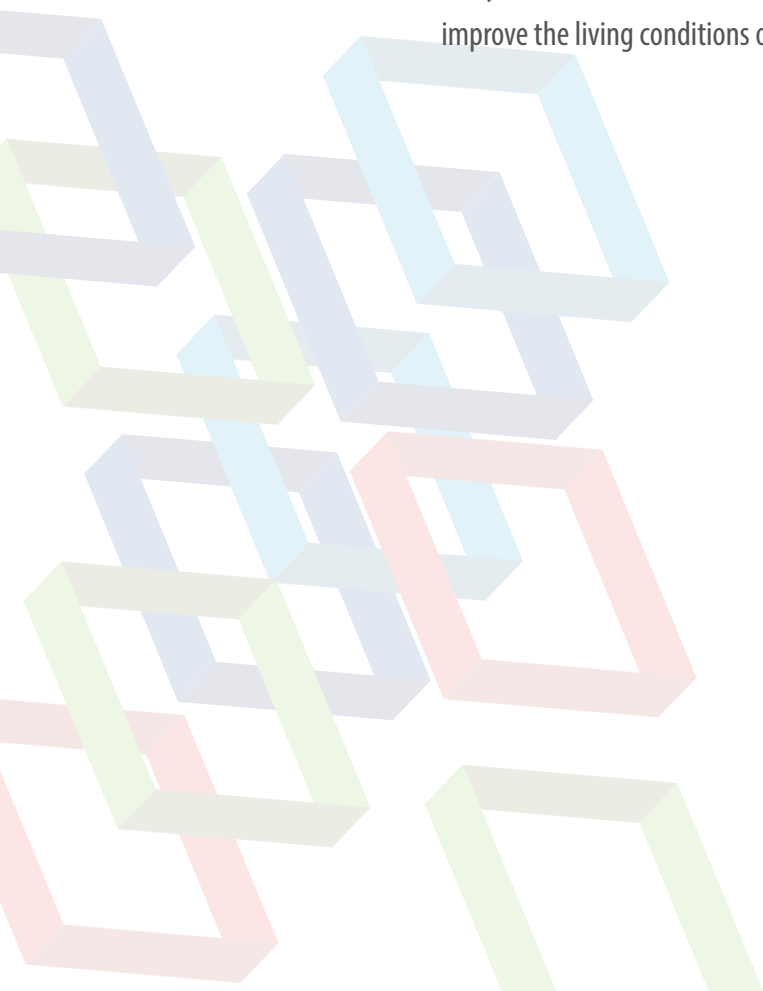# ROMACT

HANDBOOK

A manual for Mayors, Local Administrations and Roma wanting to improve the living conditions of disadvantaged Roma

ROMACT

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Contents

THERE IS A MARGINALISED NEIGHBOURHOOD IN YOUR MUNICIPALITY

What to do?

First it is necessary to understand the term "marginalised neighbourhood" as an area where a group of people with a limited participation in society live. They are often long-term unemployed or unemployable people with low or below average qualification and education. They usually depend on income from social benefits or informal employment and often are over indebted. The issue is aggravated by poor access to services and conflicts with the neighbourhood.

Marginalisation is too often given an ethnic dimension as marginalized neighbourhoods are often inhabited by Roma. Ethnicity is then explained as a cause of the problem; it is said that the Roma have a different culture, that they are different and, in extreme cases, that they are inadaptable.
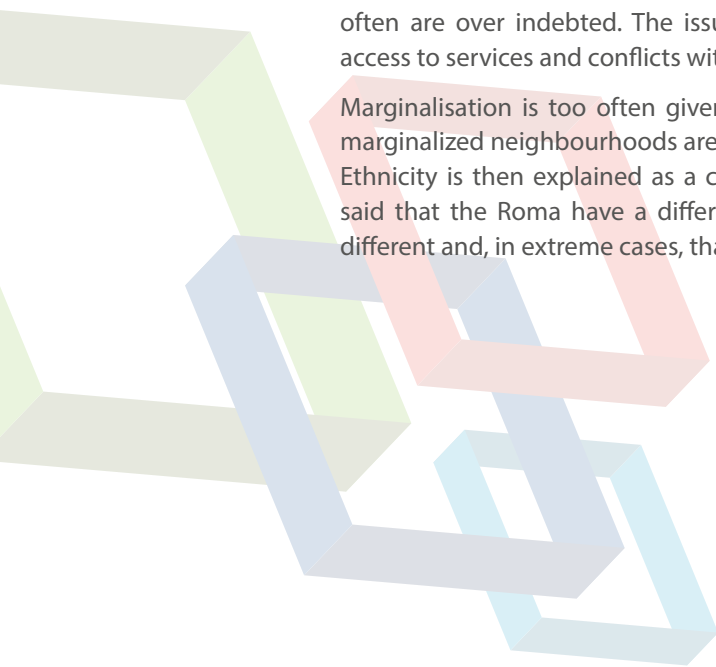
However, if we explain marginalisation as an ethnic issue, we *de facto* lose the ability to solve it, because marginalisation is first of all a social issue, which cannot be solved until its causes are identified and addressed.

