fed in into the regional level?
- Have all stakeholders, including vulnerable and civil society groups, been able to participate actively and meaningfully in the planning process of the regional development plan?

¹³ See above, Principle of Subsidiarity, p 10.

¹⁴ UNDP Policy Paper, How to make Local Development Work, p 3-6.

Possible tools to be used:¹⁵

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 5: Participation and empowerment.
- HR and community facilitator/expert.
- Vulnerable Groups List: results of the municipal and community assessment have to be fed into the regional level. Representatives of those groups have to participate in bodies and institutions established on regional level.
- Civil Society Organization List: see above.
- Social mobilization initiatives: creation of citizens committees, public forums and roundtables.
- Multi-sector partnership groups and partnership working groups which should consist of a broad group of stakeholders.
- Focus groups targeting specific vulnerable members of the society.
- Inter-municipal Co-operation as defined by the Law on Local Self Government, Art. 14, 15 and 61.

Actions:

- Institutionalized representation of all stakeholders, including women, in planning committees.
- In case that on the local level not all stakeholders, especially the vulnerable and the poor, have participated in the planning of a local development strategy, corrective measures have to be introduced at regional level to ensure that those sectors of the society are not excluded.

B) Surveying the Region

Surveying the region is critically important for the following reasons:

- *The region may have significant differences within it and these will have to be accounted for in the planning process.*
- *The level of preparedness on the part of the partners is critical and facilitators and potential partners should know in advance the varying degree of capacity.*
- *A comparative survey of the region should be undertaken to determine the relative capacity and circumstances of the respective economic entities within the region.*¹⁶

Furthermore, surveying the region is also critically important with view on providing (1) thorough information about specific HR issues and the level of their realization, (2) a detailed assessment of vulnerable groups and their economic and employment status as well as (3) the existing poverty level and any factors negatively or positively impeding on the situation of the vulnerable and poor.

'The types of things that should be considered in the survey include the geography, nature of the economic base of the individual municipalities, current economic

¹⁵ Please see references and explanatory notes concerning each tool in Annex 1: Tools and Methods for a HRBA to Regional Development.

¹⁶ A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 14.

*status, poverty level, educational make up and background of the potential participants.*¹⁷

With view of the assessment and analysis concerning the poverty level and other HR issues, the national MDG plan might provide valuable data and information. It is self-explanatory that regional economic development, economic growth and a general increase of resources, could be of paramount importance in addressing issues and problems identified in the national and regional MDGs plans. By harmonizing both strategies, the economic development could be the driving force ensuring fulfillment of the MDGs and progressive realization of human rights.

As addressed in the methodology, it is also instrumental to determine the degree of preparedness, commitment and capacity but also concerns of the municipalities, cities and communities which should embark on a joint regional development strategy. If a minimum readiness and preparedness is not given and municipalities have not yet prepared local development strategies, the overall process might be jeopardized and it is recommended to put further steps on hold until all stakeholders reach the same starting point.

Politicians and officials need to understand the purpose as well as short-term, mid-term and long-term goal of a regional development strategy as well as the added value for each individual local community. Broadest local support from local and inter-mediate government level is an important step towards ownership and responsibility.

In some regions it might be further necessary to explain the added value of regional economic development, as concerns have been raised that the strengthening of the regional level might lead to the formation of ethnic clusters and weakening of the state institutions. To avoid any risk of possible increase of ethnic tension, special attention has to be given to guarantee non-discrimination and equality and ensure the representation of minorities.

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| Issues to be considered: |
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- Are all stakeholders, from bottom to top level, informed about the RED plan, have a full understanding of the concept and are prepared to commit to it?
- Do local authorities and all others involved in the process have the necessary qualification and experience to develop a strategic plan?
- Are there significant disparities concerning the level of poverty or number of vulnerable groups and minorities between the municipalities and communities within one region? How can this be effectively balanced in the RED?
- Are there relevant cultural, ethnic and social differences which have to be accounted for in the planning process?
- Does the level of preparedness only encompass the political and economic leadership or is the RED plan also accepted and supported by the citizens, including the vulnerable and poor?

¹⁷ See above, p 14.

Possible tools to be used:

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, specifically Guidelines 6 to 14 covering the content of Poverty Reduction Strategies in the Human Rights Approach.
- HR and community facilitator/expert.
- MDG ambassador/facilitator.
- National Legal Framework Checklist.
- Human Rights Checklist.
- Vulnerable Groups List: ensure that all vulnerable and disadvantaged groups have been identified.
- Civil Society Organizations List.
- Gender Baseline List.
- Public Opinion Poll to get a thorough assessment on the level of information and support by the citizens.

C) The Planning Process - Strategy Development

The process of Strategy Development is divided in five steps, all of them containing critical issues, which need to be considered also from the aspect of a HR based approach.

(a) Choosing the proper people

The first step of the planning process, the selection of the proper people for the Commission might not only turn into a difficult and challenging task but is also paramount for the whole process. Getting the right people on board is crucial for the success of the further development. Here it is also particularly important to be as inclusive as possible and ensure that all stakeholders, including civil society organizations, vulnerable groups and the poor, which have been identified at an earlier stage, are included in an equal and non-discriminatory manner. The same counts for a balanced gender and minority presentation. A system needs to be put in place to ensure a minimum quota of the members to be women as well as representatives of minorities and other disadvantaged groups.

*'The effort in a regional process is further complicated by the fact that it is important to consider fair distribution and inclusion form a much broader area, with potentially more diverse interests and possibly very different needs. However, despite the difficulty it remains a highly important issue that must be resolved in an equitable manner if the end result of the Commission's work is to be successful.'*¹⁸

As already emphasized, it is of strategic importance to consider economic development in its broadest sense and be inclusive rather than exclusive. As economic development not only affects all citizens in a community but is further instrumental in achieving decrease of poverty, higher levels of employment, social security and progressive realization of human rights, it is important to ensure that

¹⁸ See above, p 16

those most affected by poverty and social exclusion are given space to express their needs and actively participate in the development of a strategy.

As there is no legal basis providing guidance for the establishment and mandate of the Regional Commissions, it is important that an agreement between the political leadership, determining size and make up of the commission also ensures an equal and non-discriminatory participation and representation of all sectors of society, which also reflects a fair gender balance. Furthermore, this agreement should include operational guidelines, also establishing a transparent, fair and non-discriminatory selection and disciplinary procedure.

