

USE OF STATISTICAL DATA IN THE ELABORATION OF THE NORTH REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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Abstract

The core element of an effective regional development policy is strategic planning. The main reason to develop a strategic plan is finding a coherent response to the development needs in order to overcome economic and social problems.

The North Regional Development Strategy (North RDS) is the main mid-term strategic planning document at regional level to ensure equitable and sustainable socio-economic development of the North Development Region of Moldova. The starting point in developing the strategic planning document was the elaboration of the socio-economic analysis, which had to describe the economic and social context of the region and provide an evidence for the future objectives and measures to be taken.

Information that served as a basis for conducting the socio-economic analysis was disaggregated at regional and district levels and collected as statistical indicators: simple indicators, complex indicators, dynamic indicators and indicators of relationship. *The justification of the analysis was based on 3 types of sources: documents* (projects, analyzes, reports, records, books, portfolios, etc.), *views of people involved* (questionnaires, interviews, focus groups) and *direct observation* (guide observation, observation sheet).

An important role in the elaboration of the strategic planning document was the collaboration with institutions that produce statistical data, the involvement of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) of the Republic of Moldova www.statistica.md being considered one of great value. Collaboration between the NBS and the MRDC, and Regional Development Agencies was enhanced through the European Union financed technical assistance project for "Improved Regional Statistics in the Republic of Moldova" (EuropeAid/135932/D/SER/MD, contract n° 2014/349632) - www.statreg-moldova.eu/

The strategic planning process is complex and not always smooth and it is often geared towards overcoming some challenges. The biggest challenges in elaborating the North RDS were: *lack of data or limited available data, ignorance of possible sources of information; using available and easily accessible data, yet mismatched or outdated; collecting too much data, much of which was superfluous to strategy and not used in the analysis; collecting information took so long that when the analysis was done, the situation had changed already.*

Using regional statistics in the development of a strategic planning document at regional level is the key to ensure its sustainability and truthfulness. The quantity and quality of information affects the quality of the analysis and conclusions, respectively – the quality of strategy.