This handbook will assist you in improving the life of all citizens living in your municipality, including the Roma. It will help you in objectively assessing what needs to be done in your municipality, assist you in planning actions together with all those concerned, and show you how to translate these plans into concrete measures, and when needed - how to access and use EU and other funding for that purpose. It will also assist you in complying, at your level, with duties imposed by international conventions and national laws.

This handbook describes the method of the ROMACT Programme. Although it is focused on the inclusion of marginalised Roma, it is also relevant for other vulnerable people.

Applying the ROMACT process will be hard work but it will lead to positive change, not only for the local Roma, but also for the entire municipality.

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

Start by reading the whole handbook. This will give you an overall view of the ROMACT method and tools.

Before you start to use this handbook, please, bear in mind that:

1. All its parts are important; you will need every single one. Some of them might seem less important, but without all of them the final result will be poor.

2. Following the ROMACT process in a step-by-step manner is also important. Changing the order of activities could put the overall outcome at risk.

3. Every municipality is different. It may be necessary to adapt the method of the handbook to the realities of your municipality.

We also strongly recommend you to read the "Handbook for improving the living conditions of Roma at local level"[1]. This handbook provides additional tools and good practice notes for implementing projects at the local level.

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1. Handbook for improving the living conditions of Roma at local level, World Bank and European Commission, 2015 http://bit.ly/2dPDjiZ

HOW TO INITIATE THE ROMACT PROCESS

It is important to start the ROMACT process using the right approach and taking into account a few essential guiding principles. These principles should accompany you throughout your work in all circumstances.

START WITH AN APPROPRIATE APPROACH[2]

Improving the living conditions of marginalised people mainly entails measures to enhance their access to education, employment, health care, housing and social services. It is essential to recognize from the beginning that these aspects will need to be addressed in an integrated way. There is never one single cause of marginalization, but often a long list of them.

Furthermore these causes are interrelated. Addressing one or only selected causes will not lead to change; the situation must be solved comprehensively and all causes must be addressed simultaneously. None of these causes can be underestimated.

Each area affects the others, so failing to address one area will impair progress in the other areas. For example, without good education it is difficult to find good employment. Poor housing conditions lead to bad health and also affect school performance.

On the other hand education, employment, health and housing may be impacted negatively by the same cause. For instance, renovating roads or providing public transport can improve at the same time access to education, health care, and employment opportunities.

2. See also the «Handbook for improving the living conditions of Roma at local level», World Bank and European Commission, 2015 http://bit.ly/2dPDjiZ

A poor outcome in education, employment, health or housing often has multiple causes, which must be addressed together to make a positive impact. For example, building a new healthcare centre is by itself unlikely to improve the health of people. Health care workers, social workers or health mediators as well as transportation services will also be needed.

Issues that affect the Roma often concern the whole municipality and therefore need to be seen in this wider context. When public services provided to the Roma are of poor quality, it is very likely that they are not much better for the whole population. Local authorities are responsible for improving this situation. The methodology of ROMACT enables the local authorities and other organisations under their mandate to address in a sustained manner the issues faced by the socially excluded and disadvantaged groups, including the Roma.

An integrated approach is needed to ensure that actions are effective, efficient and sustainable.

An integrated approach means more than just combining a series of actions. With Roma communities facing so many challenges, an action plan could end up being a "grab bag" of parallel activities without coordination or synergies. It is essential to have a strategy in order to avoid a bundle of incoherent, fragmented activities.

INVOLVE THE ROMA

Roma people know what they need, why they need it, what the barriers are, what can be done, what is affordable to them, and what can be maintained.

Participation increases also ownership of the inclusion process by Roma themselves, thus increasing the chances that it will be sustained over time.

At the same time, the participation of non-Roma people is also critical to gain their support, avoid stigmatization of Roma, and foster interaction and cooperation between Roma and non-Roma on the basis of mutual interests.

A FEW IMPORTANT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

When designing an inclusion strategy it is important to:

- target Roma because they are socially excluded and disadvantaged, not just because they are Roma;

- customize actions to address specific local needs;

- address barriers to the access to public services;

- prepare for what will happen, when EU funding will stop.