Issues to be considered:

- Has a transparent, fair and non-discriminatory mechanism been established based on which the members of the Regional Commissions will be selected?
- Is there a fair representation of all vulnerable groups, minorities and the poor?
- Is there a fair gender balance to ensure that women are able to actively and meaningfully participate in the process?
- Has a proper review and analysis done after a preliminary selection of all members of the Commission and is the final result a fair and balanced reflection of the community, including the vulnerable and poor?

Possible tools to be used:

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 3: Equality and non-discrimination; Guideline 5: Participation and Empowerment.
- HR facilitator/expert.
- MDG ambassador/facilitator.
- Vulnerable Groups List: ensure that all vulnerable and disadvantaged groups have been identified.
- Civil Society Organizations List.

Actions:

- The agreement between the local governments concerning the set-up and staffing of the Regional Commissions should include fair and non-discriminatory appointment as well as disciplinary procedures.

(b) Getting Organized

Once the Regional Commission has been set up, the organizational process with the final goal to establish and adopt a strategic plan can start. This process, which is still part of the overall preparation, includes (1) data collection and dissemination, (2) establishing a set of by-laws or statute for the organization and (3) undertaking a local economy assessment.

- Data Collection

The process of data collection, which is crucial for the formulation of any local and regional development strategy includes in this model three components:

The *base line analysis* providing a quick overview of the environment of the community,

The *business attitude* survey focusing on attitude and perceptions that existing businesses hold towards the community and the business prospects and

The *community profile*, which provides, under one cover, a statistical and descriptive portrait of a community.¹⁹

From a HR perspective, it is paramount that the process of data collection includes specific sets of questions relating to (1) human and women's rights, (2) minorities, (3) vulnerable groups and the poor. These data which specifically refer to the situation of marginalized groups, the vulnerable and poor have, at a later stage, to be fed into the analysis and assessment reports. Furthermore, specific attention needs also to be paid to the situation of women, the level of female unemployment/employment and active participation of women in governance and public life. Finally, data already collected through the national MDGs process should be incorporated in the assessment and analysis.

Concerning the baseline analysis, in addition to the cluster 'human resources' a specific cluster referring to 'human rights and development', including rights oriented questions as well as social and environmental issues should be introduced. The analysis should further give a clear picture of who the responsible duty-bearers are.

The community profile, which should also provide data on which, at a later stage, decisions regarding economic development and allocation of local resources will be based, is an essential part to ensure a HR based approach.

To provide '*substantive data and meaningful information*',²⁰ clearly all sectors of society and their respective environment and quality of life have to be reflected in the profile. Needs and interests of women, vulnerable and poor have to be considered and reflected and the process of resource allocation must permit all segments of society to express their interests and concerns with regard to priorities.²¹ As different patterns of resource allocation will serve the interests of different groups of people differently, it is paramount that the community profile provides complex information and data, including all groups of society. Furthermore, commitments entered under the national and regional MDGs plan need to be considered and fed into the analysis to ensure that future economic development is aiming at fulfilling those obligations and improving the quality of life of all.

¹⁹ See above, p 19.

²⁰ See above, p 22.

²¹ Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 4: Progressive Realization of Human Rights, Indicators and Benchmarks; Guideline 5: Participation and Empowerment.

Issues to be considered:

- Does the assessment and analysis include substantive information concerning the situation of vulnerable and marginalized groups, minorities and the poor?
- Does the analysis provide information concerning the situation and status of women, including also the level of active participating in governance and public life which would guarantee that their views and needs are incorporated in the further planning?

Possible tools to be used:

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, especially Guidelines 6 to 14 covering the content of Poverty Reduction Strategies in the Human Rights Approach.
- National MDG plan and report.
- HR facilitator/expert.
- National Legal Framework Checklist.
- Human Rights Checklist.
- Vulnerable Groups List.
- Civil Society Organizations List.
- Gender Baseline List.

Actions:

- Design of a specific cluster referring to human rights and development to be incorporated in the baseline analysis.

- Organizational structure

The next step after the process of data collection and analysis has been completed refers to the establishment of an organizational structure of the Commission. As there is not yet a legal framework determining the procedure and clear responsibilities of the Commission, it will be primarily up to the local government level to further decide upon those issues. Although, it can be expected that future laws will more clearly define responsibilities, mandate and authority, certain areas will always remain where the local level will need to decide upon procedural and structural issues.²²

In general, similar principles as addressed under the section 'Getting the Proper People' have to be applied during the decision making process concerning the establishing of an organizational structure. The Commission has to ensure that future procedures especially with view of human resource management, which include, besides others, issues such as appointment procedure, total number of members, hiring of staff and disciplinary procedure, are based upon following principles: non-discrimination and equality, active participation of all stakeholders, monitoring and accountability of duty-bearers.

²² A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 22.

In case an organizational committee is formed to work out those issues, it is recommended that in addition to the project facilitator, also the expert input from a HR facilitator is ensured.

Possible tools to be used:

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 3: Equality and non-discrimination.
- HR facilitator/expert.

- Initial Analysis / Local Economic Assessment

*'A preliminary economic assessment will use available quantitative and qualitative knowledge of resource, structures and trends in production and employment, skills, and other resources to help identify the strategic direction for the local economy. This information will also point towards projects and programs that will strengthen the economic base of the local area. Data collection is the first step in an economic assessment. The second step involves analyzing the data.'*²³

An honest assessment of community resources, needs and capabilities has to be done, in order to provide a realistic basis for developing an economic strategy. It should clearly show where the strong and weak points are and where gaps exist in the context of regional development. To provide a complete and complex picture, it is essential that needs and problems, but also capacity, capital and available resources from all sectors of the society, including women, vulnerable and marginalized groups, are reflected in the assessment.

Various technical tools as well as benchmarks and indicators can be used to analyze the data collected.

- The exercise applying the '4 Capitals'²⁴ may help to identify and balance the economic, natural, human and social capital. Those are the resources available in the region and a thorough review may also help to identify possible solutions, priorities and to create the strategy. The analysis of the 4 available capitals may provide a good structure and facilitate a better view on how to best connect and use the resources.
- Another commonly used strategic planning tool is the SWOT analysis,²⁵ which allows organizing the information collected during the economic assessment in a logical manner. The data are grouped into internal and external factors, differentiating between opportunities / threats (external) and strengths / weaknesses (internal).²⁶
Referring to the internal factors, especially with view of weaknesses, issues such as increasing poverty, lack of employment opportunities, lack of access to education and health, discrimination, lack of gender equality and other

²³ See above, p 23

²⁴ UNDP Policy Paper, How to make Local Development Work, p 32.