TARGET SOCIALLY EXCLUDED AND DISADVANTAGED ROMA

Priority should be given to integrating Roma who experience poor living conditions. And the inclusion strategy should also benefit non-Roma who face similar disadvantages. This will help counter negative perceptions according to which the Roma receive more than their share of public resources.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR STRATEGY TO ANSWER LOCAL NEEDS

A strategy that is successful in one municipality may not necessarily be suited for another. Even the same type of need in two different municipalities may have different causes and thus require different solutions.

For example, in one municipality lack of access to health care facilities and providers may be the main cause of poor health, while in another one, lack of clean water and sanitary systems may be the main cause.

To be effective, a strategy must be adapted to the needs and conditions of a specific local context.

ADDRESS BARRIERS TO THE PROVISION AND USE OF SERVICES

Don't believe that "if you build it, people will come". People, especially in impoverished communities, will not necessarily use new public services. If they are not aware of a new service or its benefits, or if they cannot afford it, they will not use it. Even when a service is offered free of charge, the indirect costs of using it—such as transportation or lost income for time away from work—may be too high. Fear of being mistreated or humiliated by service providers can also discourage people from using a service. The design of any measure must therefore be accompanied by the question, "if we build it, how can we ensure that people will come?". Complementary measures may for instance be needed to facilitate access and use.

PREPARE FOR WHAT WILL HAPPEN, WHEN EU FUNDING WILL STOP

Improvements should not disappear with the end of EU funding. The transition to local or national funding needs to be planned in advance so that gains are sustainable. Continued subsidies from national government programmes or local budgets may be needed. This should be anticipated and prepared.

FOUR STEPS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION OF MARGINALISED ROMA

The ROMACT process consists in four STEPS:

Step **01**	Step **02**	Step **03**	Step **04**
Becoming committed	Agreeing on needs and plans	Translating plans into actions and projects	Funding, implementing and monitoring

Each STEP involves key activities (ACTs).

These STEPS, and the related activities, are strongly interlinked: the ROMACT process should be seen as a coherent whole rather than the implementation of disconnected actions.

For the ROMACT process to lead to successful results, all ACTs must be implemented.

Implementing the whole ROMACT process requires about 20 months.

ROMACT TIMELINE

STEP	ACT	month 1-5	month 6-10	month 11-15	month 16-20
STEP 1 Becoming committed	ACT 1 Understanding the need to act	■			
	ACT 2 Appointing Coordinator	■			
	ACT 3 Contracting Facilitator	■			
	ACT 4 Mapping stakeholders	■			
	ACT 5 Setting up Municipal Taskforce	■			
	ACT 6 Supporting CAG setup	■			
STEP 2 Agreeing on needs & plans	ACT 7 Deciding where to intervene	■	■	■	■
	ACT 8 Assessing municipality's capacities	■	■	■	■
	ACT 9 Community Needs Assessment	■	■	■	■
	ACT 10 Drafting Community Priorities List		■	■	■
STEP 3 Translating priorities into measures & projects	ACT 11 Developing & adopting JAP			■	■
	ACT 12 Short/medium term actions			■	■
	ACT 13 Integrating JAP in LDP			■	■
	ACT 14 Preparing concrete actions			■	■
STEP 4 Funding, implementing & monitoring	ACT 15 Funding actions			■	■
	ACT 16 Implementing actions			■	■
	ACT 17 Monitoring & evaluating			■	■

CAG is to be involved in all ROMACT process ACTs at local level

Explaining the ROMACT process to the public

Building capacity of local authorities & CAG / Roma communities

BECOMING COMMITTED

ACT 1 **Understanding the need to tackle marginalisation[3]**

Implementing the ROMACT process requires first and most importantly the commitment of local authorities. Both the Mayor and the majority of the Local Council should want to address the marginalisation of Roma people and aim at their inclusion.

Marginalisation is often reduced to the issue of Roma or the so-called inadaptable. Frequent arguments are that the "Roma are different", "they don't want to live like us", "they like ghettoes" and "they don't want to work and send children to schools". Such attitude prevents any kind of change as it makes the Roma appear as inadaptable people.

Failure to address marginalisation presents however a high risk for all citizens of a municipality. This doesn't mean only involvement in petty crime or other illegal activities which can result in social unrest. An unsolved situation, particularly in places where problems escalate, can also quickly get exploited by extreme-right radicals.