²⁵ See above, p 33.

²⁶ A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 23

aspects traditionally having a more negative impact on vulnerable and marginalized groups, have to be fully integrated. This should, to the highest possible extent, ensure that the living conditions of those disadvantaged groups as well as the general level of human rights protection, are considered when identifying strategic directions and priorities.

- The 'Problem Tree Analysis'²⁷ helps to analyze the causes and consequences in specific problem areas. It can help to establish connections and decide what areas should be given priority. The Problem/Solution Tree provides a graphic overview of the problems and their causes and connects those with potential solutions.

Similar to the SWOT analysis, the specific problem areas can (and should) also include specific human rights issues, such as lack of realization of certain human rights, lack of social mobilization and participation, lack of participation of women in the public and employment market, poor education or lack of access to health care. As the Problem Tree Analysis allows the input and ideas of many stakeholders, it should be ensured that also marginalized and vulnerable groups are included. A focused exercise with the exclusive participation of for example women or specific vulnerable groups will help to get a concrete and detailed assessment of their problems and concerns as well as ideas for potential solutions.

The various tools that help to analyze the existing economic, social and human rights conditions and resources may also help in a second step (1) to identify strategic directions, priorities and potential solutions to specific problem areas, and (2) to measure their possible impact on all sectors of the society, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

An additional important aspect of this initial economic assessment is the establishment of a data management system which can, at a later stage, be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Issues to be considered:

- Have all areas, including specific human rights, such as access to health care, the social welfare system and education, as well as all groups of the society been included in the economic assessment?

Possible tools to be used:

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction, especially Guidelines 6 to 14 covering the content of Poverty Reduction Strategies in the Human Rights Approach.
- HR facilitator/expert.
- MDG ambassador/facilitator.
- Human Rights Checklist.
- Civil Society Organizations List.
- Vulnerable Groups List.
- Gender Baseline List.

²⁷ UNDP Policy Paper, How to make Local Development Work, p 32.

- Reviewing the available resources: the '4 Capitals – economic, natural, human and social capital'.
- SWOT analysis helps to group data into internal and external positively and negatively impeding factors.
- Problem Tree Analysis.
- Social mobilization initiatives: creation of citizens committees, public forums and roundtables.
- Partnership working groups, which could provide specific input to the analysis.
- Focused roundtables or exercises, targeting marginalized and politically passive groups.

Actions:

- Ensure that the data gathering process and analysis of the economic situation is including information concerning the marginalized, vulnerable and poor by using the respective checklists.
- Ensure that the analysis includes also information about the situation and status of women, regarding their economic and business resources, skills, participation in the employment sector etc.
- Conduct separate working group sessions which target exclusively a specific social group, such as handicapped people, women or a minority group, in order to make an assessment of their specific concerns and problems. This might be especially useful concerning groups, which are traditionally marginalized, politically passive and have no possibility or no interest to express their specific concerns and problems. Technical tools, such as the SWOT analysis, the Problem Tree Analysis etc. may help to identify resources, problems and potential solutions. The results should be incorporated into the overall findings.

(c) Creating the Strategy

Creating the strategy constitutes the core of the planning process. The Methodology defines five main steps, which include:

- *Establishing a vision for the planning entity,*
- *Transforming that vision into a concise mission statement,*
- *Developing a set of coherent themes,*
- *Extracting the critical issues from these themes,*
- *Establishing goals and objectives to deal with the critical issues.*²⁸

The Commission is advised to undertake this process with the support of an outside facilitator to ensure objective expert input and feedback. Furthermore, it should be considered to consult a HR expert to monitor and advise the Commission throughout the process of creating a strategy in order to ensure that human rights principles are integrated.

²⁸ A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 24

This could partly be a joint undertaking with the local or regional MDGs ambassadors/facilitators to ensure that also millennium development and poverty reduction goals are considered and incorporated.

- *Establishing a 'Collective Vision'*

The next step following the collection and complete analysis of the data and the first step leading to the creation of a strategy is the development of a group vision, which, once agreed upon, should be unanimously supported by all stakeholders.

The establishment of a collective vision ensuring the broadest possible public consensus and support is a key element, and the Commission should not move ahead before this step is successfully completed. Furthermore, a collective vision, supported by all stakeholders, helps the development of a sustainable and commonly accepted strategy.

Public participation and broad-based community mobilization are vital for ensuring also a bottom-up support and as result long-term sustainability of the regional development strategy. As already elaborated in the previous section, fair and equal representation of marginalized and vulnerable groups as well as gender balance in the Commission ensure that in the process of establishing a collective vision, the views, ideas and possible visions of the vulnerable and poor are equally considered.

The process of establishing a collective vision requires also that policy decisions, which will be determining for the future, are taken. These should include answers to questions, such as, where the community should go and which priorities to set with a long-term view.

As a general rule, the vision should address issues which have an effect on the quality of life of all groups of society, including the vulnerable and poor. Furthermore, the focus should be put on balancing and not deepening existing social and economic gaps and disparities. From a HR-based approach the progressive realization of human rights, with the long-term goal of full enjoyment of rights and entitlements have to be included in the vision. In this context, issues such as education, access to health system, decent work, adequate housing and equal access to justice have to be looked at carefully and, if during the data collection and analysis identified as being critical, integrated in the collective vision.

Concluding, the definition of a collective vision, based on the information and data collected and analyzed, constitutes an essential element and needs at least the same level of attention, as the data collection itself. As the vision is supposed to reflect a long-term objective, it is important that not only progressive, but full protection of human rights is included, the same as implementation of goals as defined and set in the national MDGs plan.

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| Issues to be considered: |
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- Are Commission members actively seeking input and feed-back from the municipalities, communities as well as from specific groups they are expected to represent?

- Have the 'Forces at Work' been identified and all interest groups and their competing interests, demands and motivations been considered?²⁹
- Is there a public information program, which ensures, that citizens are well informed and have a possibility to actively participate in the establishment of a collective vision?
- Has there been a specific outreach program tailored to reach the most marginalized groups of society?
- Have previously defined local visions been fed into the regional and collective vision?
- Is the final outcome, the collective vision, being supported by the citizens, including the vulnerable and poor?

Possible tools to be used:

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 3: Equality and non-discrimination; Guideline 5: Participation and empowerment; Guidelines 6 to 14 covering the content of Poverty Reduction Strategies in the Human Rights Approach.
- HR and community facilitator/expert.
- MDG ambassador/facilitator.
- Social mobilization initiatives: creation of citizens committees, public forums and roundtables.
- Multi-sector partnership groups and partnership working groups which should consist of a broad group of stakeholders, including inter-municipal and regional roundtables.
- Focused roundtables or working groups, targeting women, marginalized groups and traditionally politically passive groups.

Actions:

- Establish regional partnerships, which reach out across municipal borders – vertical and horizontal – bridging gap between local communities and policy makers.
- Mobilize the communities through organization of inter-municipal roundtables etc and ensure that possible conflicting ideas and visions are presented and discussed with the purpose to agree on a joint decision or compromise accepted by all.

- Writing a Mission Statement

Once the collective vision has been identified and commonly agreed upon, the Commission can start with the task to formulate and write a Mission Statement, which is primarily based on the collective vision.

As the Statement should define the general direction of the strategic plan with the long-term goal to improve the quality of life of all citizens, needs and problems of all levels and groups of the society, including the traditionally disadvantaged and marginalized groups, have to be considered and integrated. The results of the

²⁹ Methodology and Tools for a Human Rights-based Assessment and Analysis 2004, Rights-based Municipal Assessment and Planning Project (RMAP), p 19.

economic assessment and analysis, the 'Conceptual Strategy for the Regional Planning Process in Macedonia' as well as the 'Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights to Poverty Reduction Strategies' and the goals defined in the national MDGs plan will further help to define the basic goals of the regional development.

Similar as to the previous step, the establishment of a collective vision, it is essential, that writing a Mission Statement is an inclusive process and involves the active participation of all stakeholders, including representatives of civil society organizations, vulnerable and marginalized groups and especially women. A public outreach program and focused public discussions targeting specifically excluded groups should be held to ensure wide support by the public to the regional development concept.

Possible tools to be used:

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 3: Equality and non-discrimination; Guideline 5: Participation and empowerment; Guidelines 6 to 14 covering the content of Poverty Reduction Strategies in the Human Rights Approach.
- HR and community facilitator/expert.
- MDG ambassador/facilitator.
- National MDG Plan.
- Conceptual Strategy for the Regional Planning Process in Macedonia.
- Multi-sector partnership groups and partnership working groups which should consist of a broad group of stakeholders, including inter-municipal and regional roundtables.
- Focused roundtables or working groups, targeting women, marginalized groups and traditionally politically passive groups.
- Public information campaign, including TV, radio, print-media as well as leaflets presenting the Mission Statement to the citizens.

Actions:

- Ensure widest possible public information and support to the Mission Statement and the strategic direction for the RED. This helps to develop local ownership of the RED and secures a sustainable development.

- *Developing a Set of Coherent Themes*

The third step in the process of creating a strategy is the development of general themes or categories that are of concern in the region.

As this cannot be considered as an isolated process taking place on regional level, it is necessary to consider existing national policies and strategies, including also the national MDGs plan and other commitments, such as national and international human rights obligations, as well as the Local Economic Development (LED) plan.

There is a general need to balance central government commitments towards equality and human rights with local government commitments to improving the social and economic conditions of individual communities and regions. Overall, it will be important that strict guidelines are put in place, to define the scope of regional

development strategies and activities versus local government programs and national goals.

A HR approach must ensure that, when developing a set of themes at least those human rights are specifically included, which have been identified during the data collection process as being at stake and critical. Those could be rights referring to education, equal access to health and social welfare system or access to justice, to list just some examples.

Hand in hand with the development of themes goes the process of prioritization. Whereas during previous steps in the planning procedure, the issue of prioritization has been addressed only in a general way and primarily referred to the overall strategic direction of the RED, it is now, that decisions have to be taken, which priorities to set concretely and which programs and projects to implement - a process that also implies allocation of available resources among alternative options. This is not only difficult and bears numerous elements of a potential conflict, but constitutes an essential step in the planning procedure.

From a HR-based perspective this process of prioritization is a strategically important step within the policy development and very closely related to the principles of participation and empowerment. Guideline 5, referring to 'Participation and Empowerment',³⁰ describes clearly the link between participation and allocation of available resources: *'As different patterns of resource allocation will serve the interest of different groups of people differently, a conflict of interest is inherent in any process of policy formulation. In whose favour this conflict is resolved depends very much on who can participate effectively in the process. Traditionally, the poor are left out, as they do not possess enough political or financial power to make their interests count. A human rights approach must take steps to alter this situation, by creating a legal-institutional framework in which the poor can participate effectively in policy formulation.'*

To avoid the exclusion of vulnerable groups, especially the poor, from this process and ensure that their views and concerns are taken into consideration, active and meaningful participation of all stakeholders has to be ensured. Furthermore, the substance of the prioritization must be guided by human rights based principles, ensuring that any economic development also facilitates the progressive realization of human rights of all groups of the society.

Finally, to ensure that possible disputes, such as potentially conflicting value judgments can be reconciled in a fair and equitable manner, a just and transparent institutional mechanism has to be put in place. This is best done already during the establishment of the organizational structure of the Commission.³¹

Issues to be considered:

- Have those human rights, which have been identified during the data collection process as being at stake and critical, been thoroughly considered and incorporated in the themes?

³⁰ Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, p 16.

³¹ See: Chapter (C), Organizational Structure

- Has a just and transparent mechanism been put in place which ensures that conflicts and disputes are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner? If not, this should be established without further delays.

Possible tools to be used:

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 5: Participation and empowerment; Guidelines 6 to 14 covering the content of Poverty Reduction Strategies in the Human Rights Approach.
- HR and community facilitator/expert.
- MDG ambassador/facilitator.
- National MDG Plan.
- Social mobilization initiatives: creation of citizens committees, public forums and roundtables.
- Multi-sector partnership groups and partnership working groups which should consist of a broad group of stakeholders, including inter-municipal and regional roundtables.
- Focused roundtables or working groups, targeting women, marginalized groups and traditionally politically passive groups.

- Identification of Critical Issues from these Themes

*'A critical issue is any element of a theme that the commission concludes is important enough to deserve further discussion.'*³²

The process of determining critical issues and ranking them in accordance to their relevance might again bring conflicting value judgments concerning the different impact of certain issues on different groups within the society. The same as in previous steps of the planning procedure, participation and an inclusive approach is essential to guarantee a fair and transparent decision making process.

The use of the 'Problem tree analysis' might serve as valuable tool in order to help identifying and sorting critical issues, potential solutions and the specific impact on the community.

However, it has to be clarified in the outset, that in case of conflicting value judgments, trade-offs concerning minimum standards of human rights are not permitted, neither are any policies which would result in a retrogression of human rights. A progressive realization of human rights has to be guaranteed and has to have absolute priority over other goals and objectives.