Furthermore, the persistence of marginalisation often leads to the breakdown of social cohesion in the municipality, an increase in social tensions, and a loss of identification of inhabitants with the municipality. Dramatic consequences can be seen particularly among children at schools. If children do not feel comfortable in schools and do not respect each other, the problems in the

3.   See also the Handbook on Social Inclusion in the Municipality, Czech Agency for Social Inclusion http://bit.ly/2dPDyun

municipality will likely get worse over time.

This is why local authorities should want to tackle marginalisation so as to include all people living on the territory of the municipality, including the Roma.

But reducing poverty and exclusion in the municipality is not just about reducing risks, it is also about opportunities:

social inclusion will help improve the overall quality of public services;

it will also lead to an increase in the value of houses and properties and

it will increase the attractiveness of the whole municipality as a place for all local citizens to live.

All these will attract investors and the inward migration of new residents with higher levels of income, and make visible that the local authorities are a good partner and perform well.

If improvements are sustained, a number of those who today need social and economic assistance, and represent a burden for the municipality, will tomorrow be able to actively contribute to the local economic and social development.

The decision to implement the ROMACT process in the municipality should be formalized through a written decision of the Mayor, or even better through a written decision of the Local Council.

ACT 2   Appointing the Coordinator

Once the Mayor has decided to implement the ROMACT process in the municipality he/she needs to appoint a high level member of the municipal staff as the **Coordinator** who will be responsible for managing and monitoring the ROMACT process.

The **Coordinator** reports to the Mayor.

THE TASKS OF THE COORDINATOR INCLUDE:

- setting up the **Municipal Taskforce for Roma Inclusion (the Taskforce)**;

- convening and chairing meetings of the **Taskforce**;

- coordinating the **assessment of the capacities of the municipality**;

- coordinating the preparation of the **Joint Action Plan for Roma inclusion**;

- coordinating the integration of the **Joint Action Plan** into the **Local Development Plan**;

- coordinating the implementation of the **Joint Action Plan** activities that have been included in the **Local Development Plan**;

- coordinating the **monitoring** and **assessment** of the implementation of the ROMACT process;

- informing the Mayor, the City Council and the public about the implementation of the ROMACT process.

ACT 3 **Contracting the Facilitator**

The Municipality needs also to contract a **Facilitator[4]**. The **Facilitator** should not be a member of the municipal staff. He/she should be contracted by the municipality for the duration of the ROMACT process.

The role of the **Facilitator** is multifaceted:

- building the capacity of the local authorities and administration to design, fund and implement measures for the inclusion of Roma;

- assisting municipal staff in assessing needs, identifying resources and designing solutions;

- mobilising the Roma and developing their capacity to become active citizens, in particular through the establishment of the **Community Action Group (CAG)**;

- helping the Roma in identifying and expressing their needs;

- supporting the dialogue and cooperation process between the local authorities and the **CAG**;

- in a word, ensuring that the ROMACT process is properly implemented.

The **Facilitator** guides the whole ROMACT process in an independent way: he/she does not represent the municipality, nor the Roma. The **Facilitator** is not a mediator either.

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4.   In municipalities where the ROMACT Programme is implemented, the **Facilitator** is hired by the Council of Europe.

THE TASKS OF THE FACILITATOR INCLUDE:

- identifying **capacity needs** and coordinating training and mentoring for the municipal **administration** and other local institutions as well as of the **Roma**;

- **coaching** the municipal **administration** and other local institutions;

- **coaching the Roma**;

- participating in the **Taskforce** and drafting minutes of its meetings;

- **mapping stakeholders**;

- helping set-up the **CAG**;

- convene, moderate and draft minutes of **CAG** meetings

- assisting the CAG in performing the **Community Needs Assessment**;

- assisting the CAG in preparing the **Community Priorities List**;

- assisting the Roma community in implementing some of the actions of the **Joint Action Plan**;

- moderating meetings between the administration and the CAG to translate **the Joint Action Plan** into concrete actions;

- informing the municipality about **funding** opportunities;

- informing the CAG of progress in the **implementation** of the **Joint Action Plan** and **Local Development Plan**;

- assisting the CAG to participate in the **monitoring** and **evaluation** of the implementation of the **Joint Action Plan** / **Local Development Plan**.

The Facilitator must be empowered by the municipality, so that he/she is assertive in his/her role.

The **Facilitator** must be capable of:

- reaching out, communicating with and mediating between all stakeholders, from authorities to individual people;

- adapting his/her style and discourse to suit all stakeholders;

- providing coaching where needed.

The **Facilitator** has a key responsibility in ensuring that the ROMACT process runs smoothly and consistently. He/she has to ensure that all stakeholders are informed, conclusions of meetings are noted down and logistical aspects, such as meetings planning and invitations, are properly organized.