Possible tools to be used:

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 5: Participation and empowerment; Guidelines 6 to 14 covering the content of Poverty Reduction Strategies in the Human Rights Approach.
- HR and community facilitator/expert.

³² A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 26

- MDG ambassador/facilitator.
- National MDG Plan.
- Social mobilization initiatives: creation of citizens committees, public forums and roundtables.
- Multi-sector partnership groups and partnership working groups which should consist of a broad group of stakeholders, including inter-municipal and regional roundtables.
- Focused roundtables or working groups, targeting women, marginalized groups and traditionally politically passive groups.
- Problem Tree Analysis.

- Establishing Goals and Objectives to deal with the critical issues

*'After analyzing and paring down the number of critical issues that have been proposed those remaining are what this author likes to refer to as Strategic Issues and in effect are the basis for the Goals and Objectives.'*³³

Strategic issues are basically the problem side of the goals to be set in order to accomplish the collective vision and the mission statement. They should be based on the analysis of the community and provide the direction for the future based on the assessment of needs.

The Methodology refers to three time-frame categories, dividing the goals into short-term, mid-term and long-term goals. It is a three step development, where the short-term goals are supposed to initiate the process and constitute the basis for the mid-term and long-term goals.

With view of a human rights-based approach, it is important that critical human rights, which have been identified at a previous stage through the data collection process, are accordingly incorporated in the three time-frame categories. Whereas the full realization of the rights should be defined as long-term goal, the mid- and short-term goals define frame and concrete steps concerning the progressive realization of the same rights.

Effective social mobilization, the establishment of sustained civil society organizations, human resource development and capacity building might be defined as goals, as well as specific aspects of the right to education, the right to health, improvement of employment opportunities or empowerment of women. Whereas the short-term goals should start the process and focus on active participation of the citizens in order to also ensure ownership and broadest possible support, the mid-term goals in general focus on the issues that improve the quality of life of the citizens and the long-term goals reflect the collective vision and mission statement.

Finally, the last step in order to create the strategy is the translation of goals into concrete objectives or projects and into measurable targets, which will be important for the monitoring and evaluation activities. Without identifying and formulating objectives, goals might remain non-measurable ideals without action and implementation plans.

³³ See above, p 27

The SMART analysis³⁴ provides a very useful tool that helps to identify Specific, Measurable, Accepted by all, Realistic and Time-bound objectives. Once the goals and objectives have been identified, the last step within the planning process is the establishment of an effective Action Plan in order to accomplish the goals of the Program. Referring to the latter, it needs to be strongly emphasized that the development of a concrete action plan is a core element of the strategic plan and the only way to effectively guarantee its implementation.

Issues to be considered:

- Have those human rights, which have been included in the themes, also been defined as goals and objectives and accordingly incorporated in the three time-frame categories?

Possible tools to be used:

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 4: Progressive Realization of Human Rights.
- Logical framework.
- SMART analysis.

(d) Project Development and Implementing the Plan

As stated above, the next and final step concerning the planning process, the project development and implementation phase, encompasses the establishment of concrete action plans, the creation of time-tables and the assignment of responsibilities as well as the prioritization of goals.

A helpful tool to define and plan actions is to connect them with measures and objectives.³⁵ Measures could encompass for example financial-, human resource development-, structural- and legal measures, which are put in direct relation to objectives, such as community-, social-, environmental-, economic- and rights development. The set of measures identified to achieve the objectives can be used as reference and help to further plan the actions.

To ensure that actions are focusing on achieving the goals, the regular revision of the objectives, measures and actions in order to see if they are logically connected, is a useful and also important exercise. This helps to avoid that numerous actions are integrated in the plan without having a direct link to the measures and objectives.

The creation of time-tables and the assignment of responsibilities as well as the prioritization of goals, all steps being part of the project development and implementing plan, have to be looked at carefully from a human rights perspective. Principles of monitoring and accountability as well as the process of priority setting are at the core of a human rights based approach. The latter issue has already been

³⁴ A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 28; UNDP Policy Paper, How to make Local Development Work, p 35.

³⁵ UNDP Policy Paper, How to make Local Development Work, p 35-36

elaborated at an earlier stage. It has to be guaranteed that during the process of prioritization there is no trade-off concerning human rights related goals and objectives. The mechanism to set priorities has to be transparent and ensure that the most important, including those having an impact on marginalized and vulnerable groups, get first attention.

Concerning the assignment of action plans, time-tables and responsibilities, those steps are closely connected to the principles of monitoring and accountability regarding the use of resources.³⁶ Clear deadlines and assignments of mandates and responsibilities are of crucial importance to enable the establishment of an effective monitoring and accountability mechanism – which will be further elaborated below under section (e).

In general, though, the objective of any monitoring is to (1) to help identify on a continuous basis a possible need for redirecting the attention to specific targets, including the realization of human rights which have been identified as goals and objectives, and (2) to enable citizens and right-holders to hold those responsible to account for the failure to comply with the responsibilities delegated.

The accountability procedure, though related to it, goes beyond the monitoring. *'It is a mechanism or device by which duty-bearers are answerable for their acts or omissions in relation to their duties. An accountability procedure provides right-holders with an opportunity to understand how duty-bearers have discharged, or failed to discharge, their obligations, and it also provides duty-bearers with an opportunity to explain their conduct.'*³⁷

Issues to be considered:

- Have the different roles and responsibilities been clearly defined, in order to ensure that in case of any misuse or failure the respective individuals can be held accountable?

Possible tools to be used:

- Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 5: Participation and Empowerment; Guideline 16: Principles of Monitoring and Accountability.
- Graphic exercise which connects objectives, measures and actions is a useful tool to plan and revise actions.

(e) Measuring your Progress

The necessity and importance to measure the progress and development of the process itself is a basic rule of any project management. This rule is directly related to the collection of data, which are used to measure trends such as economic

³⁶ Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 16: Principles of Monitoring and Accountability, p 57-58.

³⁷ See above, p 57.

growth, employment rate, access to the health system, schooling rate and the realization of specific human rights.