ACT 4 Mapping stakeholders

Cooperation between local institutions and stakeholders is often weak in a municipality. Mapping the various institutions and stakeholders which co-exist in a municipality, and assessing their technical, organisational and human resource capacity is the first step towards developing cooperation and synergies.

The **Stakeholder Mapping** is done and **constantly updated** by the **Facilitator**. Practically the **Stakeholder Map** (or partner map) is a table which includes the names of each organisation, its responsibilities and staff contact details (at least names, phone and email addresses).

It can be done using the **ROMACT Stakeholder Map template** (See Annex T3).

ACT 5 Setting up the Municipal Taskforce for Roma Inclusion

On the basis of the **Stakeholder Map**, the **Coordinator** – with the assistance of the **Facilitator** - sets up the **Taskforce** with the approval of the Mayor and the local council.

THE TASKFORCE INCLUDES:

representatives of concerned municipal departments and other local institutions, e.g., schools, health care institutions, cultural and religious institutions, etc.,

the **Coordinator**;

representatives of the Roma community, usually the **CAG**, and relevant NGOs, CSOs, etc.;

the **Facilitator**.

Small municipalities often lack the technical and financial capacities to implement alone the ROMACT process. They could try to cooperate with other neighbouring municipalities, by establishing a common Taskforce for Roma inclusion and finding synergies between them.

At the beginning of the process, all Taskforce members should participate in each meeting, to ensure a shared understanding of the process and agree on a working method.

The **Taskforce** should meet at least once a month for a 3-4 hours session. The **Coordinator** chairs meetings of the **Taskforce** and the **Facilitator** is the secretary of the **Taskforce**.

After each meeting of the Taskforce, the Facilitator should draft a memo summarising the conclusions of the meeting and disseminate it to all Taskforce members.

> *Good communication between the members of the Taskforce is critical to its work, in particular in achieving a successful participatory planning and decision making.*

Training in communication techniques is recommended, with a specific focus on establishing and facilitating the cooperation between local stakeholders (local government, NGOs, other local institutions, public utility companies and any other people working for social inclusion or with disadvantaged groups).

ACT 6 ▸ Supporting the setup of the CAG

The ROMACT process cannot be effective without the active participation of the Roma themselves. One way to facilitate the participation of the Roma consists in supporting the set-up of a **CAG** with assistance of the **Facilitator**.

Facilitating the expression of the needs, expectations, demands and proposals of the local Roma community is a key part of the ROMACT process.

A well-functioning **CAG** is a keystone which will largely facilitate the work of the municipality.

> *The CAG should become a partner of the municipality in the ROMACT process.*

A CAG MUST BE:

Local: **CAG** members must belong to the local Roma community;

Diverse: **CAG** members should be men and women of various ages, representing a good sample of the whole community;

Team-centred: all **CAG** members are equal and should decide together on who will represent them in meetings with the public authorities. There should be no hierarchy in the **CAG**;

Democratic: Decisions are made in a democratic way, if possible through consensus, after hearing all the opinions expressed within the **CAG**;

Open: Anyone can join or leave the **CAG** at any time. However maintaining a core number of people who commit to follow the process within the **CAG** is essential;

Focused on community progress: The core aim of the **CAG** is to improve the wellbeing of the entire community, not just of its members;

Transparent: The decisions, actions and achievements of the **CAG** are communicated to other members of the community;

Constructive: The **CAG** should seek to formulate constructive proposals for change, taking account of the responsibilities, competences and resources needed for their implementation;

Based on human rights principles: All activities of the **CAG** should be guided by the principle of equality of rights;

Recognised: The **CAG** needs to be recognised as a partner by the local authority.

To be effective, a CAG should:

- include a core group of between 5 and 20 permanent members;
- meet at least twice a month, in particular during **STEPs 1** and **2**;
- meet at times convenient for its members. It is important to clarify the best timing of the meetings (which day of the week, what time). Meetings should not last more than 3-4 hours.

Engaging people who are not used to be consulted and involved in public decisions is not always an easy process. Perseverance may be required until a CAG becomes and remains fully operational.

The municipality could facilitate the work of the CAG by providing a room and refreshments for its meetings.

The **Facilitator:**

- convenes **CAG** meetings;
- moderates **CAG** meetings but does not chair them: his role is to help **CAG** members express the needs and demands of the community;
- takes notes during the meeting and thereafter drafts a memo summarising the main discussion points and conclusions, together with a list of participants. This memo is distributed to all **CAG** members, as well as to the Coordinator.

Marginalised people often lack the capacity to participate in such process. Through coaching, the Facilitator will help build their capacity to do so. See hereafter how training and coaching is provided.