A set of thoroughly developed measurements and indicators will provide the technical tools to collect the data.³⁸ It is important that specific sets of indicators measuring the level of realization of human rights, with sub-groups targeting the vulnerable and poor population, are integrated in this system.³⁹

The guiding principle is to ensure that any methodology established facilitates at a later stage an effective monitoring and evaluation of the process. With view of the latter, it is recommended that the Commission establishes in advance a proper and suitable mechanism, which guarantees an objective and impartial monitoring and accountability procedure. This should already be done when setting up the organizational structure during the planning phase.⁴⁰

Concerning internal monitoring, evaluation and accountability functions, the Planning Commission has the primary responsibility to oversee the process, based on the action plans and assignments of time-tables and responsibilities. In addition, though, the establishment of a Monitoring Committee in each Regional Council is strongly recommended.⁴¹ With view of the staffing of the Monitoring Committee, the human rights based principle which requires that members of institutions or bodies have to be selected ensuring a fair, balanced and non-discriminatory representation of all sectors of the society, including vulnerable groups, minorities and women, has to be secured.

In addition to the internal procedures, the Commission is advised to refer to additional external mechanisms. Besides political or administrative procedures, the Ombudsman (OM) institution could be tasked with a monitoring function focusing on the planning and implementation of human rights related goals and objectives. Ideally this should be a specific OM focusing on human rights and development/poverty reduction.

The most important criterion is that any monitoring and accountability procedure established, be it internal or external, has to be accessible, transparent and effective in order to ensure that citizens, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, are informed and can actively participate.

Possible tools to be used:

- 'Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies',

³⁸ *It is the intention of the organizers to have a comprehensive set of measurements and indicators developed in order to measure progress in LED over the long period. (These will be provided in the UNDP separate report.)*, See: A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 30.

³⁹ Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Guideline 4: Progressive Realization of Human Rights, Indicators and Benchmarks, p 14-15; National report on MDGs lists a comprehensive set of primary and secondary indicators.

⁴⁰ See Chapter C, (b) Getting Organized – Organizational Structure.

⁴¹ A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 31.

Guideline 4: Progressive Realization of Human Rights, Indicators and Benchmarks; Guideline 16: Principles of Monitoring and Accountability.

- The National Report on the MDGs lists a comprehensive set of primary and secondary indicators, which should be reviewed and integrated in the set of measurements and indicators currently developed in order to measure the progress in LED and RED.
- Monitoring mechanism: OM institution with an OM specifically appointed for HR and development/poverty reduction.
- HR facilitator/expert.
- MDG ambassador/facilitator.
- Monitoring Committees created within each Regional Council.
- Parliamentary or other political processes mandated with a specific monitoring and accountability function.

Actions:

- Create a legal framework within which civil society can perform an independent monitoring role.

2. Setting-up Offices of Economic Development – the Institutionalization of a RED Program

Although, as stated in the Methodology document, the design, mandate and responsibilities of the Regional Economic Development Agency (RDA) which should provide the operational structure to the RED, will strongly depend on the future National Plan as well as the different plans of each Regional Council, some basic principles have to be considered in any set-up. This counts also when looking at the RDAs from the perspective of a human rights approach.

In this regard two statements on the subject are of specific interest:⁴²

- Statement from an EU expert: '*... another identifiable feature is the very wide meaning given by the agencies to the notion of development, and the growing importance of the social component given to this concept...*'
- Draft Concept of the Regional Development Strategy: '*The task of the regional development strategy is to create a consistent system of goals, institutions and instrument for balancing the social and economic development of the whole territory of the country by integrating the general (National Interests), regional and local (special interests) in carrying out an efficient and balanced and sustainable economic development...*'

Both statements clearly include the social aspect in the regional economic development and indicate that development has to be considered as an inclusive process, not limited to a sole focus on economic and business growth. The starting and end point has to be the improvement of quality of life of all, including marginalized and vulnerable groups the same as minorities, children and women.

⁴² A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 33.

Referring to this, the RDA has to be based, besides others, on the following principles and concepts:

- Transparent and non-discriminatory selection procedure concerning permanent and non-permanent members of the RDA,
- Principle of non-discrimination and equality,
- Principle of free access to information,
- Principle of partnership, including marginalized and vulnerable groups,
- Principle of active and meaningful participation and representation,
- Principle of ownership and empowerment,
- Concept of social mobilization,
- Principle of accountability.

The following objectives should be considered:

- Capacity building of all stakeholders,
- Human resource development,
- Socio-economic development,
- Human rights development,
- Informed and active participation of the citizens.

Furthermore, a Board of the Regional Agency should ensure a harmonized approach by the individual RDAs across the country and can serve as supervisory body versus the RDAs.

3. Other Activities to Enhance the Planning Process

A) Establishing Training Programs for the Agencies and the Public

Concerning training programs, two different issues need to be considered from a HR perspective. First, a well designed human rights curriculum needs to be integrated in the RED training program, and second, separate training programs with an exclusive human rights agenda need to be designed aiming at initiating a wide-spread public information and education process.

(a) RED Training Program

The RED training program to enhance capacity building and ensure common standards across the country should be broadened to ensure the inclusion of a specific human rights curriculum.

This should at minimum cover the concept and basic principles of a human rights-based approach to development and poverty reduction, training on integration of a human rights based approach into project and program development as well as the framework of domestic and international human rights protection and the general concept and relation between rights-holders and duty-bearers.

Other issues to be integrated in the training program:

- Training for human resource development,
- Tools for social mobilization initiatives and empowerment,
- Public information and outreach-programs,
- Principles of good governance and accountability,
- Quality management.

(b) Human Rights Training Program

To integrate the human rights-based approach into the regional economic development plan in Macedonia to a large extent a new concept. This requires a broad-based education and awareness raising program, which targets all groups and sectors of the society, especially vulnerable and marginalized groups, including the poor and less educated.

It is very important, that this program does not only focus on the leaders and key figures of the economic, business and political sphere, but is specifically designed to address the vulnerable and poor, the marginalized and politically passive groups, women and minorities.

To reach the goals of

- sustained social mobilization,
- active participation of all,
- empowerment and ownership of the vulnerable, marginalized and poor,

is a long-term process and needs, certainly in the beginning, to be initiated from the outside. It is not sufficient, to provide training to the political, social and economic leadership to ensure that they are familiar with a human rights-based approach, it is essentially important that the right-holders are aware of their rights and entitlements and also know how to claim them from the duty-bearers. Groups which have been traditionally passive and remained outside of the political sphere, such as disadvantaged, vulnerable and poor people, might not know how to get involved and meaningfully participate in a policy development process, or how to use accountability procedures and which institutions to address in order to claim compensation.

Furthermore, social mobilization and capacity building, which is closely related to human resource development, may create and enhance a bottom-up approach with regard to human rights education, as citizens are getting increasingly aware of their rights and of the mechanisms put in place to ensure the fulfillment those rights.