EXPLAINING THE ROMACT PROCESS TO THE PUBLIC

When implementing the ROMACT process it is very important to proceed in an open manner and regularly inform all citizens, including the Roma but not only them. Actions for the inclusion of Roma often generate various rumours, which can spread at tremendous speed. If they are not dealt with early on, these rumours can complicate future actions. Prior to actions such as the planning of a community centre or the launch of a housing project, for instance, it is important to explain to citizens what it will and will not include and which benefit it will provide to them. This can prevent consequent protest, which could grow into petitions or even demonstrations of dissatisfied (and usually insufficiently informed) citizens.

It is essential to explain to citizens why and how tackling marginalisation and including the Roma will bring benefits for the whole municipality.

Communicating and explaining the ROMACT process to the wider population is crucial.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT THE ROMACT PROCESS?

The municipality should present information about the process, meetings, activities and projects on the information board and website of the municipality. The municipal leaflets or newspapers which are usually distributed freely in all mailboxes, can be another useful channel for informing citizens. Important documents, such as the Joint Action Plan, should also be accessible on the website.

In neighbourhoods where people don't receive the municipal newspaper, don't read information boards and don't have Internet access, or prior to major actions such as the construction of a community centre the municipality should organize an open meeting with citizens:

- to inform about the planned action;
- to show how similar service or centre operates in other municipalities;
- to answer questions etc.

The municipality should also inform the journalists and mass media.

Providing information and communication should not be one-way only. Gathering feedback from citizens on the ROMACT process could be done through surveys on the municipal website, a box for comments at the town hall, and opinions and solution proposals expressed during open meetings.

Citizens should never have the impression that something is being decided behind their backs.

A mistake that should be avoided is using negative messages. It is important to highlight throughout the process positive developments and progress achieved thanks to it.

A FEW TIPS

Communicate clearly and comprehensibly. Don't use words which people don't understand. You would alienate yourself from them and look condescending.

Don't use "project" jargon– the public does not understand the language used in administrative notices or funding applications. Describe issues in a simple and clear way.

Use concrete examples and refer to reality people live in.

Make clear that the new activities and services will be open to all citizens, or at least benefit to all. The people shouldn't think that only a few inhabitants will benefit.

Explaining and communicating from the start of the ROMACT process should help trigger a spirit of partnership and cooperation between the municipal administration and the Roma community, local authorities and NGOs, and, importantly, between the municipality and the whole population. By widely publicising municipal actions, by making them visible, one can also start changing negative attitudes linked to measures targeting the Roma community.

AGREEING ON NEEDS AND PLANS

ACT 7 — Deciding on where to intervene

Marginalisation most often affects specific neighbourhoods in a municipality. These different neighbourhoods are usually characterized by different living conditions, levels of access to services, infrastructure, jobs, etc.

Before launching the ROMACT process, the municipality needs to decide - on the basis of objective information - which neighbourhoods will be targeted.

A first task of the **Taskforce** consists in:

- collating demographic information (total population, population at risk of poverty, estimated Roma population);

- identifying the poorest areas (geographical name, streets or bordering streets, etc.);

- clarifying the physical borders of areas earmarked for interventions. Borders of Roma settlements have special importance from a development perspective, considering potential conflicts between people of Roma and non-Roma neighbourhoods; services available in bordering neighbourhoods, potential conflicts between various Roma neighbourhoods, etc.

It can be prepared using the **ROMACT Baseline Survey template** (see Annex T1).

The Mayor (and the local Council) then decide on the specific areas where the ROMACT process will be implemented.

ACT 8 Assessing the capacities of the municipality

The **Facilitator** needs to assess – on the basis of inputs from the **Taskforce** - the technical, financial and human **capacities of the municipality**.

The **Municipality Capacity Assessment** identifies the capacities of the municipal administration, including its consultants, and other relevant local institutions.

It can be prepared using the **ROMACT Municipality Capacity Assessment template** (see Annex T2).

ACT 9 Carrying out the Community Needs Assessment

The **CAG** – with the assistance of the **Facilitator** – elaborates the **Assessment of the Needs of the Community**. Identifying needs and assessing the barriers to meeting them is the basis for the development of demands and proposals from the Roma community to the municipality.

Identifying needs does not suffice; one must also assess the barriers that prevent communities from accessing resources to meet those needs. For example, poor access to health services might be due to multiple barriers: existing health centres might not be easily accessible by public transport, or Roma might lack personal identification documents.

The **Community Needs Assessment** should lay out the characteristics of the Roma community, its needs, challenges, resources and demands.