In this regards, a lot can be achieved through education institutions, the Ombudsman (OM) institution, but also through public outreach programs, radio and TV shows. Concerning the OM, the appointment of a specific OM for HR and development/poverty reduction might be a useful tool to support such a public human rights education program.

The human rights curriculum should encompass similar topics as mentioned above, but in addition provide specific lessons focusing on empowerment of the civil society, active participation, accountability and redress mechanism. It is important to make citizens, especially the vulnerable, disadvantaged and poor, aware about how they can get engaged and stand up for their rights and entitlements. The development from passive to active citizens and communities might be a challenge, as the process could result in fundamental changes of the relation between certain social groups and the leadership of the community, the municipality or the regional level.

Issues to be considered:

- What is the general level of awareness about human rights, entitlements and obligation of the duty-bearers within the public, especially with view of the vulnerable and poor?
- Are citizens prepared and ready to get involved and participate in an economic development plan?
- Is there a need of confidence building measures to foster the relation between generally disadvantaged groups and local authorities?
- What is the confidence in political stakeholders? Do citizens believe that the governments on all levels are acting in the best interest of the public, or is there a general level of political and social mistrust and frustration?

Possible tools to be used:

- Train the trainers program.
- OM for HR and development/poverty reduction.
- HR facilitator/expert.
- Radio and TV shows, theatre plays.
- Partnership WGs.
- Social mobilization initiatives: round-tables, HR focused forums.

IV. Summary

The document attempts to introduce a step-by-step approach concerning the integration of a human rights-based approach into the 'Methodology for Development of a RED Plan'.⁴³ The 'Draft Guidelines on a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies'⁴⁴ present the guiding principles, the overall objective is the progressive realization of human rights throughout the RED process with specific attention given to those, which in course of the process of data collection have been identified as critical.

For this purpose, a series of tools and recommendations as well as issues to be considered during the specific steps of the planning process are provided throughout the sections and as comprehensive overview with references in Annex 1.

⁴³ A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia.

⁴⁴ Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies.

Final remarks refer to the issue of social mobilization. Active and meaningful participation of all citizens, including the vulnerable and poor, in the policy formulation and development process, constitutes one of the most fundamental principles of a HRBA to development and poverty reduction. However, the implementation of it might present one of the biggest challenges for local authorities and all stakeholders embarking on this process. To actively reach out and include also the vulnerable and poor, women and minorities as well as other disadvantaged groups of the society in the RED process presents in Macedonia for all sides a new approach to policy development and decision making procedures. Furthermore, an active and outspoken civil society, which includes also the vulnerable and poor, might lead to fundamental changes of relations between certain groups of the society and the political authorities and present a long-term learning process for all sides. However, as problematic and challenging this might be, as crucial it is to gain broadest public support for the planning and implementation of the RED and ensure its future sustainability.

In addition to introducing specific social mobilization initiatives as well as focused outreach programs which target certain social groups, institutions such as community facilitators, HR facilitators, the MDGs Ambassadors and the Ombudsman, ideally through the establishment of a specific OM for HR and development/poverty reduction, could be instrumental to facilitate and support meaningful public participation and the empowerment of the vulnerable and poor.

A thorough and wide-spread information and training program will further be essential to raise the general level of awareness of the authorities as well as the citizens concerning human rights and the complex relation between duty bearers and right holders. To ensure a widest possible outreach, a train the trainer program might be the most effective approach, also considering the probably limited available human and financial resources.

As concluding point it should be stressed that the time-factor might play not only a decisive but also impeding role concerning the implementation of a HRBA to development and poverty reduction. Whereas above mentioned social and political processes require long-term engagement, this additional time is usually neither considered nor allowed throughout the planning process. For this reason a careful balance of the different needs as well as respective planning is paramount and specific attention will be required to prevent any trade-offs concerning human rights and the key principles of a HRBA in the course of the RED process.

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Annex 1: Tools and Methods for a HRBA to Regional Development

Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) – applicable throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

- The 'Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies' provide very useful and practical tools helping to ensure the implementation of the key principles of a HRBA as well as the realization of specific human rights, which are essential in any poverty reduction and development plan.
- The National MDGs plan defines under each of the eight goals a set of specific measures and targets to be reached within a certain timeframe. Those may help to cross-check the vision, goals and objective, as both processes (MDGs and RED) should be mutually reinforcing.
- A HR facilitator/expert working in each region may help throughout the process to ensure that a HRBA is applied in the RED. Furthermore, this expert can identify specific training and education needs which should be fed into training programs.
- MDGs ambassadors/facilitators.
- The OM institution and ideally a specific OM for HR and development/poverty reduction, who can provide advice throughout the process and take over specific tasks of monitoring and evaluation.

Non-discrimination and Equality – applicable throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

- 'Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies',
 - Guideline 3: Equality and Non-Discrimination.
- HR facilitator/expert.
- The Ombudsman in Macedonia has, deriving from the Ohrid Agreement, a particularly strong mandate to ensure non-discrimination and equitable presentation of communities in public at all levels and in other areas of public life. Insofar, the OM might be an important institution to ensure that the process of RED is implemented based on the principle of non-discrimination and equality.
- Ensure a fair gender-balance in all committees, bodies and institutions.

Participation and Empowerment – applicable throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

- 'Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies',
 - Guideline 1: Identification of the Poor;
 - Guideline 5: Participation and Empowerment.

- HR and community facilitator/expert.
- MDGs ambassador/facilitator.
- The National MDGs plan.
- Ensure the implementation of a mechanism that keeps a certain minimum number of seats in each body and institution reserved for representatives of vulnerable and marginalized groups, minorities and civil society organizations and ensure throughout all bodies and institution a fair gender-balance.
- Social mobilization initiatives, which aim at empowering people through local initiatives.⁴⁵
- Various forms of partnerships, such as multi-sector partnerships, area-based partnerships or focus groups partnerships.⁴⁶ Partnerships could support developments, such as social inclusion, empowerment, participation and capacity building.
- Partnership groups: should consist of a broad group of stakeholders. Those groups can provide valuable input throughout the planning procedure concerning the RED.
- Focus groups with members of most marginalized and disadvantaged groups, which are traditionally not participating in political and policy development processes. Certain social groups, including the poor and vulnerable, may be encouraged and supported to form their own groups and associations to ensure that their concerns, ideas and visions are listened to and considered in the policy development.
- Women focus groups with exclusive female participation may further contribute to empower women. Public opinion polls that specifically seek responses from women to certain topics and policy developments. Inclusion of women in community based organizations, such as gender equality committees at municipal level can also contribute to increase the participation of women in public life.⁴⁷

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| Access to information – applicable throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation |
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- Public Information Expert in each Regional Council with the task to design a broad-based public information and advocacy strategy on the RED plan.
- Access to Information and advocacy:
 - Public Access and Information Centers;
 - Public opinion polls;
 - Concerted advocacy and public information campaigns, including radio and TV shows, public debates, print media outlets, leaflets and posters;
 - Public meetings, roundtables, focused conferences and workshops;
 - Citizens committees focusing on distribution of information and awareness raising concerning specific policy developments.