CAG members should identify the needs, and express the demands and expectations of the whole community.

> *The Facilitator helps CAG members run through the assessment process without taking over the process.*

It can be prepared using the ROMACT **Community Needs Assessment** template (see Annex T4).

ACT 10 **Drafting the Community Priorities List**

Once needs and barriers have been identified through the **Community Needs Assessment** – the **CAG** – with the assistance of the **Facilitator** – drafts the **Community Priorities List** which is a list of concrete actions requested by the community.

> *If needed the Facilitator provides training to the CAG on how to translate identified needs and barriers into a list of priorities.*

Translating the **Community Needs Assessment** into a **Community Priorities List** is done in three stages:

- **Stage 1**: the **CAG** takes stock of the **Community Needs Assessment** and prioritize needs: which needs are most important to the community, identify potential actions that can address these priority needs, and then select and prioritize actions to be applied.

- **Stage 2**: the **CAG** reviews options and trade-offs: what approaches and actions are best suited to dealing with the problems. There are often various options available to meet the same need, and several actions can be integrated to address a combination of needs and barriers.

Stage 3: the **CAG** drafts the **Community Priorities List**, which details what should be done, by whom, by when and how.

> *It is essential to select actions which will effectively address the root causes of poor outcomes..*

For more details about how to prioritize needs and actions see the Handbook for improving the living conditions of Roma at local level[5].

5.   Handbook for improving the living conditions of Roma at local level, World Bank and European Commission, 2015 http://bit.ly/2dPDjiZ

TRANSLATING THE COMMUNITY PRIORITIES LIST INTO CONCRETE MEASURES AND PROJECTS

ACT 11 **Developing and adopting the Joint Action Plan for Roma inclusion**

The **Municipal Taskforce for Roma Inclusion** drafts the **Joint Action Plan for Roma inclusion** on the basis of the **Community Priorities List** and the **Municipality Capacity Assessment**.

> *If the municipality already has an Action Plan for the Improvement of the Roma Situation (for the implementation of the National Roma Strategy), the Taskforce should examine how to integrate into it new elements from the Community Priorities List and the Municipality Capacity Assessment. However, one should avoid creating new parallel and redundant strategies and plans, but rather focus efforts on improving and implementing plans which may already exist.*

The above-mentioned **Joint Action Plan** is likely to include three kinds of concrete actions:

- Short term actions, which can be implemented by the Roma community itself (for example, cleaning roads, clearing a space for a playground) or by the municipality with its existing resources (for example, adding a bus stop near the Roma neighbourhood);

STEP 03

- Short and medium term actions, which can be implemented by the municipality using resources from its ordinary budget (for example, cancelling kindergarten attendance fees for the poorest families);

- Longer term activities, which will need to be included in the (mainstream) **Local Development Plan** of the municipality and might require national or EU funding.

Once the **Joint Action Plan** is agreed by the **Taskforce**, it is submitted to approval by the **Mayor** and the **Local Council**.

ACT 12 › Implementing short and medium term actions

Actions, which do not require funding or can be implemented using existing resources, can be implemented by the Roma community itself, or by the municipality or other local institutions.

The implementation of these first actions gives visibility to the ROMACT process and its first tangible results. It shows that positive change can occur and helps motivate the Roma community to continue its involvement and its members to become active citizens.

> *The Facilitator helps the Roma community take ownership of the actions it is implementing.*

ACT 13 › Integrating Roma issues in the Local Development Plan / Strategy

Once **the Joint Action Plan** or the upgraded **Action Plan for the Improvement of the Roma Situation** (see ACT 11) is adopted by the **Local Council**, its content needs to be further integrated into the (mainstream) **Local Development Strategy** / **Local Development Plan** of the municipality.

The needs of all inhabitants, including the Roma, should be addressed in the overall **Local Development Strategy** rather than segregated in separate strategies.

STEP 03

The **Taskforce** needs to explore where the actions included in the **Joint Action Plan** can be best integrated into the **Local Development Strategy** / **Local Development Plan** of the municipality.

> ## It is important not to create a parallel development strategy for the Roma community.

Preparing concrete actions

The municipality is responsible for translating the content of the Joint Action Plan, including elements of the **Local Development Strategy** / **Local Development Plan**, into concrete **actions**.

Preparing an action is not a simple technical task, in particular when it impacts on the life of people.

Improving the quality and coverage of infrastructure and services without removing barriers that prevent disadvantaged Roma from accessing them will not be effective.

The municipality needs to address issues of:

- **affordability**: if the new service is too costly or if it is free but the cost of transport to reach it is too high, people will not use it;

- **opportunity**: if using the new service requires too much time away from work or family care, people will not use it;

- **safety, dignity and reputation**: if using the new service is stigmatizing, people will not use it.

When the municipality administration is preparing an action it should consult the **CAG** to ensure that the action will really respond to the needs identified earlier in the process.

Once there is consensus between the **municipal administration** and the **CAG** about an action, the detailed terms of reference can be finalised.

> ## *The Facilitator should moderate meetings between the municipal administration and the CAG.*

STEP 03

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE ROMACT PROCESS

The ROMACT process is about **learning** how to transform the municipality into a place where all inhabitants, including the Roma, belong.

Identifying **capacity needs** and coordinating the necessary **training** and **mentoring** is a task of the **Facilitator**.

COACHING THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

Staff of the municipal administration, including consultants contracted by the municipality, and of other local institutions often need coaching on a wide range of issues related to social inclusion: how to design social inclusion measures which answer the needs of people in an effective and sustainable way, to how to plan and implement actions and projects, how to apply for and manage national and EU funding, etc.

Staff of the municipal administration and other local institutions often also need to learn how to better communicate and cooperate between themselves, with marginalised Roma, and with non-Roma, in a word, how to change their approaches and mind-sets towards marginalisation issues.

Coaching staff of the municipal administration and other local institutions is a task of the **Facilitator**. When more technical expertise is required specialized experts may need to be hired.

COACHING THE ROMA COMMUNITY

To become active and informed citizens and fully take part in the ROMACT process, members of the Roma community often need training and coaching[6]. They particularly need it to produce the Community Needs Assessment and the Community Priorities List, and then to negotiate the Joint Action Plan. They also need to learn about the technicalities of project design, planning and implementation.

Coaching members of the Roma community, in particular those who are members of the CAG, is a task of the Facilitator.

> *Actions to build capacity should be initiated from the start of the ROMACT process.*

STEP 03

FUNDING, IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING OF THE PROCESS

ACT 15   Funding actions

Many actions included in the **Joint Action Plan** agreed by the **Taskforce** will be implemented using local resources.

But some (longer-term) actions and projects, in particular those included in the (mainstream) **Local Development Plan**, will necessitate national or EU funding.

Unfortunately municipalities often lack the capacity and knowledge to access EU funds and to use them properly. Accessing and using EU funding can be a multi-facetted challenge as the municipality needs:

- to be aware of the National Roma Integration Strategy;

- to be informed of calls for proposals published by national authorities;

- to match calls with actions included in the **Local Development Plan**;

- to know how to apply for funding;

- to fulfil the administrative requirements linked to the funding;

- to be able to implement the actions which eventually receive funding;

The **Facilitator** assists the municipality in being informed about funding opportunities and in identifying experts which can provide technical support for applying for funding and for managing projects.

> *The Facilitator must keep the CAG informed of planned applications and their content.*

ACT 16 ▸ Implementing actions

The implementation of actions to which the **CAG** has contributed is a significant moment in the ROMACT process.

It is important that the municipality:

- continues – with the assistance of the **Facilitator** - to inform the **CAG** about the implementation of the actions;

- involves the whole Roma community in the implementation of the actions. Involving the Roma community may mean inviting them to commit time to the action, informing them how to benefit and use the new services offered to them, etc.

ACT 17 ▸ Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of actions with the CAG

Once actions are financed and launched, it is essential to monitor and assess progress in their implementation. It will help the **municipal administration** and the **CAG** to identify implementation issues and make the necessary changes to the design of the action.

For each action, the concerned municipal department or institution and the **CAG** need to decide what will be monitored and how, who will be in charge of collecting the information, and who will be informed.

Associating the **CAG** in all these activities allows future beneficiaries of the new services to understand how the action will lead to a better situation and what intermediate improvements are already produced. Associating the **CAG** will also lead to higher accountability and ownership.

See the *Handbook for improving the living conditions of Roma at local level*[7] for more details about participatory monitoring and evaluation.

STEP 04

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7. Handbook for improving the living conditions of Roma at local level, World Bank and European Commission, 2015 http://bit.ly/2dPDjiZ

ANNEXES

The latest templates of the following annexes:

T1 – ROMACT BASELINE SURVEY TEMPLATE

T2 – ROMACT MUNICIPALITY CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

T3 – ROMACT STAKEHOLDER MAP TEMPLATE

T4 – ROMACT COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

T5 – ROMACT JOINT ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

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You can also go directly to the page by scanning the QR code below with your smartphone.

Our website is mobile friendly.

A QR reader application is needed to detect the QR code.

You can download a QR reader application to your smartphone through a mobile application store.

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