⁴⁵ UNDP Policy Paper, How to make Local Development Work, p 12.

⁴⁶ UNDP Policy Paper, How to make Local Development Work, p 7 -10.

⁴⁷ Applying the HRBA to Poverty Reduction by supporting the elaboration of an MDG-based National Development Programme 2005-2015 for Macedonia, p 12.

Those initiatives may help to inform citizens about local and regional development plans and encourage them to participate in the formulation of the process.

Collection of data, assessment and survey

- Ensure that the tools listed under 'participation and empowerment' and 'non-discrimination and equality' are considered.
- The 'Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies' provide in Part II an elaborated set of human rights indicators and targets referring to specific rights, especially relevant for poverty reduction strategies.
- HR and community facilitator/expert.
- MDG ambassador/facilitator.
- The National MDG Plan and Report provide detailed information and assessments concerning the identification of poor and vulnerable groups, with focus on persons experiencing multiple discrimination or vulnerabilities.
- The National Legal Framework Checklist should provide a complete list of the domestic legal framework relevant for the RED. The OHCHR has prepared a country profile of Macedonia and the International Human Rights System that gives an elaborated overview of the status quo of Macedonia's human rights treaty ratifications and HR gaps identified by the Committees. BIM and an expert consultant from Macedonia are currently developing a tool to assess the international and national legal framework relevant for Macedonia as reference guide for local, regional and national development planning.⁴⁸
- The Human Rights Checklist is a useful tool that helps when undertaking a HR mapping and analysis exercise or cross-checking priorities.⁴⁹
- The Vulnerable Groups List and Poverty Profile help to identify vulnerable and marginalized groups and those especially deprived. It can be further used to cross-check if those groups identified are effectively included and actively participate in the RED process. Insofar it also helps to identify possible needs of specific actions to be taken in order to ensure the input and meaningful participation of certain vulnerable groups. BIM is currently working on a special tool to identify the poor and vulnerable.⁵⁰
 - The Poverty Profile provides information to know who the vulnerable and poor are, which problems they are facing as well as possible strengths, resources and weaknesses.
- The Gender Baseline List helps to ensure equal representation of men and women. It is a useful tool to conduct gender analysis and may help during the collection of data and assessment as well as cross-checking purposes throughout the process.⁵¹

⁴⁸ See also: Methodology and Tools for Human Rights-based Assessment and Analysis 2004, RMAP, p 53.

⁴⁹ See above, p 28.

⁵⁰ See also: Methodology and Tools for Human Rights-based Assessment and Analysis 2004, RMAP, p 68.

⁵¹ See above, p 98.

- The Civil Society Organizations List provides a detailed overview of existing civil society groups, their goals and activities. It helps to ensure participation and input from all organizations.⁵²
- Various sets of social and human rights indicators which help to measure the process of planning and implementation itself and provide essential data to be used for monitoring and evaluation activities – see also the sets primary and secondary indicators used in the National Report on the MDGs.
- The exercise applying the '4 Capitals – economic, natural, human and social capital' help to identify and review available resources.⁵³
- The SWOT analysis helps to group data into internal and external positively and negatively impeding factors.⁵⁴
- The Problem Tree Analysis helps to analyze causes and consequences in specific problem areas. It provides a graphic overview of the problems and their causes and connects those with potential solutions.⁵⁵

Planning process – creating the strategy

- Ensure that the tools listed under 'participation and empowerment' and 'non-discrimination and equality' are considered.
- The 'Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies' provide in Part II a list of specific human rights, especially relevant for development and poverty reduction strategies, with sets of targets to help progressive realization of those rights.
- HR and community facilitator/expert.
- MDG Ambassador/facilitator.
- Conceptual Strategy for the Regional Planning Process in Macedonia.
- The National MDG Plan and Report might provide a useful tool to cross-check goals and objectives.
- Identifying the 'Forces at Work' helps to identify those actors who have a positive or negative influence on the problem, as well as the right holders and duty bearers.⁵⁶
- Logical framework.
- SMART analysis: helps to identify Specific, Measurable, Accepted by all, Realistic and Time-bound objectives.⁵⁷
- Graphic exercise which connects objectives, measures and actions provides a useful tool to plan actions and revise them in order to see if they are logically connected and to ensure that actions are focusing on achieving the goals.⁵⁸

⁵² See above, p 92.

⁵³ UNDP Policy Paper, How to make Local Development Work, p 32.

⁵⁴ See above, p 33.

⁵⁵ See above, p 32.

⁵⁶ Methodology and Tools for a Human Rights-based Assessment and Analysis 2004, Rights-based Municipal Assessment and Planning Project (RMAP), p 19.

⁵⁷ A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 28; UNDP Policy Paper, How to make Local Development Work, p 35.

⁵⁸ A Methodology for Development of Regional Economic Development Plans in the Republic of Macedonia, p 36.

Analysis, monitoring and accountability mechanism

- Ensure that the tools listed under 'participation and empowerment' and 'non-discrimination and equality' are considered.
- 'Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies', Guideline 4: Progressive Realization of Human Rights, Indicators and Benchmarks; Guideline 16: Principles of Monitoring and Accountability.
- The National Report on the MDGs lists a comprehensive set of primary and secondary indicators, which should be reviewed and integrated in the set of measurements and indicators currently developed in order to measure the progress in LED and RED.
- HR facilitator/expert.
- MDG ambassador/facilitator.
- Monitoring mechanism:
 - OM institution – appointment of an OM focusing on HR and development/poverty reduction.
 - Monitoring Committees to be created in each Regional Council.⁵⁹
 - Parliamentary or other political processes mandated with a specific monitoring and accountability function.
 - Create a legal framework within which civil society can perform an independent monitoring role.

Others

- Training and education program.
- Train the trainer program.
- Training on human resource development: support skills upgrade and local human resource development.

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⁵⁹ See above, p 31.